



# Perceived sportivity of experiential activities : conceptualization, measure, and effects on consumers-brands relationships

Reynald Brion

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POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE

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**L'UNIVERSITÉ DE BORDEAUX**

ÉCOLE DOCTORALE ENTREPRISE, ECONOMIE, SOCIÉTÉ  
SCIENCES DE GESTION

Par Reynald BRION

**Perceived sportivity of experiential activities:  
Conceptualization, measure, and effects on consumers-  
brands relationships**

Sous la direction de : Jean-François TRINQUECOSTE  
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Soutenue le 01/04/2022

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# **Titre : Sportivité perçue des activités expérientielles : Conceptualisation, mesure, et effets sur les relations entre les marques et les consommateurs**

## **Résumé :**

L'industrie du sport semble être ancrée dans la culture globale à un degré tel que de nombreuses activités se positionnant ou utilisant des éléments sportifs semblent émerger chaque jour, tel que l'esport, ou la pratique compétitive du jeu vidéo. Parallèlement, d'autres activités, ayant un statut légal de sport, comme les échecs, ne sont en majorité pas considérés comme étant des sports par les consommateurs. Un paradoxe semble donc exister entre la classification d'une activité comme sport et la catégorisation et la représentation mentales qu'en ont les consommateurs.

Se basant sur ce constat, ce travail de recherche a pour premiers objectifs la compréhension, mais aussi la mesure des éléments influençant la perception d'activités de loisirs comme étant sportives par les consommateurs. Cette mesure, appelée sportivité perçue, s'effectue à travers une première revue historique et sociologique du concept de sport. Nous remontons à son origine et analysons son évolution pour en comprendre ses composantes et ses influences. Ensuite, sur la base d'une série d'études qualitatives et quantitatives, nous développons un instrument de mesure permettant de mesurer cette perception et catégorisation sportive par les consommateurs. Cet instrument de mesure comporte 8 items composant deux dimensions appelées physicalité (5 items) et équipement (3 items).

Une fois cet instrument de mesure de la sportivité perçue réalisé et validé d'un point de vue convergent, discriminant, mais aussi au sein d'un réseau nomologique, nous proposons de le tester dans deux contextes. Premièrement, nous testons les effets de la sportivité perçue lors d'une étude terrain portant sur une compétition esportive dédiée à l'un des jeux les plus joués et regardés au monde : *League of Legends*. Dans cette étude terrain, nous testons et confirmons les effets de la sportivité perçue sur la perception des marques, à savoir la personnalité de la marque, l'identification à la marque, ainsi que la légitimité perçue de la marque. Enfin, nous mesurons et confirmons aussi l'influence de la perception de la marque sur 3 variables : l'engagement du consommateur, la valeur perçue, et l'intention d'achat. Ces résultats sont ensuite répliqués au cours d'une expérimentation où les deux dimensions de la sportivité sont manipulées au via des stimuli visuels et textuels.

**Mots clés :** Sportivité perçue ; Relations marques-consommateurs ; Engagement Consommateur ; Sport, Esport, Loisirs

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# **Title : Perceived sportivity of experiential activities: Conceptualization, measure, and effects on consumers-brands relationships**

## **Abstract :**

The sports industry seems to be embedded in the global culture to such a degree that many activities positioning or using sports elements seem to emerge every day, such as esports, competitive video games. At the same time, other activities, which have the legal status of a sport, such as chess, are mostly not considered as sports by consumers. A paradox thus seems to exist between the classification of an activity as a sport and the categorization and mental representation that consumers have of it.

Based on this observation, the first objective of this research is to understand and measure the elements that influence the perception of leisure activities as sports by consumers. This measurement, called perceived sportivity, is carried out through an initial historical and sociological review of the concept of sport. We go back to its origin and analyze its evolution to understand its components and influences. Then, based on a series of qualitative and quantitative studies, we develop a measurement instrument to measure this perception and categorization as a sport by consumers. This measurement instrument consists of 8 items divided into two dimensions called physicality (5 items) and equipment (3 items).

Once this instrument measuring perceived sportivity has been created and validated from a convergent and discriminating point of view, but also within a nomological network, we propose to test it in two contexts. First, we test the effects of perceived sportivity in a field study. This field study uses one of the most-watched and most-played video games in the world: League of Legends. In this field study, we test and confirm the effects of perceived sportivity on brand perception, i.e. brand personality, brand identification, and perceived brand legitimacy. Finally, we also measure and confirm the influence of brand perception on 3 variables: consumer engagement, perceived value, and purchase intention. These results are then replicated in an experiment where the two dimensions of sportivity are manipulated through visual and textual stimuli.

**Keywords :** Perceived Sportivity ; Consumer-brand relationships ; Consumer engagement ; Sport ; Esport ; Leisure

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## Introduction – Sports consumption, market size and opportunities

The sports industry is known to be global, with numerous ties to consumer culture (Giulianotti and Numerato, 2018). Due to its large size and the blurriness of its limits, it is extremely difficult to properly estimate the size of the global sports market. However, according to a 2021 study from Boston Consulting Group and Signa Sport United, conducted with more than 19 000 respondents and interviews with senior experts from the sports industry, 35% of the world population (2.7 billion people), participate in sport at least once a month, which represents a global sport retail market of 1.1 trillion dollars divided into four categories: ticket sales, sports retail, physical activities and broadcasting rights. Sport represents the second biggest leisure activity in the world behind travel and is expected to continue to grow at a rate of 5% in the next few years. More specifically, sport is expected to strongly grow online, with an annual rate of 13%. The global sport product, which describes the sport's good or service that is offered to the consumer to satisfy his need for sport, be it spectator, viewer, active participant, or sponsor (Shank, 2005; Pitts and Stotlar, 2007) is everywhere today. It has extended beyond the sole practice of a sporty activity to become a lifestyle and a vector of identity for consumers (Donnelly and Young, 1988; Green and Jones, 2005).

Researchers argue that the sports product followed the process of globalization during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to become the worldwide product it is today (Harvey, Rail and Thibault, 1996; Maguire, 1999, 2005, 2011; Miller et al., 2000; Thibault, 2011; Giulianotti and Numerato, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Smart (2018) even positions the Olympic movement in the globalization process. However, the globalization and modernization of the global sports industry and the Olympics began with the arrival of new 'alternatives' sporty practices, such as surf, snowboard, or skateboard (Giulianotti and Numerato, 2018). These new practices led to a redefinition and an expansion of the sports product, which was not only a strongly commodified and regulated practice anymore but became more of a lifestyle with brands reaching out to consumers with products not directly related to the sports practice itself (Gottdiener, 2000; Pitts and Zhang, 2016; Giulianotti and Numerato, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Sport is not only about practicing anymore, it is also about watching, dressing, and being a member of communities (Yoshida et al., 2015).

With these new activities and forms of commercialization, the sport has become even larger and seems to have lost its primary institutional sense. It starts to open to new activities such as drone racing or esports (Witkowski, 2012; Jenny et al., 2017). Esport has been defined as “any form of competitive video gaming in which human players compete against each other” by France Esport, a governing body born at the initiative of the French Minister of Finance and Economy and the French State Secretariat for the Digital that aims at quantifying, qualifying and regulating the esports sector. An esports event was also organized by the IOC in cooperation with Intel and ESL on two famous esports titles ‘Rocket League’ and ‘Street Fighter V’ during the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games; The Intel World Open, highlighting already existing links between sport and esports.



*Figure 1: Intel World Open: The first esports tournament co-organized by the IOC and Intel*

Moreover, some activities that used to be strongly criticized by sports institutions for various reasons even gained the status of a sport internationally. ‘Alternative sports’ such as surf, skateboard and climbing which were at first rejected by sports institutions even joined the Olympic program at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Moreover, Mixed Martial Arts, a fighting sport created by companies for entertainment purposes, originally massively criticized for being too violent and barbaric by sports institutions, gained a sport status (Andreasson and Johansson, 2019).

On the contrary, some other activities which used to be recognized as sports and organized likes ones have lost their sport status in the consumer’s mind. For example, in 2017, a poll conducted by YouGov in the United Kingdom to discuss the sporty nature of chess, an institutionalized

and regulated sport, revealed that 73% out of the 4130 respondents did not consider chess as a sport despite its status (yougov.co.uk, 2017). Such discrepancy between official regulations and individuals' perceptions highlights the blurry nature of the frontier between what sport is and what it is not.

The evolution of the sports industry is such that the entire sports ecosystem has become commercialized. Nowadays, consumers follow organizations, events, teams and even players at the local, national and even international levels, with some athletes having the status of superstars (Giulanotti and Numerato, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Some authors have also mentioned and tested the uniqueness of sports consumers (Stewart and Smith, 1999; Smith and Stewart, 2010; Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, 2014; Pedersen and Thibault, 2014; Baker, McDonald and Funk, 2016; Fujak et al., 2018). Sports consumers are often described as unique in terms of passion and brand loyalty. However, research on the consumer's perception is scarce, and existing research only focuses on precise aspects of the sports experience (e.g. Kelley and Turley, 2001; Koo, Quarterman and Flynn, 2006; Zhou et al., 2020). Such scarcity makes unexamined how people categorize activities as sporty and how such categorization affects their evaluations and their willingness to engage in the activity. In this research, we propose that the sole perception of an activity as sporty – perceived sportivity – will influence consumers' perceptions. Therefore, our research aims to answer the question: "How does the perceived sportivity of a leisure activity influence consumers' evaluations and behavioral intentions?"

However, despite this lack of research on consumers' perception of sporty activities, many brands have entered the sports market in many forms. Some of them have entered the sports market through sponsoring, others through media or merchandise. The most prominent form of entering the sports market is through sponsoring, one of the biggest forms of sports investment for brands. In ancient Greece already, some forms of sponsoring already existed (Remijsen, 2015). The most famous example of such sponsoring in ancient times is the donations of Herod, the King of Judea, who donated huge amounts of money to Olympia for the organization of the Games. However, even though traces of modern sponsoring have existed since the 1860s (Tribou, 2002) most researchers agree that current modern sponsoring appeared and gained extreme popularity in the 1980s (Piquet, 1985; Desbordes, 2001). Sponsoring is a communication technique that aims at persuading an audience that a link exists between the event they attend and the company that is sponsoring the event. The objectives of sponsoring, for a company are mostly about recognition and brand image (Tribou, 2002). Sponsoring

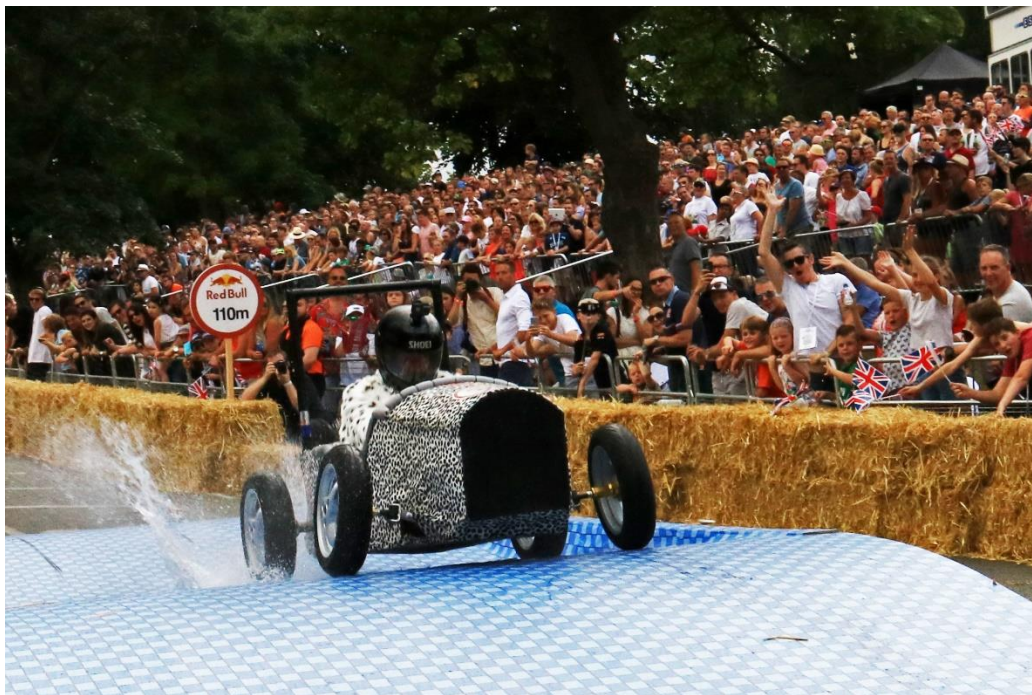
generates a favorable image for the sponsor at the brand level, but also at the corporate level, and the meanings held by the sponsored event can be transferred to a brand (Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Cornwell and Coote, 2005; Chien, Cornwell and Papu, 2011). According to a 2018 Statista study, global sponsorship spendings have been continuously growing since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, to reach \$65.8 billion in 2018 (versus \$37.9 billion in 2007). These numbers are expected to keep on growing at an average annual growth rate of 5%.

Sponsorship in sport, when done properly, has been shown to foster numerous positives outcomes for consumers and brands (Levin, Joiner and Camaron, 2001; Meenaghan, 2001; Chien, Cornwell and Papu, 2011; Lewis et al., 2012; Meng-Lewis, Thwaites and Gopalakrishna Pillai, 2013). More specifically, when there is congruence between the sponsor and the event, brand awareness (Meenaghan, 2001), brand image (Chien, Cornwell and Papu, 2011), brand recall (Levin, Joiner and Camaron, 2001) and brand identification are fostered, ultimately leading to improved willingness to buy (Lewis et al., 2012; Meng-Lewis, Thwaites and Gopalakrishna Pillai, 2013) products from the brand on the customer's side.

Besides classic sponsoring actions, brands and firms have at their disposal a multitude of strategies to invest and work with sports. Derived products are one of them (Pons and Richelieu, 2004). Sport-related products have grown tremendously over the past few years, especially with lifestyle products. People do not only buy sports products to do sport, they also buy sport-related products to show that they belong to certain communities and to express their identity (Wheaton, 2003, 2010, 2013). Sport lifestyle products have gained such popularity that it has become quite difficult to classify apparel as sporty or not. Brands such as Nike and Adidas, which respectively have an estimated value of \$30.4 billion and \$16.7 billion in 2021, (according to Statista, 2021) are leading the market.

Other brands, such as Red Bull, which are not specialized in apparel and retailing, have also embraced the sports industry (Gorse, Chadwick and Burton, 2010; Kunz, Elässer and Santomier, 2016). Originally an Austrian energy drinks brand, Redbull adopted an entrepreneurship strategy to enter the sports market (Gorse, Chadwick and Burton, 2010). To promote their products, the company created and sponsored many sports events, such as the Red Bull Crashed Ice or the Red Bull Air Race. They also sponsored existing sports, by buying sports entities such as the football club of Leipzig, the football club of Salzburg, and two

Formula One teams: Red Bull Racing, and Scuderia AlphaTauri. Red Bull strategy has been defined as a “best practice” by researchers (Kunz, Elässer and Santomier, 2016). Red Bull’s Strategy can be defined as a form of content marketing using branded entertainment. Red Bull has embraced the sports market to such a point that the company has even created its events on all types of sporty activities. Redbull events include a wide range of activities such as motorsports, parkour, paragliding, ice-skating and so on. Because these events are held by a company – with some of them focusing on activities that do not have a sport’s status – the sporty property of some of these events could be subject to debate. Therefore, a goal of our research is to provide a clear conceptualization of what sport means to consumers, and what triggers their perception of an activity as a sport. By doing so, we will be able to study all types of activity, even those that are not considered as a sport, under the prism of perceived sportivity.



*Figure 2: Redbull Soapbox Race: One of the many sporty events organized by Red Bull that gather tens of thousands of people every year*

Sports being massively broadcasted, many companies have also invested in media rights. According to a 2019 Xerfi study, media rights in the sports industry represented more than \$45 billion in the world and accounted for 30% of the global turnover of the sports industry. The popularity of sports entertainment has led many authors to explore consumers’ motivations for sports consumption (e.g. Wann, 1995; Trail and James, 2001; Allen, 2003; Kim, 2003; Mallet

et al., 2007; Seo and Green, 2008). However, to our knowledge, in all these studies, the sport's status of the object of study was only defined by the authors and not explicitly discussed.

What precedes highlights the long debates regarding the definition and the nature of sport. Many authors do not agree on the definition of sport (see Wertz, 1985; Best, 1985; and Platchias, 2003 for an example). Recently, some authors also discussed the sports construct. Kobiela (2018) for instance builds on the debate regarding chess and “mind sports” to discuss the global sports construct. In his view, sport has evolved so much, either from an institutional or individual point of view, that a complete reconceptualization and a redefinition of the sport object due to its growing importance. The debate regarding “mind sports” such as chess represents a perfect example of why the concept of sport should be redefined by sports philosophers.

Therefore, we here propose to provide a clear, consumer-based conceptualization of perceived sportivity. Such perceived sportivity could help researchers to study any leisure activity that shares similarities with sport but does not classify as a sport. Because this research is performed within the marketing discipline, we do not aim to give a final answer to the infinite debate regarding the nature of sport. Instead, we aim to propose a concept that will allow any researcher to study any leisure activity under the prism of sport. Real-life examples of the difficulty to define sport also exist. The example of Chess, highlighted before, is the most famous.

To study consumers' perception of sport, we will first explore sport from a sociological and historical point of view. We will see that, in the history of sport, there are elements that help in defining the object. Then, using Categorization Theory (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987; Cohen and Basu, 1987), we will focus on consumer subjective mental representations of what a sport is, what we refer to hereafter as perceived sportivity. Then, we will introduce our field of study, esports, and explain, using categorization theory, why this field represents an appealing opportunity for the study of perceived sportivity. In Chapter 3, we will explore consumer-behavioral intention models using existing research on customer experience and sports marketing to make predictions about the effects of perceived sportivity.

Through this research, we thus aim to answer the following problematic:

**To what extent does the perceived sportivity of a leisure activity influence consumers' evaluations of the activity, brand perception and behavioral intentions?**

To achieve this goal, in the second part of this research, because perceived sportivity remains to be fully conceptualized and measured, we will proceed with the development of the perceived sportivity measurement scale. This measure will next be applied in a real-life context to investigate if having consumers perceiving an activity as sporty can be of interest to brands. Finally, we will replicate this field study through an experiment, and discuss the results, as well as the limitations of this research and its future implications.

By doing so, this research aims to answer several gaps highlighted in this introduction. First, with our scale of perceived sportivity, we aim to study the perceptions of consumers regarding the nature of sport. As we have seen, sport has always been defined institutionally, and we argue that studying sport under the prism of consumers' perceptions and categorization could provide advantages for managers and researchers. Understanding consumers' perceptions and mental representations of sport can help brands and event organizers in their positioning by highlighting what makes an activity sporty for consumers and how people react to such sportivity. Finally, under the assumption – that our model will test – that perceiving an activity as sporty prompts consumers' engagement, one may argue that identifying what makes an activity perceived sporty could also have social implications. Positioning activities as sporty could make people more willing to engage, and thus be used to encourage consumers into health-related practices for example.





**PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT  
AND PERCEIVED  
SPORTIVITY – AN  
INDIVIDUAL  
PERCEPTION THROUGH  
CATEGORIZATION  
THEORY**

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esports as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the perceived sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the perceived sportivity scale to esports: the French League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- **CHAPTER 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport**
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  - Section 3: Sport through the lens of sociology – The meaning of sport
- Chapter 2: Categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes

# CHAPTER 1: SPORT AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY – THE CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SPORT

## Section 1: The interest of a research on sport – Economic and cultural importance of sport

### **1.1 The economics of sport**

In the general introduction, the emphasis was made on sport in terms of numbers to show its economic importance. However, much like any other complex and multidimensional commercial industry, the scale and scope of the global sports industry are impossible to discern with any degree of certitude (Andrews and Ritzer, 2018). Sport as a commercial entity is so complex that any journalistic estimation concerning its economical weight may only be speculation. For instance, some analysts suggest sports weigh about US\$480 billion (Collignon et al., 2011), while some others suggest they weigh about US\$1.5 trillion (Anon, 2015).

However, researchers agree that sport, as an industry, constitutes a significant element of economic and cultural life within advanced consumer economies (Smart, 2007). Concerning football, the UEFA Euro 2020, considered the most-watched event in history, had an estimated audience of 5.23 billion people worldwide, according to the Union of European Football Association. Similarly, the fifteenth most-watched television broadcasts of all time all appear to be sporting events.

Dates	Broadcasted event	Estimated audience (billions)	Reference
11/06/2021 – 11/07/2021	UEFA Euro 2020	5.23	UEFA (2021)
07/09/2016 – 18/09/2016	Rio 2016 Summer Paralympics	4.1	IPC (2017)
27/07/2012 – 12/08/2012	London 2012 Summer Olympics	3.6	IOC (2012)
05/08/2016 – 21/08/2016	Rio 2016 Summer Olympics	3.6	Statista (2018)
14/06/2018 – 15/07/2018	Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup	3.572	FIFA (2018)
08/08/2008 – 24/08/2008	Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics	3.51	IOC (2012)
19/07/1996 – 04/08/1996	Atlanta 1996 Summer Olympics	3.5	Hajeski (2013)
15/09/2000 – 01/10/2000	Sydney 2000 Summer Olympics	3.5	Stavroulakis (2003)
13/08/2004 – 29/08/2004	Athens 2004 Summer Olympics	3.5	Ritzer (2008)
10/06/1998 – 12/07/1998	France 1998 FIFA World Cup	3.4	Kotabe and Helsen (2004)
11/06/2010 – 11/07/2010	South Africa 2010 FIFA World Cup	3.2	
12/06/2014 – 13/07/2014	Brazil 2014 FIFA World Cup	3.2	FIFA (2015)
31/05/2002 – 30/06/2002	2002 FIFA World Cup (Korea & Japan)	3	Luxbacher (2005)
09/06/2006 – 09/07/2006	Germany 2006 FIFA World Cup	3	Statista (2018)
30/05-2019 – 14/07/2019	ICC Cricket World Cup 2019	2	ICC (2019)

*Table 1: The 15 most-watched television broadcasts of all time*

All the events highlighted in Table 1 appear to be sports mega-events, which attract billions of people. Mega-events are defined as “large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events, which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance” (Roche, 2000, p.1). Mega-events appear to have two main characteristics: they have significant consequences for the host city, region, or nation in which they occur and they attract considerable media coverage (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). The first research on sports events focused on mega-events and their economic (Roche, 1994, 2000, 2003, 2006), political (Black, 2007) and sociological outcomes (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). The importance of media coverage in sport can be highlighted by the amount of money paid by media to acquire television rights. In the US only, NBC spent more than US\$2 billion for the broadcasting of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and the 2012 London Olympics. In comparison, the amount paid for the 1978 Lake Placid Winter Olympics and the 1980 Moscow Olympics was US\$87.5 million (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006). Media rights exploded with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, the first financially profitable Olympics in history (Terret, 2019).

The 1984 Los Angeles marked a first shift in the orientation of the global sports product, and the acceptance of forms of commercialization (Wenn, 2015). Indeed, Los Angeles being the only candidate for hosting the Games in 1984, organizers gained more liberty and modified the business model of the Games. This business model rested on three pillars: “maximum usage of refurbished as opposed to new athletic venues, the pursuit of maximum television revenue, and the reconfiguration of an organizing committee’s corporate sponsor program.” That all had the same objective, make the event profitable (Wenn, 2015). The following table provides an overview of the construction costs, television rights and sponsoring revenues of the 1984 Los Angeles games compared to the previous editions in Montreal and Moscow

City (year)	Construction Costs	Television Rights	Sponsoring Revenue
Montreal (1976)	\$1,500,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$5,000,000
Moscow (1980)	\$1,708,596,472	\$100,2000,000	/
Los Angeles (1984)	\$92,973,000	\$286,900,000	\$157,200,000

*Table 2: Cost / Revenue comparison between Montreal, Moscow, and Los Angeles Olympic Games (from Wenn,2015)*

This table shows how the Olympic Games became profitable, by cutting construction costs, enhancing competition for television rights, and encouraging sponsoring. As a result, more cities applied for being host cities in the following years.

Olympic year	Date of the award of host city status	Winter	Summer
1972	1964	4	4
1976	1970	4	3
1980	1974	1	2
1984	1978	3	1
1988	1981	3	2
1992	1986	6	6
1994	1988	4	–
1996	1990	–	6
1998	1991	5	–
2000	1993	–	5
2002	1995	9	–
2004	1997	–	11
2006	1999	6	–
2008	2001	–	10
2010	2003	8	–
2012	2005	–	9

*Table 3: Declared Olympic bid cities for the Olympic and Olympic Winter Games, 1972–2012. (from Wenn, 20015)*

This first development in the Olympic Movement marks the first link between marketing and sport, notably through sponsoring elements. Since then, sports mega-events have been an object of research in marketing and management, and researchers have for example shown how they affect the host city brand awareness and brand image (Kenyon and Bodet, 2018; Andersson, Bengtsson and Svennson, 2021), or how they tend to be promoted as generators of significant business legacies (Merendino, Bek and Timms, 2016).

However, authors have also started to work on non-mega events, or small-scale events due to their multiplication over the years and their influence on residents' quality of life (Taks, Chalip and Green, 2015; Taks, 2017), city perception and destination image (Mainolfi and Marino, 2020), and even their positive influence on sponsor perception (Close et al., 2006). Therefore, brands could gain by associating themselves with even local events through sponsoring, as they influence the way consumers perceive them.

Mason (1999) was among the first to study sport as a product by studying the marketing of professional sports leagues. In his view, professional sports teams unite to produce what he calls a "League product", an entertainment sold to four distinct groups: fans, television and media, communities and then corporations. Sports Leagues, in that sense, "provide a unique

environment for marketing decisions and processes to occur, in many markets and at many levels, and should continue to be a growing segment within the broader, global, entertainment industry” (Mason, 1999). More recently, Beech and Chadwick (2007) used marketing theory from Kotler et al. (2006) to introduce the entirety of sports products. Sports products can be either tangible or intangibles. Sport tangible products can also be classified based on the type of benefits consumers gain from using them. The following figure provides an overview of this categorization.

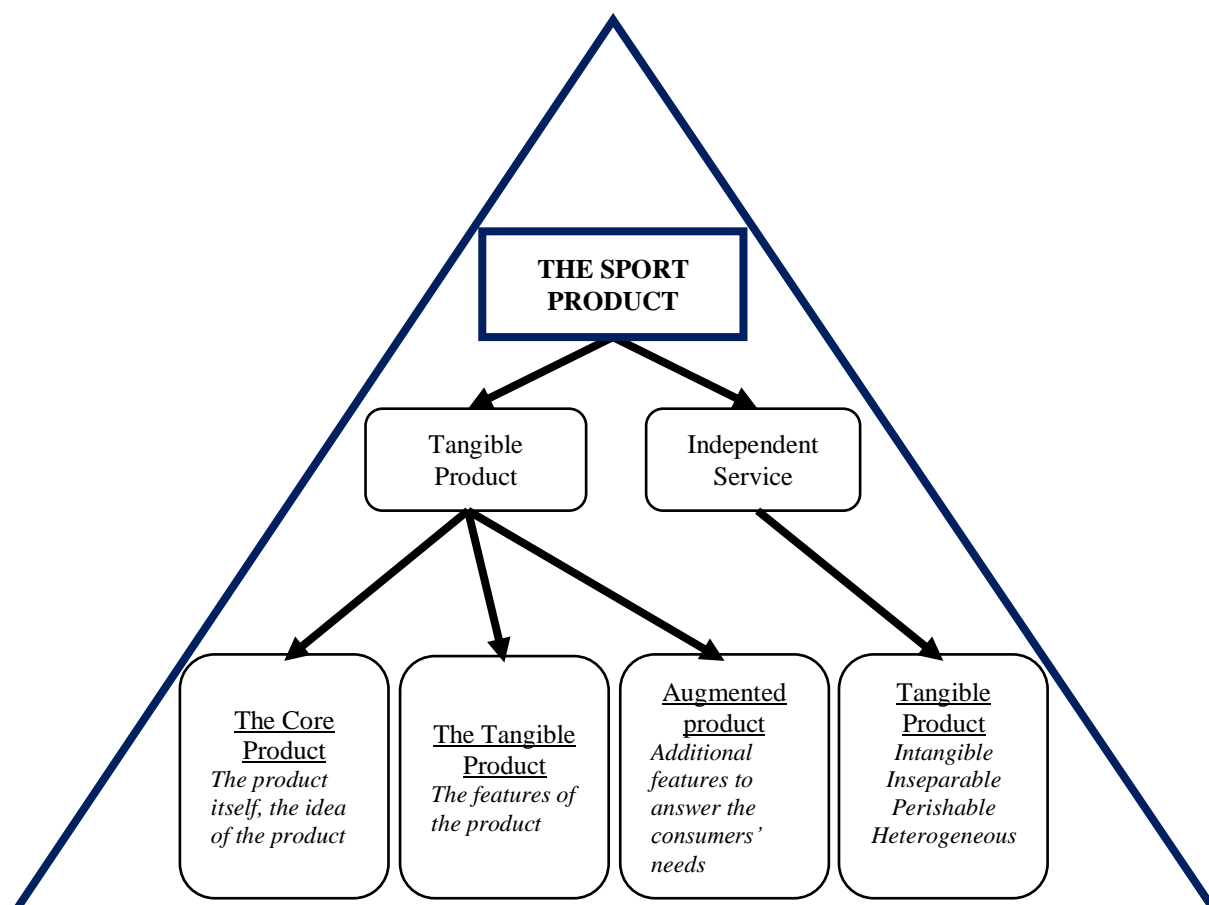
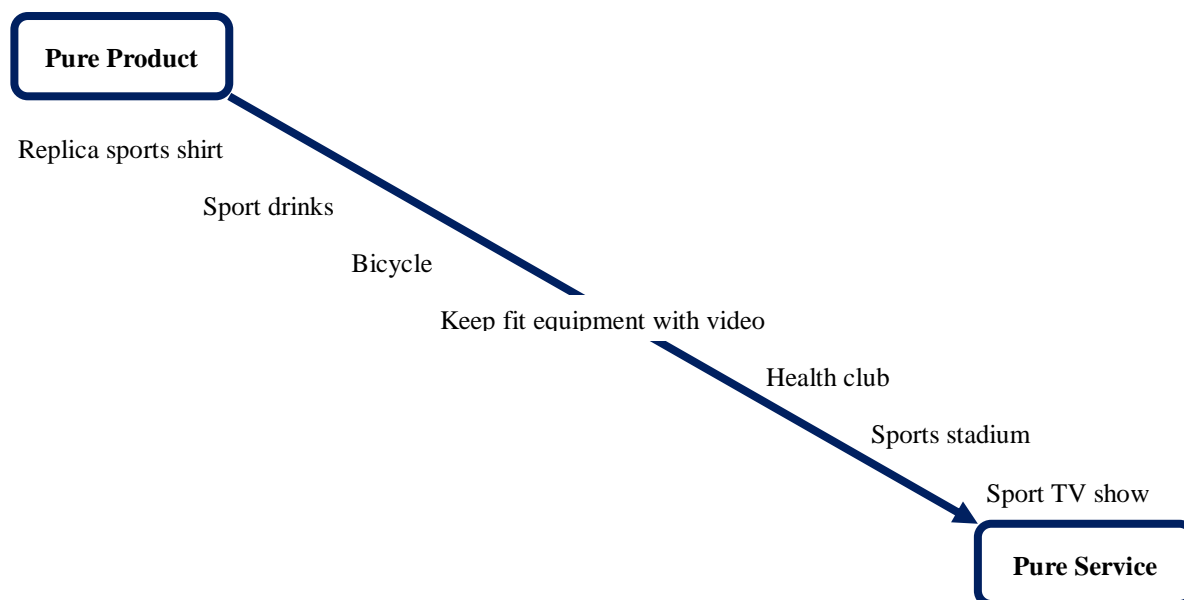


Figure 3: Product categorization based on Kotler et al. (2006) (from Beech and Chadwick, 2007)

As we can see from Figure 3, the sports product can take up all types of forms and contains a wide range of categories. Beech and Chadwick (2007) also propose a different categorization called the sport product-services continuum. This model proposes a sport-product categorization based on the product/service difference.





*Figure 4: Sport Product-Service Continuum (from Beech and Chadwick, 2007)*

Therefore, the sports product seems to take many forms and can be either a pure physical good, a pure service, or even a mix between the two, which offers many opportunities for brands to involve themselves.

## 1.2 The cultural importance of sport and its marketing opportunities

Some authors also argue that sport is not just a product anymore, it represents a certain culture with its values sought after by brands (Marshall and Cook, 1992; Wheaton, 2003, 2010; Bouchet, Hillairret and Bodet, 2013; Evens, Iosfidis and Smith, 2013; Wheaton and Thorpe, 2018). Marshall and Cook (1992) were among the first to acknowledge the importance of sport for brands, and more precisely the importance of sponsoring for brands, even from a purely utilitarian point of view. In their opinion, two main reasons encourage companies to invest in sport through sponsorship. First, sport allows companies to gain access to a specific target. Secondly, sport help companies enhance their corporate image. This brand image enhancement can be attributed to the values that people and society give to sport. Indeed, sport is associated with certain values and generates certain benefits for people, communities and organizations.

Evens, Iosfidis and Smith (2013), building on MacClancy (1996), Sugden and Bairner (1999) and Roche (1998) propose an overview of the social values and benefits of sport in society.

<b>Individual engager</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>National</b>
Achievement	Bequest value	Citizenship
Continuity with the past	Community cohesion	International reputation
Creativity	Community identity	National pride
Diversion	Creativity	
Enjoyment	Employment	
Escape	Existence value	
Expression	Innovation	
Health	Option to use	
Income	Productivity	
Inspiration	Reduced crime	
Knowledge of culture	Shared experience	
Self-esteem	Social capital	
Self-identity		
Skills/competency		
Solace/consolation		

*Table 4: The social values and benefits of sport (from Evens, Iosfidis and Smith, 2013)*

Therefore, sport is associated with a large set of values and shares many meanings that can be useful for companies.

From a marketing point of view, recent research has started to explore the relations between sport and brands, and more precisely how sponsoring affects brand image through image transfer (Smith, 2004; Carrillat, Harris and Lafferty, 2010; Arai, Ko and Ross, 2013; Dos Santos et al., 2016; Tsordia, Papadimitriou and Parganas, 2018).

In this regard, Smith (2004) – following recommendations from Marshall and Cook (1992) on brand image development through sponsoring – was among the firsts to study the actual effects of sport sponsoring on brand image. First, building on Keller's (1998, p.93) definition of brand image as “perception about a brand as reflected by the brand's associations held in consumer memory”, he defines brand image transfer as a “transfer of meanings” between an entity (the

sponsored) and a brand (the sponsor) (Smith, 2004, p.459). Then, using this definition, he builds a framework of Brand Image Transfer through sponsoring.

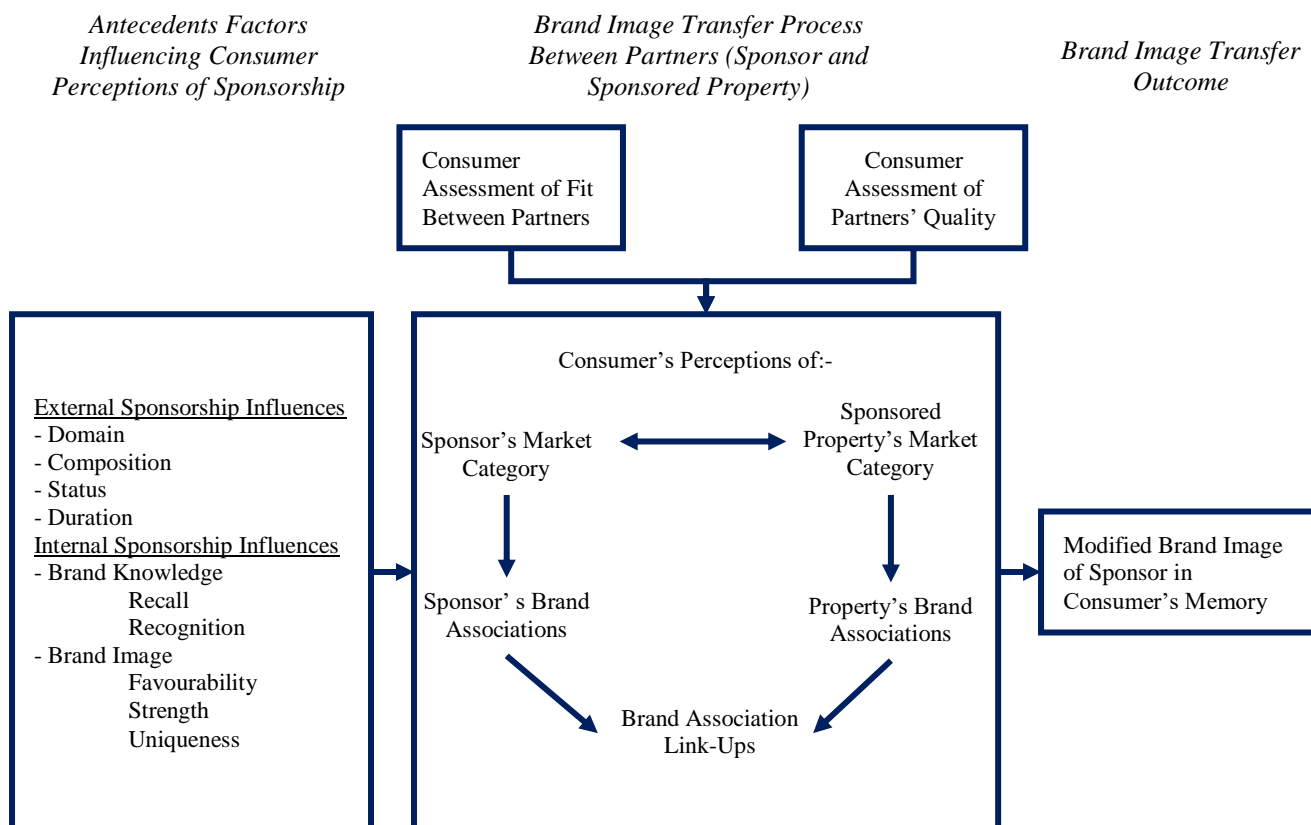


Figure 5: The Brand Image Transfer through Sponsoring Framework (from Smith, 2004)

The above figure not only highlights the brand image transfer process in itself but also introduces some antecedents and consequences to that transfer. Antecedents of brand image transfer have two forms, they can either come from outside the sponsorship's influence or be internal, that is they relate to the brand. Concerning the consequences of a brand image transfer, they mostly concern the modified brand image of the sponsor in the consumer's mind. Moreover, two factors seem to act as possible moderators in a brand image transfer process. The first factor concerns the perceived fit between the sponsor and the sponsored in the consumer's mind. The second factor relates more to the overall perception of the quality of the two partners.

Sports entities are usually associated with elements such as health and well-being, fun, or dynamism (Seippel, 2006), which are positive values. For any given brand, being associated with such values represents a great opportunity.

Since the 1990s and the emergence of lifestyle sports (Wheaton, 2003), sports also represent different lifestyles and do not share the same values between them, offering thus even more opportunities for brands to be associated with different positive values. For instance, lifestyle sports focus more on values such as authenticity (Wheaton, 2003), youth, (Wheaton and Thorpe, 2018) freedom (Wheaton, 2010), anti-competitiveness and anti-regulation (Wheaton, 2004). On the contrary, some other brands that directly operate on more competitive sports – like Red Bull being active in football, flying contests and Formula 1 – may rather be associated with values of excitement and roughness.

Therefore, any brand could potentially gain from an association with a sports entity, and the sports market still represents a huge opportunity for brands to create their image in the consumer's mental representation. Even sports brands nowadays represent a central element of the modern sports business and a ubiquitous component of contemporary global culture (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet, 2013). In 2000, Adidas and Nike ranked respectively sixth and fifteenth worldwide among the brands that contributed the most to well-being, improvement and quality of life (Pernès, 2000). Similarly, Nike is one of the few brands in the world that records one of the highest recognition rates among teenagers (Bouchet, Hillairet and Bodet, 2013). Sports brands have become so important that they now represent means of identity expression and community belonging for consumers, highlighting once more the opportunities offered by the global sports market for brands.

Moreover, brand sponsoring has been shown to foster important consumer outcomes (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Pope and Voghes, 2000; Smith, Graetz and Westerbeek, 2008; Olson, 2010; Chien, Cornwell and Papu, 2011). More precisely, corporate sponsorship generates a favorable image for the sponsor, both at the corporate and brand levels (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). Moreover, building on Categorization Theory, Chien, Cornwell and Papu (2011) showed that sponsoring, when done correctly, has a positive effect on both brand personality and brand meaning for companies. Some authors have also highlighted the influence of brand sport sponsoring on purchase intention of products related to the sponsor (Pope and Voghes, Slith, Graetz and Westerbeek, 2008). Finally, Olson (2010) also showed how sponsoring has a similar effect in both sports contexts and other cultural contexts.

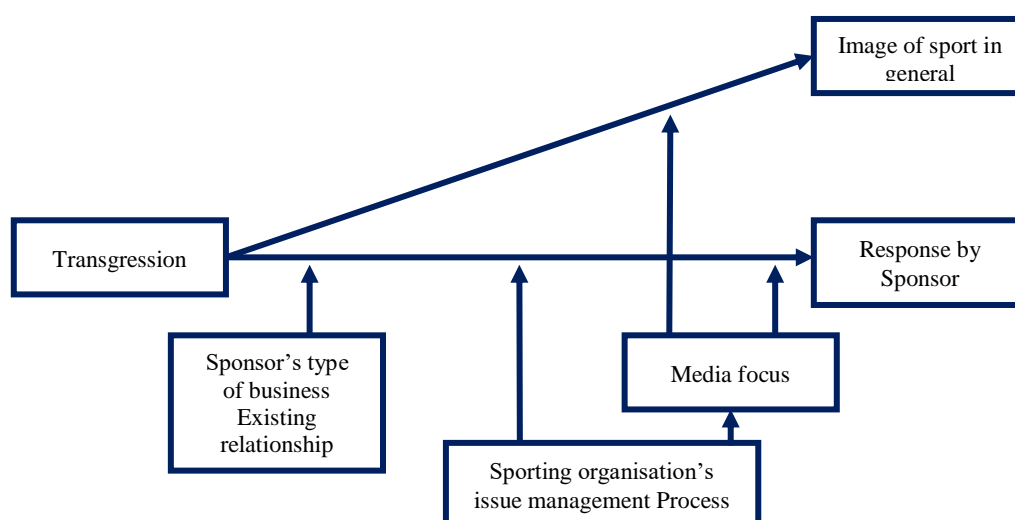
As we have seen previously, sport represents a great opportunity for brands to build their own identity based on values and meanings that appeal to consumers. However, Using mediums

such as sponsoring to build such identity can also lead to issues for brands. Brands often sponsor athletes, teams, or entities with which they share associations (Wilson, Stavros and Westberg, 2008; Chien, Cornell and Papu, 2011; Arai, Ko and Ross, 2013). However, when the sponsored entity transgress, negative outcomes also arise for brands (Wilson, Stavros and Westberg, 2008). One of the most recent examples of player transgression occurred in 2009 when Tiger Woods was caught for infidelity with several women (Carrillat, D'Astous and Lazure, 2013). While most of the major brands that were involved with Tiger Woods decided to sever their ties with him, Nike decided to stay faithful to its athlete, and even tried to rehabilitate him with a marketing campaign a year later.



*Figure 6: The 2010 Nike Commercial after Tiger Wood's scandal*

Different research focused on the consequences of player and teams transgression for brands (Wilson, Stavros and Westberg, 2008; Messner and Reinhard, 2012; Carrillat, D'Astous and Lazure, 2013; Lohneiss and Hill, 2014). For example, Wilson, Stavros and Westberg (2008), after highlighting how player transgression could lead to disrupted organizational operations and even bad reputation for brands, built a model of sponsor response to transgression, encompassing all the factors that influence sponsors' responses.



*Figure 7: Sponsor response to transgression Model (from Wilson, Stavros and Westberg (2008))*

Companies' responses to transgressions, therefore, depend on different elements, such as the existing relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored, the sponsor's type of business, the sponsored issue management process, and the level of media focus. Other authors have also explored sponsor responses to players and teams' transgressions (Messner and Reinhard, 2012; Carrillat, D'Astous and Lazure, 2013; Lohness and Hill, 2014). Mesnier and Reinhard (2012) for example showed how strategic exiting from a controversial sponsorship can have positive consequences for the sponsor's image when the decision is trusted, but detrimental consequences when the exiting is attributed to overly self-serving reasons. Going further, Carrillat, D'Astous and Lazure (2013) studied the moderating effect of brand-endorser congruence in the relation between revoking endorsement and brand attitude and purchase intentions. Results showed that when brand-endorser congruence is high, the firm's decision to revoke the endorsement is suboptimal concerning brand attitude and purchase intention. However, results also showed that denying the truth of the negative event lowers the trustworthiness of the endorser, which in turn lowers attitude toward the brand as well as the intention to purchase the brand's products. Lohness and Hill (2014) used the Tiger Woods scandal to study the effects of sponsor transgression on brand image and purchase intention and found that using a transgressive sponsor led to decreased brand image and decreased purchase intention toward the brands. However, they also found that even though purchase intention is lowered, athlete endorsers who have transgressed continue to drive sales.

Despite these risks, companies still massively use sponsoring for the opportunities it gives to brands, and we have also seen that even problematic sponsoring can lead to positive outcomes for brands if managed properly, thus highlighting once more its importance and opportunities.

As we have seen in this first section, brands use sport extensively to appropriate its values and to highlight them in their products and services. Sport, therefore, represents a preferential medium for brands to shape their identity and influence their image with consumers. Indeed, all the values mentioned above, linked to sport, are values that a large majority of brands would like to be associated with. Thus, via a congruence effect, sport represents a privileged ground for brands to improve their image with consumers, and consequently to influence their behavioral intentions.

However, to fully understand sport, what it can offer to brands and all the characteristics it encompasses, it is necessary to go back to its origins and study its diffusion from both a historical and sociological point of view. We will go into that historical approach first in the next session. Then, we will explore it under the prism of sociology. Finally, we will use a perception-based approach by focusing on categorization theory to justify the study of perceived sportivity as a categorization tool for consumers.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- **Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport**

- Section 1: The interest of a research on sport – Economic and cultural importance of sport

- **Section 2: An historical approach of sport – Emergence, diffusion and institutions**

- Section 3: Sport through the lens of sociology – The meaning of sport

- Chapter 2: Categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport

- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes



## Section 2: An historical approach of sport – Emergence, diffusion and institutions

As we highlighted before, sport – as a product –encompasses a multitude of elements. However, to understand how the sports product became so big, examining its history and evolution is needed. Nevertheless, we are aware that a mere thesis chapter is not sufficient to address the entire history of sport, which has already been studied by many authors (Kretchmar et al., 2017; Mechikoff, 2019; Terret, 2019). Moreover, it would be presumptuous to assume that a marketing doctoral dissertation would have this purpose as well. For this reason, we will focus on the major stages of the evolution of sport, acknowledging the risk of forgetting some passages that might yet be considered important.

### 2.1 The definition of sport:

Etymologically, the term sport is not English, and comes from “disport”, or “desport”, two terms that date back to the Middle Ages in France and were used to designate any type of distraction or amusement. (Terret, 2019). In the 19th century, the English term “sport” designates "a set of amusements, exercises and simple pleasures that absorb a rather notable portion of the time of rich and idle men", according to Larousse's *“Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXè siècle”*. It is only at the beginning of the 20th century, during the period between the two World Wars that some authors try to define sport. Among them, Pierre de Coubertin (1922) defines sport as "the voluntary and habitual cult of intensive muscular effort, based on the desire of progress". George Hébert (1925), one of the most famous opponents of the English sports model, defines it as: "Any kind of physical exercise or activity whose purpose is the achievement of a performance and whose execution is essentially based on the idea of a struggle against a defined element: a distance, a duration, an obstacle, a material difficulty, an animal danger, an opponent, and by extension, oneself". In these first definitions, we can already see the emergence of two aspects that will be at the center of contemporary reflections on the definition of sport: physical effort and performance.

It is especially in the 1960s that most reflections regarding the current definition of sport emerged (Terret, 2019). Indeed, it was at that time that the reflection on sport took several different directions, through historical (Ulmann, 1965), sociological (Magnane, 1964), psychological (Bouet, 1968), and philosophical (Jeu, 1977) analyses. At that time, the main

questions concerned the nature of sport, and the elements allowing the categorization of any given activity as a sport. It is thus with these works that we saw some first global definitions of sport, taking into account many elements. For some, sport is defined by the reasons that push an individual to its practice. It is for example the position of the National Institute of Sports and Physical Education (INSEP), which, following its survey on the sports practices of the French people in 1986, defines sport as being "What people do when they say they do sports" (Irlinger, Louveau, Métoudi, 1987). This definition of sport is the first to propose sport as a perception of its practitioners. In that sense, sport is any type of activity that people categorize as a sport. This very broad definition is in contradiction with the thoughts of many authors who see sport under a more institutional prism (e.g. Brohm, 1976; Parlebas, 2003).

However, this stance on the definition of sport as an institutionalized practice has increasingly been questioned, particularly with the emergence of new practices that have been taking place since the 1960s in reaction to sports institutions (Terret, 2019). Moreover, the valorization of the playful side of activities also gives rise to a debate on the consideration of professional sport. It is notably these limits that led the INSEP, as we have seen, in its 1987 study, to define sport as "what a person does when he or she says he or she does sport" (Irlinger, Louveau and Métoudi, 1987).

Thus, two definitions of sport can be adopted. The first would represent an extended definition, where sport encompasses any type of physical activity performed for recreational, hygienic, or competitive purposes and within a minimal regulatory framework. The second would be more restricted, where sport would be the set of physical practices, codified, institutionalized, performed for performance or competition and organized to guarantee equality between participants (Terret, 2019). Because the first definition of sport allows for the inclusion of any given activity as an object of study and also appeals to people's perception and categorization of leisure activities, our research on perceived sportivity will adopt this particular definition.

## **2.2 The genesis of contemporary sport**

Sport, as defined previously, takes its roots in the English bourgeoisie of the 18th century with rural activities such as fox hunting and turf (Elias and Dunning, 1986). These activities, over time, will progressively adopt more codes and principles, leading to the first sporting regulations and institutions. At that time, proxies, mostly animals, were used whether for races

or fights. Over time, these activities began to integrate coaches, animal lines, stables, and more organized meetings, thus leading to a first specialization and rationalization of practices.

Later on, English companies also adopted these practices, creating inter-company meetings in which the best employees competed in racing or boxing events. It is in this type of meetings that the first money flows linked to sport were born, with the appearance of bookmakers who flourished everywhere in England. As far as matches were concerned, they were becoming so important in the rural population that simple boxing matches between companies could have up to 20,000 spectators. The market for inter-company matches pushed even the most efficient workers to offer themselves to the highest bidder, thus pushing owners to recruit outside their domestic pool, marking the first rupture with tradition (Terret, 2019). We are witnessing here the beginnings of a real market, with notably a professionalization of physical preparation and increased regulation and codification of matches. It is in this perspective that the stopwatch, the table of records, and the notion of handicap appeared to preserve the equality of chances between the participants. A first world boxing championship took place in 1810 in front of 25,000 spectators, with a match between Tom Molineux and Tom Cribb that lasted 33 rounds.



Figure 8: Illustration of the fight between Tom Molineux and Tom Cribb

At the same time, we also witnessed the emergence of the first institutions that aimed at regulating these new activities. These institutions followed the example of the *English Jokey Club*, founded in 1750, the *Royal and Ancient Golf Club*, founded in 1754, or the *Marylebone Cricket Club*, founded a few years later, in 1788. For example, the *National Swimming Society (NSS)*, founded in 1838, was the first national institution created to regulate an activity. It

organized, as early as 1839, swimming competitions, and then even a real professional championship (Terret, 1994).

However, this process is not the only one that explains the emergence of contemporary sport. Indeed, in the prestigious English schools, often called Public Schools, another phenomenon occurred during the 19th Century. It is in particular in the schools of Winchester, Westminster, or Rugby, that new collective physical practices developed between 1820 and 1860, most often at the initiative of students. (McIntosh, 1968). It was from the 1820s onwards that these practices, very often inspired by the “soule”, a traditional rural game, changed their status and lost their spontaneity to become major elements of the British educational system. As early as 1828, Thomas Arnold, the principal of the Rugby School, decided to regulate spontaneous football games for the first time by setting up various elements: rules, duration, refereeing, with a codification of the phases of violence to reduce them.

It is moreover in the city Rugby that, in 1845, the first written regulation of football-rugby was born. In England, in the 19th century, two distinct sports cultures emerged, one professional and popular within companies, and another, amateur and elitist within public schools. These two cultures met and came into conflict at the end of the 1860s. On the one hand, we were witnessing a multiplication of university meetings, facilitated by a more developed railway network. On the other hand, we counted more and more students who wished to continue practicing their favorite activity once they returned to civilian life (Terret, 2019). Moreover, it was this extension of the university practice in civil life that generated the birth of several sports clubs such as, for example, the Blackheath Club in 1858, created by former students of Rugby. It is in this same logic that in London, in 1863, former students of Oxford and Cambridge agreed on the rules of the *Football Association* (FA), but also on the establishment of a calendar. However, there were disagreements regarding some rules, especially the use of hands, which led to the split of the FA, and by extension the creation of the Rugby Football Union in 1871.

Many sports followed the same process as football-rugby. For example, the *Amateur Athletic Club* was founded in 1866 to manage athletics, the *Associated Metropolitan Swimming Club* in 1869, which became the *Amateur Swimming Club* in 1882 to regulate swimming and the *Amateur Rowing Association* in 1882 for rowing. Many other sports followed until the end of the 19th century (Terret, 2019). These associations, mostly born at the initiative of the British upper middle classes, were all based on an amateur ethic, advocating for fair play, respect for

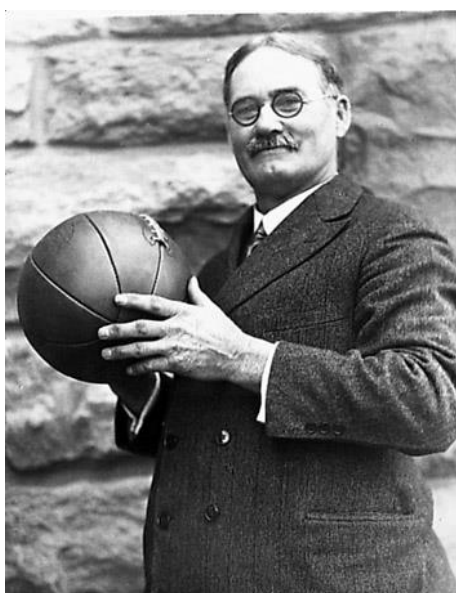
the rules, the opponent and the referee, as well as the control of impulses. This conflicted with the culture of gain associated with popular professional practices. The first federations of the time very often forbade practitioners from earning money.

The working classes were therefore the first victims of the firmness of the new sports institutions, and a conflict broke out during the first democratization of sport in the United Kingdom between 1870 and 1890. It was after the refusal of the *Rugby Football Union* to reimburse the compensation for the loss of earnings of the participants in 1895, that the *Northern Union* was born, which later became the *Rugby League*, and which organized a professional practice of rugby, *The Rugby League* (with 13 players instead of 15). Football, on the other hand, was already becoming the preferred sport of the working classes, forcing the *Football Association* to quickly modify its statutes so that workers' clubs could be created. It led to the explosion of football clubs throughout the country. For example, the city of Birmingham had one football club in 1874, compared to 150 in 1880 (Birley, 1993). From then on, a specialized press was born in the 1880s with newspapers such as *Sportsman* or *Sporting Life*, and the first forms of hooliganism even appeared. Football then became the first form of leisure activity in England and subsequently throughout Great Britain (Holt, 1989). It is this model that was exported to the rest of the West and then to the rest of the world.

### **2.3 Sport as a cultural asset - The spread of sport beyond Great-Britain and resistance toward the English model: the example of France**

British sport, from the 19th century onwards, extended beyond the borders of Great Britain and then of Europe to become a worldwide phenomenon. Three channels were privileged for this diffusion. First, the United Kingdom, with its colonial empire, used sport as a means of “education” in the colonies (Terret, 2019). Large parts of the British colonial administrators were trained in public schools, and they quickly understood the usefulness of sports in a logic of control and assimilation of local populations. The ethics of sports were intimately linked to the UK colonial project (Mangan, 1986). This is how we saw the appearance of English sports in African and Asian countries, such as cricket, for example, whose first Indian club was founded in 1848 and which later became a national sport with a vocation to “educate” and bring the “indigenous” peoples closer to British values.

The second channel of diffusion was similar to the first since it concerned British immigration to its former colonies, such as the United States and Australia. In this post-colonial climate, the primary objective of sport was to pacify relations with the new countries and their leaders, which may explain a stronger evolution of practices in these countries than in others. This is for example the case of Football Rugby, practiced in the 1860s in the United States, which became American Football 20 years later, a sport in its own right, independent of rugby. The parallel can also be drawn with Australian football, which experienced a unique and independent development from Rugby in Australia (Terret, 2019). In turn, former colonies also used sport in a quest for cultural imperialism (Gems, 2006). In the United States, for example, sport was a means of propagating the values of white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant society. It was used by the *Young Men's Christian Association* to develop a project even more secularized than the British one. In the United States, for example, from 1887 onwards, physical educators were professionalized in a school: the *International College of Springfield Massachusetts*. It is in this school that basketball was born in 1891, followed closely by volleyball in 1895. The leaders of the *Springfield College* planned to introduce basketball in Europe, especially in Paris, in a cultural conquest logic but failed. Basketball was only established later in Europe, after the First World War (Chavinier, 2008).



*Figure 9: Dr. James Naismith, the inventor of Basketball*

Finally, the last channel of diffusion of British sports concerned its commercial exchanges with foreigners, and in particular Europeans. Indeed, from the end of the 19th century, we witnessed the birth of the sports movement in most of the industrialized countries of Europe, i.e. the

countries that traded the most with the United Kingdom (Terret, 2019). Thus, in Switzerland, we witnessed the foundation of athletics clubs and football clubs by former English students, as well as the creation of the *Royal Belgian Yacht Club* in Belgium in 1851, or the birth of the *Antwerp Football Club* in 1880. This phenomenon was observed throughout Europe and we can affirm that, from the beginning of the 20th century, athletic sports, whether in their amateur or professional form, affected almost all of the industrialized European countries (Guttmann, 1994).

However, in these same European countries, other models were created before the arrival of British sports: the large "gymnastic" systems. These systems were present in many European countries, with for example the model of Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852) in Germany, the one of Henrik Ling (1776-1839) in Sweden, or the one of Francisco Amoros (1770-1848) in France (Terret, 2019). In France, gymnastic was quickly institutionalized by the military school of *Joinville-le-Pont*, in 1852 (Simonet, 1998), then by the *Union des Sociétés de Gymnastique de France*, founded in 1873. These two entities worked, at first, to slow down the diffusion of the English sports model in the French territory.

It is especially during the Second Empire (1852-1870) that a commercial gymnastics market emerged in France, through the implementation of places dedicated to practice. This emergence was facilitated by the post-epidemic sanitary context linked to the cholera disease of this period, and the supposed hygienic benefits of gymnastics for the bodies of an increasingly health-attentive bourgeoisie (Vigarello, 1978). More precisely, it was from the year 1847 that the heading "gymnastics" appeared in the general directory of commerce in France (Andrieu, 1988). However, the first French gymnasiums were mostly run by Germans or Swiss, most of them former soldiers, and were not unanimously accepted by the public. It was especially thanks to the implementation of commercial strategies based on health, coupled with the establishment of partnerships with doctors and institutions acting as authorities in matters of hygiene, that gymnastics encountered its public (Defrance, 1987). The services offered in gymnasiums remained very diverse at that time. Indeed, one could practice rational exercises, as well as the handling of the dumbbells, massages, or baths (Andrieu, 1988). Gymnasiums were generally open all day, and although some were exceptions, they were generally reserved for men. A few years later, gymnastics became more and more legitimate, with the creation of the CAEG: the Certificate of Aptitude for Teaching Gymnastics, in 1869, which could only be obtained at the military school of *Joinville-le-Pont*. Moreover, the introduction of compulsory gymnastics in

secondary schools following the decree of February 1869 allowed the creation of a real job market around this new practice.

After the fall of the French Second Empire, gymnastics were organized in coherence with the Third Republic, in a more patriotic form, very different from the English sport. Moreover, physical exercise which was until then reserved for the most well-off classes was also democratized among the working classes for several reasons (Charpier, 1997). First of all, its practice was encouraged among the working classes because it made it possible through the rationalization of gestures and the learning of obedience to a master, to respond to the economic logic of the time. Moreover, at the same time, the working-class populations, which were expressing increasing desires of sociability and solidarity, found refuge in these gymnastic structures, very largely accepted and defended by public authorities. As early as 1873, several gymnastics societies grouped within a national federal movement: the *Union des Sociétés de Gymnastique de France* (USGF), under the impetus of Eugène Paz (1835-1901), a journalist commissioned by the Ministry of Public Instruction five years earlier to conduct a study on gymnastics in France. At the same time, Paz launched the first specialized magazine, "*Le Moniteur de la gymnastique*". The USGF was recognized as a patriotic organization in 1889 and became directly financed by the War Ministry that same year. Just before the First World War, the USGF had more than 2400 gymnastics societies, to which we could add 3000 structures belonging to the *Union des Sociétés de Tir*, an institution with the same goals as the USGF. Finally, in parallel to the USGF, regional structures emerged in the 1860s, such as the *Association des Gymnastes Alsaciens* in 1864, and the *Association des Gymnastes du Nord* in 1880.

The military and civil authorities locally supported all these gymnastics societies with which they shared their ideals. They also participated in the diffusion of values dear to the society of the beginning of the III<sup>rd</sup> Republic: respect for hierarchy and regulations, the cult of effort, solidarity, and patriotism. (Callède, 1987). Their functioning also transformed them into a great place of socialization and integration into French society. (Arnaud, 1986, 1987). Indeed, hierarchy and strict compliance with the company's internal regulations governed the internal life of these associations, and any breach of the rules of conduct was punished. Adherence to the republican norms of the time was reflected at all levels of the gymnastics societies, even in their names or mottos: e.g. *La jeunesse patriotique*, *Honneur et patrie*, *Tout pour la patrie*. These societies remained essentially masculine and worked to promote virile masculinity



exacerbated within their members. However, we can also note the beginning of a feminine gymnastics movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Indeed, France counted about a hundred feminine structures in 1911, according to an article of the magazine "*Le Gymnaste*" published the same year, which remained derisory compared to the thousands of masculine gymnastics societies that existed. Nevertheless, in 1912, the *Union Française de Gymnastique Féminine* (UFGF) was created, at the initiative of Master Podesta, founder of a gymnastics association in Le Havre (Terret, 2019), which was quickly recognized by the USGF.

However, even though the gymnastics and the sports models remained dominated by men, they were opposed in terms of social recruitment. Indeed, while English sports advocated for elitism and amateurism, and were exclusive to a wealthy class, the practitioners of gymnastics were generally young adults under 35 years of age from working-class backgrounds, close to military values, republican, and of French origin. Gymnastics would follow the model of sport only from 1942, when the USGF became the *Fédération Française de Gymnastique* (FFG).

Despite the arrival of the great gymnastic models in France, the French bourgeoisie experimented, in its closed circle, the British sports model with activities that represented the beginnings of sport from the middle of the 19th century. For example, the *Jockey Club of Paris* was founded in 1834 and was accompanied in the following years by the first cycling and rowing races. These first institutions announced the arrival of the English sports model in France, still under the influence of British immigrants (Terret, 2019). This is how the *Le Havre Athletic Club*, one of the oldest French football clubs, was born in the naval city of Le Havre in 1872. The *English Taylors Club* was founded in 1877 in Paris, followed by the *Paris Football Club* two years later. In the south of France, Bordeaux also had its first rugby football club at the same time, with the foundation of the *Bordeaux Athletic Club* in 1879, considered to this day to be the oldest amateur football club in France. In 1882 and 1883, the *Racing Club de France* and then the *Stade Français*, two emblematic French rugby clubs, were founded.



Figure 10: Logo of the Bordeaux Athletic Club, the oldest French Amateur Football Club

Clubs continued to emerge in big university cities during the following years, under the impulse of student movements. It is following this movement that some supporters of English sports, decided to take a more precise interest in sport because of its political and economic importance. Notably, Pierre de Coubertin saw the potential offered by sport and described it as an excellent means of education for young people in his 1888 book: *"Education in England"*. He created, the same year, a Committee for the propagation of physical exercises in education, which confirmed the French bourgeoisie youth in its desire for sports activities (Terret, 2019). At the same time, the scientific and medical community also began to take an interest in English sports practices, notably with the opening of the physiological station at the *Parc des Princes* in 1881. Taking advantage of this new scientific interest, some elitist private schools decided to follow the British educational model and to appropriate it. This was the case, for example, of the *Ecole des Roches*, founded in 1899. However, in France, various sports clubs were at the origin of the institutionalization of the practices, with the foundation of the *Union des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques* (USFSA) by representatives of the *Racing Club de France* and the *Stade Français*. The USFSA created committees for each sport it wanted to regulate: running, football, tennis, cycling, and later swimming and winter sports. Finally, in 1894, it organized itself into regional committees to expand its territory. It quickly became the main sports federation in France (Terret, 2019). Only sports that predated its creation, such as rowing and mountaineering, and those that wished to maintain an aristocratic distance, such as golf, resisted this federation.

However, even if regional committees existed, clubs served as primary institutions at the local level. Unlike gymnastics, patriotic feelings were not heightened in sports, which instead promoted good relations between members, physical development, the organization of inter-

club meetings, and the organization of parties and outings. Nevertheless, with the approach of the First World War, clubs started to develop a patriotic culture similar to the one put forward in gymnastics. Moreover, just like gymnastics societies, sports clubs also had their own rules to follow, with their leaders always coming from the most affluent classes, thus reinforcing existing social divisions (Arnaud, 1986). The first real democratization of sport only occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, through the intermediary of the petty bourgeoisie, artisans and employees, later followed by workers and rural people from the outskirts of large cities with a strong English presence, such as Bordeaux and Toulouse (Terret, 2019). Some sports also became democratized faster than others to all classes of society, with football and rugby at the top. However, despite this progressive diffusion within the various classes of the society, sport remained quasi exclusive to males, with some exceptions, in particular in tennis and swimming. Indeed, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century corresponded to a time when women were still excluded from decision-making, and when men needed to reassure themselves by putting forward values that they considered "masculine", such as fair play, courage, or physical strength. The few women who took up sport were often mocked in the press, while also being supported by a medical body that declared the practice of sport dangerous for women and opposed to its maternal role (Terret, 2019).

In the press, two specialized magazines emerged at that time, *La Revue Athlétique*, in 1890, and *Les Sports Athlétiques*, two years later. However, at that time, athletes were defined more by their lifestyle than by their taste for effort (Vivier, 1999). Similarly, sport still did not respond to a logic of specialization, and it was very common to see athletes practice different sports depending on the season. Dedicated facilities also remained rare and archaic until the 1890s, and it was very common to use the same field for numerous sports. In the same logic, clothing dedicated to the practice of sports remained rare, and the only companies manufacturing these clothes were two English brands that shared a monopoly at the time: the *Turner Company* and *Willams and C°*. The first French company, the *Agence Générale des Sports*, described in 1894 as "the only French company selling all sports articles" in the directories, had a hard time establishing itself and was later joined by a few Parisian department stores.

It is the law of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901 on the freedom of association, in France, which allowed a real development of sports associations on the French territory, even if they were already present before this date. Indeed, while the USFSA counted 13 societies for less than 2,000 members in 1890, it announced 1,700 societies for 300,000 members before the First World War (Terret,

2019). However, it is only during the inter-war period that the democratization of sport accelerated in France. Indeed, several factors still blocked the democratization of practices at the very beginning of the 20th century (Léziart, 1989). Firstly, the practice of sport marked a generational break between parents who were reluctant to practice English sports and young people who wanted to practice. Moreover, the leaders of the associations, wishing to maintain a certain social distance, as well as a certain elitism within their practices, also prevented the rapid diffusion of the English model. However, these positions did not prevent the diffusion of the practices within more popular milieus. From 1897, we saw the creation of company clubs for workers, at the initiative of the Parisian department store *Le Bon Marché*, followed by *La Samaritaine* two years later. At the beginning of the 20th century, we even witnessed the birth of non-corporate clubs, initiated by workers, which led to the creation, in 1908, of the *Fédération Sportive Athlétique Socialiste (FSAS)*, an organization independent of the USFSA, more open to professionalism, which contained about forty clubs before 1914. In the same line, we saw the appearance of other institutions wishing to regulate the sport, under a more permissive, open and professional spectrum than the one advocated by the USFSA, which thus saw its grip on the sport disappear. One can note, for example, the creation of the *Fédération des Sociétés Athlétiques*, in 1896, in reaction to the too strict regulations of the USFSA. Similarly, around the same time, the *Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France* was born in 1898. This association is at the origin of the *Comité Français Interfédéral*, born in 1907, an organization aiming to regulate football differently on the French territory. This association then became the current *Fédération Française de Football* (Munoz, 2003).

Paralleling the emergence of these new sports institutions in resistance to the values of amateurism and elitism advocated by the USFSA, the press also appropriated the sport and transformed it into a spectacle that readers could experience by proxy. Horseracing was a pioneer in terms of specialized press, with the newspaper *Le Jockey*, which first appeared in 1863. By 1890, more than a hundred specialized magazines had been launched, with varying degrees of success in France (Tétart and Villaret, 2010). In addition, the general press also detected, as early as the 1850s, the possibilities offered by sports from a journalistic point of view, with the treatment of events in regional and national newspapers, and then dedicated columns. Some activities were more popular than others were and received more coverage, such as football and cycling (Wahl, 1989). Cycling became one of the first spectacles in France with the appearance of major media races, such as the *Bordeaux-Paris* in 1891, or the *Paris-Roubaix* in 1896. In 1903, Henri Desgrange (1865-1940), director of the newspaper *L'Auto*, in political

opposition with the newspaper *Vélo* regarding the Dreyfus case, which divided the entire French society, decided to create a new cycling race, *The Tour de France*. Very quickly, this competition became a huge event, not only in terms of sports and events but also in terms of the French collective memory.



*Figure 11: The first Tour de France, launched on July 1st, 1903*

At the same time, Pierre Frédy, Baron de Coubertin (1863-1937), a young French aristocrat who discovered sport via English schools during various trips, wanted to use sport as a lever to renovate the French school system for the elites (Terret, 2019). However, despite trying various actions within the USFSA, he did not manage to find the expected success and then focused on writing (Boulogne, 1975; Müller, 1986). His most famous action remains the restoration of the Olympic Games, a project that he started in 1892. His first concrete action in favor of the Olympic Games took place in 1894 at the Sorbonne, when he proposed his concept in front of 2000 spectators. This project was then voted by a delegation from 12 different countries, which then founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) (Terret, 2019). Through this project, Coubertin also hoped to participate in the pacification of the relations between the countries, and an important part of the members of the congress of renovation of the Games were members of the *International Peace Bureau*, founded in 1891. The first Olympiads took place in Greece, in 1896, and then in Paris during the universal exhibition of 1900. Even if the hype surrounding these renewed Olympic Games was not as big as hoped, they posed all the bases of the modern games, with the installation of a program, a ceremony, as well as the spotlight of amateurism always advocated by the aristocracy of the time. However, despite the pacifist ideal advocated by the first organizers of the Games, they would be marked by the growing nationalist push in

the approach of the First World War. For example, the Olympic Games of 1916, supposed to take place in Berlin, were canceled (Terret, 2019).

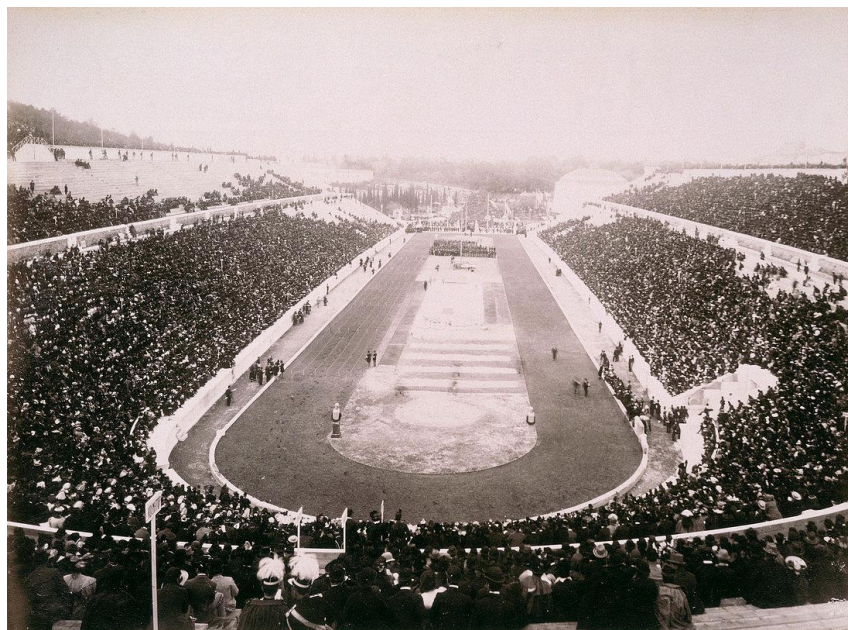


Figure 12: The 1896 Athens Olympic Games

Similarly, Coubertin's model met great resistance in France. Indeed, his desire to make the Olympic Games a structure independent of the sports movement generated a lot of opposition from the federations already in place. Thus, in 1908, at the initiative of the USFSA and other federations, the *Comité National des Sports* (CNS) was created, which merged five years later with the *Comité Olympique Français* (COF), created in response to the CNS in 1911. However, the members of the CNS remained hostile to the Olympic movement and, in conjunction with several foreign leaders, created several international organizations, which remained in conflict with the IOC for a very long time (Grosset and Attali, 2009). Thus, in 1904, the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) and the *Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile* (FIA) were born, followed by the *International Union of Shooting Federations and Associations*, which became the *International Shooting Sport Federation* (ISSF) in 1907, and the *Fédération Internationale d'Athlétisme Amateur* (FIAA) in 1912.

The Great War broke out on July, the 28<sup>th</sup> 1914, and the general mobilization made the sport's grounds temporarily deserted. However, from October onwards, football competitions resumed in France, notably with the *Coupe Nationale*, managed by the USFSA, which would also launch a rugby competition the following year for young people who had not been called to war. At the same time, the reduction in meetings due to the war prompted the various actors of sport to



reflect on their practices and techniques, with the press giving more and more consideration to the associations between sport and war (Terret, 2019). Thus, sport became an analogy of war and was very often associated with it. This association remains to this day. Similarly, sports education was very often positively associated with the preparation of the war effort. However, the war was longer than expected, and sport became an increasingly popular form of escapism, both at the front and in the rest of the country. Similarly, women, until then ignored by sporting institutions, decided to take up a practice neglected by men at the front. This is how the first women's societies were created, defending the right to compete for women. In 1916, there were three main societies in France: *Académia*, *En Avant*, and *Fémina Sport*, which quickly regrouped under the *Fédération des Sociétés Féminines Sportives de France* (FSFSF), which took charge of the development of women's sport after the war. The arrival of the Americans on French territory in 1917 was also accompanied by the arrival of new sports practices that were to become established on French territory: notably basketball and volleyball (Terret, 2019).

#### Sport as a political tool and a spectacle - The democratization of sport in the inter-war period

At the end of the war, the USFSA found itself in a very precarious situation. In fact, in 1919, it lost control over the country's leading sports (football and rugby), with the transformation of the *Comité Français Interfédéral* into the *Fédération Française de Football Association*. The following year, the rugby commission of the USFSA was dissolved and reborn as the *Fédération Française de Rugby*. This trend continued very quickly, with many sports breaking away from the USFSA to create specialist federations. By 1923, France had about thirty specialized sports federations. Despite a failed attempt to evolve under the new name *Union des Fédérations Française de Sports Athlétiques* (UFFSA), the former USFSA merged with the CNS in 1929.

This period of restructuration reinforced the shift from generalist and elitist sports to specialized activities accessible to the masses. After the First World War, there were more than a million sports licensees, 30% of whom were involved in football alone. This figure reached four million people at the beginning of World War II. The press followed suit, with specialized newspapers such as *L'Auto* printing up to 750,000 copies of the *Tour de France* (Terret, 2019). Under the influence of this press and an increasingly demanding public, sports continued to become a

spectacle, and the French thirst for sporting events did not seem to be lowered by the economic crisis of the early 1930s. At a national level, the French followed football and rugby championships with passion, as well as various boxing and cycling events. At the international level, the period between the two world wars also saw the birth of the first major events. The Five Nations tournament had included France since 1910 and was followed by an increasing number of sports enthusiasts. The Football World Cup was born in 1930 under the influence of the French president of FIFA, Jules Rimet (1873-1956), with its first edition in Uruguay. Similarly, the Olympic Games continued to grow in importance, although with a smaller number of followers than football or rugby. The organization of the 1924 Paris Games helped to cement the popularity of sport in France (Terret, 2019). The 1938 football World Cup, also organized in Paris, was logically much more widely followed.

Beyond the growing events, sportsmen and women also became real popular figures and models for society. Indeed, from the 1920s onwards, it was not uncommon for poets, painters and novelists to draw inspiration from sport and sports heroes in their works (Charreton, 1985). Among the most famous champions of the time was Georges Carpentier (1894-1975), the first Frenchman to become a world boxing champion in 1920. His defeat the following year against the American Jack Dempsey was lived as a national tragedy (Rauch, 1992).



*Figure 13: The Georges Carpentier – Jack Dempsey Fight in 1921*

Other sportsmen, such as Jules Ladoumègue (1906-1973), a French runner from the working-class districts of Bordeaux, were to serve as models and examples of successful meritocracy. However, sports federations were still amateur and elitist, and the runner was disqualified by his federation in 1932, two years after his six world records, for having received money to run.



This affair also illustrated the growing gap between sporting institutions that were based on old-fashioned values and practitioners who, as they devoted more and more time to their sport, demanded a minimum of financial compensation (Lassus, 2000). A crisis then broke out in the world of sport, and the federations, under pressure from clubs and practitioners, later reversed their position. For example, in 1932 the French Football Federation accepted the payment of players, thus marking the birth of the first professional championship. It was on the same system that the French Rugby XIII championship was created, following the refusal of Rugby XV and its federation to pay its players (Terret, 2019).

To respond to this democratization of the sport and its spectacular station, dedicated spaces were necessary. From the 1930s onwards, many cities began to build stadiums, such as Marseille in 1935 and Bordeaux in 1938. The architecture of these new stadiums responded to the spectators' desire for show, with imposing buildings capable of accommodating an increasing number of people (Ehrenberg, 1980).

In parallel to this democratization of the sports spectacle, the movement also became increasingly instrumentalized, whether at the political, integrational or educational level. For example, the *Fédération Sportive des Sourds-Muets de France* was created in 1918 to integrate deaf people. The first silent Olympic Games were held in Paris in 1924. Following the same logic, other "affinity" movements were created during this period (Lebecq, 2004). This was the case, for example, with Catholic sport and workers' sport, which saw the emergence of their respective federations, far away from the classical considerations of spectacle sport.

Similarly, women continued their desire for sport that started during the First World War, despite the formal opposition of the male model. For example, following the refusal of the *International Olympic Committee* to integrate them, the *Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale* (FSFI) was born in 1921 under the influence of the sportswoman Alice Milliat (1884-1957). The FSFI organized the first Women's Olympic Games in Paris in 1922, which were followed by three other editions: Gothenburg in 1926, Prague in 1930 and London in 1934. After the war, the IOC opened up to women, thus causing the disappearance of exclusively female structures. Finally, sport also found its place in education under the influence of the *Société Médicale d'Education Physique*, created in 1921, which was followed by the creation of the *Association Internationale Médico-Sportive*, founded seven years later (Terret, 2019). However, sport was not unanimously supported in schools, and only high

schools and students could practice it. Resistance to the sport model remained, as evidenced for example by the *Règlement Général d'Education Physique: Méthode Française*, written by the Joinville military school in 1925. Nevertheless, a few student sports clubs were formed, followed by the creation of the *Office du Sport Universitaire* in 1934. Four years later, this office expanded to become the *Office du sport Scolaire et Universitaire* (OSSU), to also reach high school students. The following year, primary schools were also involved, with the creation of the *Union Sportive du Premier Degré* (Pociello and Denis, 2000).

With this popularisation of sport in all sectors of society, it became a tool of national prestige (Terret, 2019). France, for example, created the *Service des Œuvres Françaises à l'Etranger* (SOFE) in 1920, which was attached to the Tourism and Sports section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to strengthen the country's international image through sports propaganda. The pacifist ideology of Coubertin and the IOC could do nothing to prevent this. Germany, after the defeat of 1918, remained excluded from the Olympic Games until 1925, while France still refused to participate in sporting events against its former enemy. Similarly, Lenin's USSR was not welcome in Paris for the 1924 Olympic Games. For its part, Italy, amid the rise of fascism under the control of Benito Mussolini, decided to progressively control all its press organs and sports institutions, to spread the success and power of its model to the rest of the world through sport. This led to the birth of the first state athletes (Terret, 2019).

Germany, inspired by the fascist model and in the midst of Nazism, very quickly understood the usefulness of sport for propaganda. Organizing the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany took the opportunity to launch a huge propaganda program designed to use sport as a tool for controlling the masses and as a demonstration of political power. Despite the reluctance of other countries, notably Great Britain and the United States, the 1936 Olympic Games were held in Berlin, with an opening ceremony held in a colossal stadium with 100,000 spectators and the Nazi cross alongside the Olympic flag (Brohm, 1976). Similarly, when Nazi troops invaded Austria in 1938, FIFA's only reaction was to maintain the World Cup, which took place the same year, and to withdraw the Austrian team from the competition, even though it had been a finalist four years earlier.

France entered the war on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939, following the annexation of Austria by Germany, and was quickly defeated, requesting an armistice following the German invasion on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1940. It led to the division of the French territory into two parts, and the

installation of a new government in Vichy, in the free zone, led by the Maréchal Pétain. Eager to put in place a spirit of strong discipline, the physical and moral education of young people was at the center of the government's concerns, with a new organization dedicated to it: *Le Commissariat Général à l'Education Physique et Sportive*. This commission, under the direction of Jean Borotra (1898-1994), a former tennis player, launched a major series of reforms for civilian sport and school education, with a substantial budget of 1.9 billion francs (Gay-Lescot, 1991).

It was in this perspective that the *Charte des Sports* was launched in December 1940, imposing an ideology in line with the “main morals of the National Revolution”. Thus, any sports association had to obtain the approval of the State before existing, which contradicted the previous law of 1901 (Terret, 2019). Federations were also more controlled and placed under the control of the *Conseil National des Sports*, whose officials were directly appointed by the state. Professional sports were banned, and full government support was given to outdoor sports. New rules were also drawn up for general education and sports education, the number of hours of practice increased, and practice was based on the work of George Hébert, even though he refused to work with Vichy. It was also with this in mind that new infrastructures and diplomas were created for General and Sports Education (EGS), notably the *Centre National des Moniteurs et Athlètes*, accompanied by regional EGS centres, but also the *Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat d'Education Physique et Sportive* (CAPEPS) a diploma for sport educators, introduced in 1943.

All these reforms did not seem to create any opposition within the population, as shown by Dourdin's (1942) survey on the physical and sporting practices of the French people, on behalf of the *Commission Générale pour l'Education et le Sport*. For example, the OSSU had 17,964 members for 542 associations before the war, compared to 47,017 members for 1253 associations in 1942. As for football, it went from 75,616 members in 1939 to more than 275,000 five years later. This can be explained by several factors. Firstly, sport and the sports association represented a space of relative freedom in an era that was marked by war and restriction. Secondly, it also represented a pretext to travel, in a context of deprivation (Arnaud et al., 2002). Some clubs and organizations, such as the *Sport-Libre* network, were also used for resistance purposes and allowed sportsmen and sportswomen to avoid their compulsory labor service (Terret, 2019).

## 2.4 Sport beyond institutions - Massification of sport after World War II

By 1949, France had 1.8 million license holders, which rose to 5.2 million in 1970, then 7.4 million in 1975 (Terret, 2019). As early as 1960, 39% of the French population declared that they practiced a sport, according to a study conducted by INSEE. However, some activities were more popular than others. For example, in 1949, football had 440,800 members, making it the leading sport in France ahead of the *boule lyonnaise* and basketball, which respectively had 180,000 and 95,000 members. This hierarchy was not overturned until the 1980s. However, some affinity federations, such as the workers' federation and the Catholic federation, experienced more difficult days after the war. These problems were mostly due to the overall reduction of the primary sector in the economy, the rise of industry and then services, and a distancing from religious institutions by a population looking for emancipation from classical pillars of identity construction. At the same time, other affinity movements emerged. For example, the organization of the *Stoke Mandeville International Games* in 1948 gave rise to the Paralympic Games in 1960 (Bailey, 2008). In France, the *Amicale sportive des mutilés de France* (ASMF) was founded in 1954. It became, after much tension, *Fédération Française Handisport* (FFH) in 1977.



Figure 14: The 1948 Stoke Mandeville International Games

Nevertheless, after World War II, institutions and the government realized that federal data was no longer sufficient to study the sporting habits of the people. From the 1960s onwards, many practices appeared that went beyond the traditional institutional framework. The generational

break of 1968 accentuated these changes in sports practice, with the arrival of 'Californian' sports such as surfing and windsurfing, or more 'oriental' sports, such as aikido for example (Terret, 2019). Furthermore, certain activities, which had previously been practiced under institutions, became more and more practiced outside of federations, such as road racing or skiing. This is referred to as the emergence of the "fun" culture. On the events side, sport also gained in popularity and reached record audiences. The newspaper *L'Equipe*, which came into being in 1946 after *L'Auto* was banned from publication because of accusations of collaboration during the war, quickly established itself as one of the world's leading sports newspapers. Television, in full democratization in the 1970s, took hold of the sports phenomenon by giving it more and more time in its programs.

The democratization of the sporting spectacle in the press and on television was not the only reason explaining the democratization of sporting activities. Firstly, the democratic situation in France after World War II saw the emergence of a whole new generation: the baby boomers, representing a third of the French population in 1968, coupled with an improvement in the overall standard of living in France over that same decade. (Terret 2019). From the early 1960s, sociologists began to question the possible emergence of a 'leisure society' (Dumazedier, 1962). In addition, beyond this social evolution, sport was also in line with the new values of a more ecological society, eager to get closer to nature, and more concerned about its health and well-being, which justified the emergence of practices outside the competitive framework. Thus, the new generation was appropriating sports practices and rejuvenating sport overall, allowing the establishment of more precise age categories, specific events, and also the creation of sports schools. Women also continued to appropriate sport at this time. Indeed, even if their representation and treatment in the media had not evolved since the 1920s, they were much more daring, and 22% of them declared that they practiced sport on a regular or occasional basis in 1967 (Terret, 2019).

With time and effort, even the most conservative federations, such as tennis and football, finally opened their doors to women in 1959 and 1970 respectively. However, women took on different practices from men, focusing on aesthetic and non-competitive activities, confirming stereotypes that were already well established (Davis and Louveau, 1998). The fact that school was made compulsory until the age of 16 in 1959 also favored the democratization of sport among the youngest, particularly women, with associations that transformed themselves (Attali and Saint-Martin, 2004). In 1962, Maurice Herzog, Secretary of State for Youth and

Sport, transformed the OSSU into the *Association du Sport Scolaire et Universitaire* (ASSU), to make it the first breeding ground for French champions, taking up the model proposed by Coubertin earlier. However, even if sport was democratized throughout the *Trente Glorieuses*, its distribution was very uneven across France. In 1967, it was noted that farmers and workers were still the ones who practiced sport the least, whereas the middle and upper intellectual professions were the ones who practiced it the most (Terret, 2019). The INSEE confirmed this observation in their 1981 survey (Pociello, 1981).

At the political level, things also changed for sport during the Cold War. Indeed, it became a political tool when the USSR joined the IOC in 1951 and took part in the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games (Peppard and Riordan, 1993). The sporting performance then became the best way to show the superiority of its society model (capitalism versus communism) to the whole planet which was, at that time, divided into two large blocks. However, the major sporting competitions of the Cold War also served to highlight internal problems within societies, as shown for example by the Olympic Games in Mexico City in 1968, where black American athletes demanded their rights in line with the Black Power movement.



*Figure 15: The Black Power Movement during the 1968 Mexico Olympics*

France did not escape this political logic, and also tried to use sport, notably by placing the CNS and the sports movement under surveillance. However, the poor sporting results of the French did not allow the country to have the same influence as the USA or the USSR, and the country's economic priorities were not attributed to sport (Terret, 2019). It was not until the arrival of

General de Gaulle, and under the influence of Maurice Herzog, that high-level sport was reformed, to make France a world-level power independent of the USA and the USSR. This is how technical directors were installed in the federations, with the setting up of the *Institut National du Sport*. The desire of countries to show the domination of their model also led to numerous abuses in sport, which moved further and further away from Coubertin's ideals of peace. In particular, state doping appeared in many countries, as well as boycotts and corruption.

The growing independence movement in the French colonies also diminished its sporting influence, relegating the country to the rank of a mere organizer of sporting events in Africa. However, the establishment of the *Commission d'Aide Internationale Olympique*, officially created to help newly independent countries join the Olympic movement, allowed France to retain some influence over its former colonies (Charitas, 2010). Within France, the State was divided into two positions at the end of the Second World War: recognizing the prestige of sport or maintaining its educational value. The increase in juvenile delinquency encouraged the State to transform sports into a real "life discipline" (Amar, 1987). Thus, even if the *Charte des Sports* established during the occupation was abolished, the State put in place an ordinance in 1945 to keep a firm grip on sports federations and associations. However, for the next 30 years, this ordinance had no consequences for associations, apart from state subventions (Terret, 2019). Still, with a supervising objective, numerous diplomas and state certificates were set up to train coaches, trainers and supervisors, and these diplomas became compulsory for teaching in all sports. Thus, sport became a vast public service where all levels of practice were supposed to become complementary. It is in this perspective that university courses such as the *Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives* (STAPS), or the *Institut national du Sport et de l'Education Physique* (INSEP), etc., were born. Gradually, the state, under the influence of liberalism, transferred its missions to civilian organizations, while maintaining control over them (Houel, 1979).

The 1970s also saw the birth of a new movement that sport could not escape: globalization (Terret, 2019). With this change in scale, sport became global and took on a whole new economic, media and political importance. For example, by the end of the 1990s, it generated a global turnover of more than 2,500 billion francs, or about 400 million euros, 5% of which was for the French market alone. The role of television and the media was not to be neglected here either. The multiplication of the television offerings and the sport-specialized channels,

such as Eurosport in 1989, considerably modified French television. The strategies were as numerous as the channels that broadcasted sport. While some offered many sports, others set themselves up as specialists by concentrating on a single activity. As a result, sports were increasingly broadcasted and generated more and more revenue, with more and more advertising funding and an increasing number of viewers. In the mid-1990s, football already benefited from more than 500 hours of broadcasting per year and, in 2003, more than 50% of people over the age of 15 said they had attended a televised sports event in France (Cléron, 2003). Major sporting events were also increasingly covered by the media and attracted record audiences. For example, the 1998 World Cup had a cumulative audience of over 41 billion viewers.

Organizers took advantage of this situation to raise the bidding for the media rights to broadcast the events, generating even more money. Moreover, the 1984 Olympic Games, under the influence of new marketing and sponsorship techniques, finally made the event profitable for the organizers (Terret, 2019). Major brands then rushed to sponsor sports events. The sums generated by existing events also encouraged the creation of new events. For example, the Paris-Dakar Rally was created in 1979, the Rugby World Cup was created in 1987, and athletics meetings were created everywhere around the world. These events were easier to set up as they sometimes benefited from the enormous fame of the participants, who were elevated to the rank of superstars, as well as from a professional system on a global scale. Thus, sport became a show diffused everywhere, whether on television, in the press, on the radio, or more recently on the Internet. Even the IOC, the last bastion of amateurism, could do nothing and abandoned its ideals in 1980 when Juan Antonio Samaranch was appointed as the head of the IOC to replace Lord Killanin, a fervent defender of amateurism. Samaranch even modified the charter set up at the beginning of the Olympic movement to allow the professionalization of the Games.

Beyond the phenomenon of globalization, sport has also been able to adapt to mentalities over time. Thus, despite an increasing orientation towards the cult of performance (Ehrenberg, 1991), the use of certain methods is still forbidden and very often condemned by the sporting world. Furthermore, the numerous ethical debates following the many scandals concerning the organization of major international events tainted by corruption have led the major sporting bodies, and particularly the IOC and FIFA, to review their policy in favor of the development of sport in the most disadvantaged areas of the world and for young people. An example of this



policy change is the consequences of the awarding of the last FIFA World Cup, which, after investigation, led to the arrest or extradition of very high-ranking officials of the football world.

In a similar vein, sport has also tried to re-establish links with health and its hygienic aspects. Thus, a very dynamic leisure sports market has emerged, particularly in the most developed countries. Among the various sporting activities, it is notably maintenance gymnastics that have been doing best. In parallel, the emergence of board sports, sometimes called "Californian" sports, in the 1970s created a "green sport" movement. This movement advocates for a practice close to nature, ecologically friendly, but still linked to health and well-being. However, even if the sport-health association is still present, as are all the measures taken by the federations, the specter of doping remains present at the highest level, with numerous cases appearing in the press frequently, despite the creation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 1999 (Laure, 2004). Thus, despite the development of many training techniques, the suspicion of doping now tarnishes every exceptional performance.

## **2.5 For a first current historical 'definition' of sport and perceived sportivity**

As this first historical review of sports shows, the practice that began in late 18th century England has evolved greatly to become what it the worldwide product that it is today. Sport has developed in line with societies and countries. Initially strongly criticized for its lack of virtue, it has been able to adapt to become a State tool despite the resistance of national models. It has gone from an elitist practice advocating absolute amateurism to a full-fledged profession, with champions earning astronomical sums of money, revered by millions of spectators. The history of sport can be seen as a constant struggle for legitimacy and approval of the people. When people's values evolved and classic institutions lost their legitimacy, new types of practices emerged, more in line with the values of people.

However, today's sport still seems to have some characteristic elements that can help conceptualize it. Firstly, it requires physical effort, in line with Coubertin's notion of surpassing oneself, and more and more people are using sport for health and well-being objectives rather than for performance. People nowadays identify many activities linked to health and well-being as sport, beyond the mere competition. Further, since the 1980s, and in particular the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, sport seems to have entered into a spectacle dimension, with the involvement of the media and the multiplication of sponsors.

Thus, the concept of perceived sportivity – which, as a reminder, is concerned with the constituent elements of sport according to consumers, and not according to institutions – could reflect these elements. All of them will therefore be studied when conceptualization the construct of perceived sportivity and designing its measurement that will be developed further in the next sections.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- **Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport**

- Section 1: The interest of a research on sport – Economic and cultural importance of sport
- Section 2: An historical approach of sport – Emergence, diffusion and institutions

- **Section 3: Sport through the lens of sociology – The meaning of sport**

- Chapter 2: Categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes

## Section 3: Sport through the lens of sociology – The meaning of sport

As we have seen in our previous historical section, sport as an object remains epistemologically vague as it has evolved and been used for many different purposes. It is therefore important not to limit ourselves to this historical vision, but also to broaden it through another field that studied sport as an object a lot: sociology. Indeed, as we will see later, sport, in its many forms, has been the subject of numerous sociological approaches, particularly since the end of World War II. However, once again, the multiple usages of the term “sport” as well as its multiple applications at several levels of society make the term rather vague. Indeed, sport cannot be considered only as a practice or a way of life, but it can also be a spectacle or even a political tool. It, therefore, constitutes a "crossroads" object where numerous works from different sociological currents meet. To address how sociology can help provide a deeper understanding of the meanings associated with sport as a research construct, our research will therefore focus on three sociological approaches of sport: a first figurational approach, of which the German sociologist Norbert Elias (1978) is considered the founder. Then, we will explore a second approach applying Weber's comprehensive sociology to explain the birth of modern sports. Finally, we will also explore a third Marxist and more critical approach to sport put forward by Jean-Marie Brohm (1976) in France.

### 3.1 A figurational sociological approach

As early as the 1930s, the German sociologist Norbert Elias studied the evolution of societies through the lens of a process he called "the civilizing process". In his work, he sees civilization as a long historical and sociological evolution, linked in particular to technical progress and the differentiation of society on the one hand, but also competition between humans (Elias, 1976). Thus, civilization can be defined by several elements: a control of violence in society by state institutions, as well as an economy based on money. This concept is the basis for Elias' (1986) study of sport.

Definition of the figurational approach: the sportisation of society

According to Elias, the advent of sports is linked to this civilizing process (Pfister, 2003). Indeed, in the Eliasian figurational approach, sport was born out of a form of non-violent physical confrontation, in a period when the violence that enveloped English society was slowly

diminishing (Maguire, 1999). Elias defines sport as a form of regulated and rationalized physical confrontation, a form of culture, specific to countries with industrialized production, central state power, and a high level of internal discipline (Pfister, 2003). Thus, in these industrialized societies, sport is one of the greatest social inventions that help reduce tensions and control aggression within society. Moreover, sport is seen by Elias as a 'mimetic battle' (Elias and Dunning, 1986), that is a confrontation in an imaginary setting. This process, explaining the development of sport during the industrialization period of in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in England and its subsequent expansion throughout Europe and the world, is defined as 'sportisation' (Elias, 1986).

Dunning (1997) – a former student and co-worker of Elias – uses the example of boxing to explain this sportisation process. According to him, although still a contact sport, modern boxing matches, unlike before, are practiced by people of the same weight category, with rounds limited in duration and numbers. Similarly, there are rules to diminish violence. For example, it is forbidden to hit below the opponent's belt. Thus, although these rules do not eliminate physical violence, they aim to reduce it as much as possible, while allowing both participants to compete on an equal footing. Thus, Dunning (1997) also argues that Elias saw, through sportisation, and the civilizing process, an evolution towards an equalization of power between the different social classes in society.

Moreover, industrialization in civilized societies also resulted in a “routinization” of everyday life, with citizens being increasingly subject to control, whether internal or external. Indeed, the civilizing process in English society and generally in the rest of Europe has been characterized by a decrease in acceptable behavior in the public sphere, and an increase in legislation, thus requiring internal control for citizens (Elias and Dunning, 1986). Sport, and more generally leisure activities, broke this routine by allowing people to relax and experience a moment of excitement, a “controlled release of excitement” (Elias and Dunning, 1986). It is this “controlled release of excitement” that is at the heart of recreational sports according to Elias (Maguire, 1992).

Furthermore, Elias also notes that, by the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, some English activities had the characteristics of modern sports. These sports developed rules and frameworks for practice to regulate them and reduce violence. Over time, the rules became more precise, explicit and differentiated. At the same time, the techniques of supervision and

observation that were put in place to enforce these rules became more effective, in line with the civilizing process (Elias, 1986). Elias then concludes that all these cultural attempts to prolong the pleasure of victory in a simulated battle through sport are symptomatic of a change in the very personality of humans, which then led to a change in the structure of society as a whole (Elias and Dunning, 1986). According to Elias, it is especially these changes that were closely related to the civilizing process (Elias, 1978, 1982).

More recently, Jean-François Loudcher (2016) also took an interest in the theory of Norbert Elias. Indeed, as he reminds us, Norbert Elias' theorization is not directly addressed to sport but to the whole of Western society, sport is above all a privileged voice of analysis because it seems to correspond to an orientation of physical practices towards a codification aimed at reducing illicit violence. Thus, sports practices would not have been constructed on their own but would have been influenced by the various social and political phenomena of the time, as shown by the implementation of numerous regulations aimed at reducing violence in sport and on the fields (Loudcher, 2016). However, as these processes to control sports violence are directly linked to the history and politics of countries, especially via their state and social organization, other forms of 'violence', as well as other practices, may have emerged. As a result, the civilizing process does not appear to be linear and flawless and needs to be considered more flexibly concerning the degree and nature of control it exercises.

Norbert Elias' notion of sportisation in the civilizing process has subsequently been studied and criticized by many authors (Dunning and Rojek, 1992; Maguire, 1999; Horton, 2012; Loudcher, 2016, etc.). Among them, Dunning and Rojek (1992), in collaboration with other authors, devoted a book to Norbert Elias' theory. Firstly, it is worth noting that, for Dunning and Rojek (1992), Elias' discussion of mimetic leisure and 'controlled excitement' is not absolute, and control of these activities may be beyond the power of practitioners and organizers. This is the case, for example, with football hooliganism, which represents an exacerbated form of violence in sport, and which has been studied by Elias (Elias and Dunning, 1986). Stokvis (1992) also notes that, until the 20th century, fighting was a very common activity in Europe linked to all forms of festivities in rural areas (Burke, 1978). Thus, hooliganism can also be seen as a continuation of this tradition in a modern setting. Secondly, the idea of justice as a characteristic of the process of sportisation, and consequently the aversion to any attempt at cheating, seems not to exist anymore in sport, as exemplified by the many cheating and doping-related scandals we see every day in the news. (Waddington and Murphy, 1992).

Still, in Dunning and Rojek's book, Maguire (1992) takes up Elias's term 'civilizational push', which seems to have taken place in 18th century England, and places it at the center of the global civilizing process. Indeed, according to Maguire (1992), it is crucial to examine this notion of "civilizational push" to understand the different patterns of contemporary sport and leisure. Moreover, the function Elias attributes to sport in his theory seems to be based on a vision where citizens express a psychological, socially conditioned need to experience some form of excitement, spontaneous, elemental, unthinkable, but enjoyable. A few years later, Maguire (1999) revisits Elias' concept of sportisation by proposing a 5-phase model of the global sportisation process, building on Robertson's (1992) work on globalization (Horton, 2012).

### Critics of Elias' vision

Although it has been the basis of many works, the Eliasian theory has not been free from criticism, regarding both the concept of sportisation and more generally the civilizing process (Maguire, 1992; Stokvis, 1992; Hargreaves, 1992; Loudcher, 2016). As sportisation is seen as an element of the civilizing process like any other, it seems appropriate to also take into account the criticisms of the global process.

The first major critics of Elias' work are summarised by Loudcher (2016) and concern the definition of the term sport. Indeed, we often take the term for granted when we read Elias' work, whereas his definition is very vague. For example, he uses the term 'modern sport' to differentiate sport from ancient practices, but does not explain how this 'modern sport' can be different from what the pastimes of the English bourgeoisie were (Loudcher, 2016). Thus, one can question the appropriateness of comparing a wide variety of activities, involving violence, professionalism, sports betting, leisure, competitions and so on with modern sports. Not all English pastimes were violent, and so the reduction in violence that would have accompanied them over time seems different for each of these pastimes. However, even if this criticism is scientifically and epistemologically valid, Loudcher (2016) himself explains that even today we do not have a definition of modern sport that can be supported by scientific theory. Moreover, it seems very complicated today to explain a phenomenon that has taken place over more than 150 years of history and that has been subject to local, regional, national and international influences. Thus, it seems difficult, for example, to link the process of sportisation in England according to Elias with the emergence of the major international sports institutions

that regulate sport today, at the initiative of French personalities in reaction to a disagreement with national federations.

The second major criticism that can be made of the sportisation process concerns violence, and more specifically its non-definition. Echoing Bourdieu, Loudcher (2016) explains that the violence Elias refers to in his work is purely physical, whereas violence can also be psychological or symbolic. Furthermore, Elias does not define the term violence in his work. Thus, according to Loudcher (2016), he would rather make a male history of aggression from which women, minorities, would be excluded. Moreover, the notion of violence is highly evolving. Loudcher uses the example of the teacher/pupil relationship to justify his point. Today, it is considered extremely violent for a teacher to slap a student, whereas a few years ago it was accepted and even encouraged for educational purposes. It is therefore appropriate to question Elias' definition of violence (Loudcher, 2016).

Beyond the definition of violence, Stokvis (1992) even explains that sport has become a standardized international phenomenon through national and international organizations. In this process, the reduction of violence has taken place in some sports, but not in all. Moreover, this organizational process has been based on the English model for one simple reason: England was the leading industrialized world power at that time and represented a model of success that the elites of other countries tried to copy (Landes, 1969; MacAloon, 1981). Similarly, according to Stokvis (1992), the reduction of violence in sport had another purpose. Whereas in the hobby era workers were often alone and not dependent on others, after industrialization they were much more interdependent, working in large organizations, so injuries related to physical activity were no longer allowed for practitioners, thus justifying the reduction of violence in certain activities (Dunning and Sheard, 1979).

Other authors have also been critical of Elias' work. For example, Maguire (1992) notes that the notion of leisure is very often associated with that of 'freedom' by Elias, which seems to be wrong. Indeed, modern leisure is also characterized by a balance between permissions and restrictions. Moreover, Maguire also notes that Elias, and later Elias and Dunning, tended to focus on certain sports in their analysis to illustrate their point, thus neglecting other sports. Finally, according to Maguire, Elias' theory focuses so much on the notion of mimicry that it has forgotten that identity formation in sport involves other aspects, such as the quest for self-realization, or self-presentation (Goffman 1961; Kaelin, 1968; Gerber, 1974).



Finally, a last important criticism of Elias' work and the civilizing process comes from Hargreaves (1992). According to him, Elias sets up a paradigm of sociological analysis that focuses exclusively on the male experience, thus neglecting women and gender relations. Elias, like all the researchers who take up his work, focuses exclusively on men's sports, or the relations between men in these sports. Furthermore, Elias refers to gender relations as if it was possible to lump all women into a single group, based only on rare experiences of privileged and therefore unrepresentative individuals (Hargreaves, 1992). Finally, struggles in sport cannot be understood without mentioning the notion of value and commitment. Sport is a highly contested area of social life, and women and men struggle daily to establish a model that is different from the classical aggressive competition that has historically been dominated by men (Hargreaves, 1992). Elias' work is based on the idea that the state is a neutral, disinterested and benevolent institution, which is not necessarily the case.

To summarize, in the Eliasian logic, sportisation seems to be an element like any other in the process of civilization that England experienced from the end of the 17th century before spreading to the rest of the world. Thus, sport would be born above all from the reduction of violence in society at large, but also the rationalization of acceptable public behavior and the routinization of everyday life in societies. Sport would therefore act as a simulacrum, a theatre of war, allowing people to release their excitement in a form that is 'controlled' by regulations. It would also provide a break in the daily routine of the participants looking for stimulation. However, sportisation is not an absolute process and depends on many criteria, such as the type of control exercised by the State, or the degree of violence control in societies. Similarly, the example of hooliganism reminds us that violence is not totally out of sport. Moreover, some of the notions used by Elias can be vague, such as that of violence, sport, or leisure, and it would be advisable to try to define them before using them. It would also be good to move away from the exclusively male analysis of society, although this was still the norm at the time of most of Elias's work, to a feminine vision that would complement the work. Finally, sport according to Elias would therefore include elements of confrontation, mimicry, dramatization, rationalization, but also regulations and institutions.

### **3.2 A comprehensive sociological approach: the “sportification” of activities**

With a different objective from that of Elias, Allen Guttman published a book in 1978 entitled "From Rituals to Records, the Nature of Modern Sports" in which he sought to explain the characteristic elements of so-called "modern" sports, as opposed to ancient games. While Elias'

figurational approach focuses on the dynamic evolutions and mutual dependencies between groups of people (Elias, 2000); comprehensive sociology focuses more on the actual concept and its evolution. Guttman defines the process of evolution from ancient games to modern sports by a seven-step process that he calls “sportification” (Guttman, 1978). Although this process and that of Elias are sometimes confused in several studies, their origins and objectives are different. Indeed, while Elias focuses on the external social reasons for the emergence and diffusion of sport, Guttman is interested in the internal mechanisms that made the games evolve into modern sports.

### Definition of the comprehensive approach

Before even looking at Guttman’s work, it is necessary to contextualize it. Very much in line with the Weberian logic, which he mentions several times in his work, Guttman (1978) published his work at the end of the 1970s. At this particular time, sport was just starting to fully occupy the media space, notably with the emergence of mass broadcasting, which was to become established especially after the 1984 Olympic Games. Thus, certain activities and techniques related to sport did not exist. According to Guttman, modern sport developed in seven distinct stages, which he calls respectively: 1/ secularisation, 2/equalization, 3/specialization, 4/rationalization, 5/bureaucratization, 6/quantification, and finally the 7/quest for the record (Guttman, 1978).

1. The first stage, called “secularisation”, is reflected in the removal of the sacred element of sports. Indeed, in primitive cultures, the term sport did not exist in the vocabulary. There were indeed physical competitions, but they were not sports, and all of them had a religious significance (Guttman, 1978). There is indeed much evidence that primitive societies incorporated running, jumping, or wrestling into their religious rituals and ceremonies as far back as pre-Columbian civilizations (Culin, 1907). In Europe, Guttman notes that the ancient Games, whether Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian or even Athenian, were all sacred festivals in honor of different gods. Indeed, the Olympian Games were "sacred games, held in a sacred place during a sacred festival; it was a religious act in honor of a god. Those who took part did so to honor a god, and what they won came from the gods. ". For example, the Olympian Games were dedicated to Zeus, while the Corinthian Games were dedicated to Poseidon (Guttman, 1978). Conversely, although some might consider the myths of modern sport to be a

religion in their own right, the attachment to a possible deity has been severed. Similarly, performance in modern sport is for its own sake.

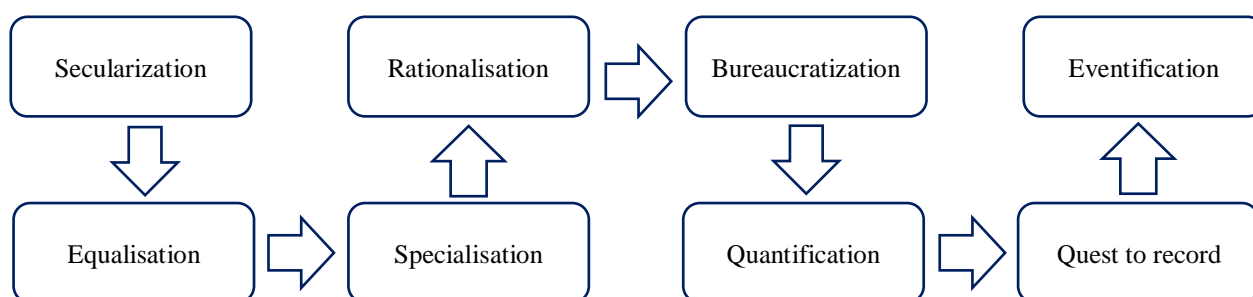
2. The second stage of sportification is “equalization”. However, this concept of equality is broad, and Guttmann (1978) focuses on two of its aspects. The first aspect of this equality is the fact that, theoretically, everyone should be able to participate in sport. The second aspect is that the conditions of practice should also be the same for all participants. In contrast, in primitive societies, participation in physical activities was reserved for members of certain classes or social groups. However, regarding this concept of equality, Guttmann (1978) identifies three existing anomalies in modern sports: exclusion based on social class, exclusion based on color, and exclusion based on gender. To these anomalies, Guttmann responds that the logic of modern sports proposes that women, who are sometimes excluded, should have equal opportunities to participate in sport. However, equality in Guttmann's sense is not about equality of outcome. On the contrary, inequality of outcome is one of the essential characteristics of sport.
3. After the first two aforementioned stages, comes the stage of “specialization”. Indeed, although primitive societies were the first to show some degree of specialization, it was nothing compared to today's specialization in sport (Guttmann, 1978). Specialization and professionalization in modern sports are inevitable because of their international scope. However, the notion of professionalization is not determined here in terms of money, but in terms of the time given to practice. Thus, because it seems impossible for a single person to achieve the best performance in several sports, sportsmen and women increasingly focused on one activity, thus becoming more and more specialized. According to Guttmann (1978), this notion of specialization and professionalization was born from the desire for accomplishment leading athletes to free themselves from boredom and economic distraction.
4. Then, “rationalization” is, for Guttmann (1978), the fourth stage of the sportification process. Rationalization here means, among other things, the establishment of rules and regulations as universal. Over time, rules seem to have become more complex, but identical for a given sport everywhere in the world. In contrast, in primitive societies, such as in ancient Greece, rules differed from one event to another and each organizer had its way of operating. For example, the weights used for throwing in ancient competitions varied from one city to another.

5. The fifth stage of the sportification process according to Guttmann (1978) corresponds to a process of “bureaucratization”. This stage, closely related to Weber's (1958) analysis of the distinction between the primitive and bureaucratic organization, highlights the essential hierarchy of sport that led to its organization, as we know it today. Indeed, one of the main characteristics of modern sport is the presence of a bureaucratic organization regulating competitions and participants. It is the establishment of this bureaucracy that contributed to the standardization of rules in modern sport. In contrast, primitive societies were not regulated by institutions and depended mainly on the will of the players to be practiced.
6. It was the bureaucratization of sport that directly encouraged the sixth stage of Guttmann's (1978) sportification process, i.e. quantification. Indeed, whereas the points' calculation systems in ancient competitions were very complicated and sometimes incomprehensible, modern sports moved into an increasingly simple quantification system. Moreover, all aspects of modern sport now tend to quantification of performance via statistics or analysis. Numbers are increasingly being used in sport to measure performance, both individual and collective. Even disciplines with a strong artistic connotation, such as gymnastics, have been modified to facilitate their quantification.
7. Finally, the last stage of the sportification process according to Guttmann (1978) refers to the infinite search for the best possible performance, that is achieving the record. Indeed, the quantification of performances, combined with all the other stages of the sportification process, have led participants to a constant quest and struggle for records.

This 7-step process of sportification was therefore put forward by Guttmann at the end of the 1970s. However, other authors have taken up this process to update it, adding nuances or completing it over time. For Collinet et al (2013), two of these stages are crucial in the process of sportification and the diffusion of sport throughout the world: standardization and institutionalization. It is these two elements, which, by setting up common standards and operating modes, allowed the rationalization of techniques and therefore the diffusion of the practice.

For Pfister (2003), sport – although having spread on a global scale – has not remained unchanged, and has sometimes adapted to countries, cultures, or peoples to establish itself durably, thus providing nuance to Guttmann's discourse (1978). Sato (2013) completes this

analysis by using the example of judo, a practice that developed from the East to the West, unlike the majority of sports, and which had to adapt to spread. According to Sato, judo was developed through four distinct phases: the codification of rules, the emphasis on competition, the opening to spectators, the orientation towards entertainment, and finally the commercialization of the practice. Thus, the process of sportification would no longer stop at the quest for the record but would have to be broadened by considering activities that have developed elsewhere than in the West on the one hand, but also by taking into account the economic and entertainment aspects linked to sports practices. This is also what Carlsson (2018) argues when he proposes the integration of a stage he calls "eventification" into the sportification process. In this final stage, sport would become spectator-oriented by being positioned as mass entertainment (Carlsson and Svensson, 2015).



*Figure 16: The updated Sportification Process*

Even beyond the world of sport, the process of sportification could also be applied to other spheres of society (Carlsson and Hedenborg, 2014). Indeed, the logic of sport has penetrated other spheres by elevating performance as a decisive factor in many areas. Indeed, Carlsson (2018) notes, for example, that the radical application of the process described by Guttman (1978) to a field such as science, leads to an observation of certain similarities between sport and science. Carlsson goes even further and argues that the logic of sport applies to many spheres and that it is crucial to transform sports science into a field of study separated from social science (Carlsson and Hedenborg, 2014).

#### Critics of Guttman's vision

Although widely studied in sociology of sport, Guttman's (1978) process of sportification is also subject to some criticism. Firstly, the process does not seem to apply to all sports (Svensson, 2016). Indeed, extreme or lifestyle sports, such as surfing, skateboarding, or climbing, do not seem to experience a classical sportification process, and some of them even

reject aspects such as institutionalization or even competition (Wheaton, 2013; Dumont, 2014). Moreover, the process of sportification is seen by Guttmann (1978) as unidimensional, moving from Europe to the rest of the world, which does not seem to be entirely true. Many sports, and in particular martial arts, for example, originated in Asia and then spread to the West (Sato, 2013). Thus, it is the very vision of sport according to Guttmann that is called into question. Sport should not be seen as an object that spreads unilaterally, but rather as a collective construct that extends in many directions and merges with other elements to develop. Sport here becomes something alive, shaped by the encounters between different cultures and practices. This then challenges one of the phases of Guttmann's (1978) model, namely standardization. According to Sato (2013), standardization does not mean the adoption by the world of a monolithic culture. Rather, it is a process through which many cultures reach similar benchmarks as a result of a process of synchronization and acceptance between them. Thus, it is not only institutions that are at the origin of standardization of sports practices, but also the different categories of practitioners who shape their evolution by coexisting with each other. Here we can see a first foreshadowing of the influence of practitioners in the evolution of sport, and thus the importance of their perception.

Finally, one of the biggest criticisms of the sportification process is its uniquely masculine view of sport and society (Von der Lippe, 2001). Indeed, the logic of equality advocated by sportification has great difficulty in justifying the exclusion of social categories from sport throughout history, including women and minorities. Guttmann's analysis is based on a logic of rationality in the Weberian sense of the term, whereas the very principle of excluding women from sporting competitions is seen as irrational. The process of sportification should therefore be analyzed from both a male and a female perspective to be more precise.

### **3.3 A Marxist approach – The Critical Theory of Sport**

Finally, a third approach, much more critical because Marxist-inspired, was developed, especially in France. This approach proposed a different vision of sport, under the inspiration of the sociologist Jean-Marie Brohm. This approach, called Critical Theory of Sport, was born through the sociological review *Quel corps?* (1975-1997) founded by Jean-Marie Brohm, and argues that sport, particularly with the use of media, is linked to a process of ideological subjugation and control over the people, a process he calls sportivisation.

### Definition of Brohm's approach – the sportivisation

According to Jean-Marie Brohm (1986), the term sportivisation originated from his work on the *Critical Theory of Sport* in 1968. The term was first used to address the ideological and institutional imposition of the English sports model in French physical education classes (EPS), leading to an identity crisis of the discipline (Marsault, 2009). This vision was developed to go against the sports institutions, which defined their practice as being "politically neutral and the bearer of universalist ideals at the service of the fraternity of people" (Duret, 2019). Indeed, in this vision, the history of sport is closely linked to the diffusion of the capitalist ideology and corresponds to a global process of "bureaucratic institutionalization and ideological expansion up to the present capitalist globalization" (Brohm, 2019). Thus, sport would be subject to numerous institutions, whether they be states, governments, or even multinational companies. Similarly, sport would be inherently political, as would all sporting practices. This is what would make sport a "perverse form of political substitution or the continuation of politics by other means" (Brohm, 2019). This is the purpose of the *Critical Theory of Sport*: to show that there is nothing inoffensive about competitive sport and that it is not a mere tool of amusement, but rather "an ideological state apparatus, an institution of ideological domination reproducing the structures and superstructures of state capitalism" (Brohm, 2019). Brohm even argues that sport violates human rights. He uses the examples of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, organized by the USSR, or more recently the 2008 Olympics organized by China despite the presence of labor camps in the country, the occupation of Tibet, and the various bloody state's repressions, to justify his point.

In Brohm's analysis, the commercial dimension of the sports industry is also criticized. Indeed, according to him, sport is today a fully-fledged industrial branch, with its commodity production system, investors, sponsors, and dedicated financial circuits, leading it inexorably to the search for profit (Brohm, 2004). More than the sports industry, it is even the athletes, the competitions, the performances, and the records that are bought, traded, and sold. Moreover, Brohm asserts that all the dimensions that make contemporary sport a "total social fact" in the sense of Mauss (1924) have been explored: "the productivist political economy, sports organization as a capitalist spectacle enterprise, internationalization of the sports governing bodies (IOC, FIFA), accelerated bureaucratization of sports institutions, alienated mass psychology of the sports spectacle, media manipulations, addictive logics of doping and drug addiction, etc." (Brohm, 2019). Finally, *Critical Theory*, again according to Brohm (2001),

also opposes the main field of thought on a crucial point: corporeality. Indeed, contrary to what the sports institutions dictate, there is no such thing as a good physicality, whether it is therapeutic, aesthetic, or even pedagogical. Indeed, corporeality is neither a “field” nor an “object”, but a “subjective horizon of meaning and personal sensitivity” (Brohm, 2001).

Thus, Brohm summarises his thoughts by postulating that the *Critical Theory of Sport* has two objectives, “the destruction of the alienating capitalist logic of sport”, and “the abolition of its merchandizing fetishist logic”. Similarly, critical theory, in this logic, goes beyond the mere academic discipline to become a “fundamental critique of the established order of which sport is today the opium of the people” (Brohm, 2001).

Many authors have taken an interest in the concept of sportivisation as developed by Brohm (e.g. Marsault, 2009; Perelman, 2010; Duret, 2019; Godin, 2019). For Duret (2019), the radical critique of sport attributes three main functions to the sporting spectacle. Firstly, large sporting events serve above all as a showcase for all political regimes that neglect human rights with impunity. For example, the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, which symbolized the support of democracies for the Nazi regime, or the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, which made people forget the students massacred by the Mexican army in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco district, 10 days before the opening of the Games. In addition, Jean-Marie Brohm organized several boycott committees against major sporting events.



Figure 17: The American athlete Jesse Owens during the 1936 Berlin Olympics

According to Duret (2019), the sports spectacle has a second function in Brohm's eyes, that of diversion from political and social conflicts, which he called *Panem et Circences* (Bread and



circuses). Indeed, the sporting spectacle, through alienation of the masses, seeks to numb the critical consciousness of the people, thus leading to “de-politicization”, transforming it into a real “opium of the people”, dumbing down “cretinized” spectators (Brohm, 1993). Finally, the sports spectacle has a third main function, that of enlisting. According to Duret (2019), in Brohm's theory, the majority of sports champions are on the right side of the political spectrum. There would even be a certain concordance between high-level athletes and the ideals of capitalism. Thus, the sporting spectacle would be a powerful vehicle for right-wing ideology, and the politicization of sport is accompanied by the sportivisation of the whole of society.

In a review of one of Brohm's books, Burgel (2018) also tries to summarise the author's thinking. He describes Brohm as being radically opposed to any kind of sport, including amateur sport, which he associates with a form of subjugation of the individual to capitalist market forces. Contemporary sport, in this view, is a global social process that goes far beyond mere playful activity, and is historically linked to the rise and supremacy of capitalism, and, therefore, is not concerned with following the bodily exercises that originated in Ancient Greece. Similarly, according to Brohm, sport today is mostly accompanied by corruption, doping, violence and abusive media coverage (Burgel, 2018). All of these abuses are said to stem from three components, i.e. competition and the omnipresent spirit of performance at all levels of society, the confrontation of entities such as clubs, and the organization of matches subject to capitalist ideology, which contaminates the spirit of healthy emulation (Burgel, 2018).

Thus, according to Brohm, sport is above all a vector of capitalist ideology, the dissemination of which is considerably stimulated by the media explosion. Indeed, Brohm (2019) notes that it was the Berlin Olympic Games that marked the beginning of live television broadcasts of sports competitions, supported by extensive radio coverage, with more than 40 German companies broadcasting the event. Brohm also defines the sport-spectacle as “a universal spectacularization, and living commodities in the service of dead commodities”. Following this logic, Perelman (2010), argues that the history of sports is linked to that of the mass media, even though their common development is hardly emphasized. Indeed, sport and the media participate in the creation of a mass culture which they continue to develop through the use of new technical innovations and new forms of spectacle (Clastres and Méadel, 2008). The development of sport and its dissemination is still favored today by the new media, especially the Internet, and the multiplication of screens on increasingly varied platforms (television,

computer, tablet, smartphone) installed not only in the private space but also in the public sphere (Perelman, 2010).

Thus, sport and media seem to benefit from an indestructible link. The "global sports audio-visual machine" was created with the help of states to become a global superstructure that surpasses them. Media even appropriate new sports by promoting them, and even by modifying some of their rules, as in tennis, which saw the appearance of the tie-break, or decisive game, to avoid matches that were too long. The integration of technological elements in certain sports, such as video refereeing in rugby, also responds to this logic. Sport and the media even have left their respective fields to become a common movement, an enormous power of alienation of the masses capable of capturing the attention of all (Perelman, 2010). In this idea, the sports stadium seems to be the perfect representation of this vision. Indeed, according to Perelman (2010), the stadium: "Perceived as a place of individual and collective freedom, of social emancipation or even of happiness between members of the same family or office colleagues, it (the stadium) is, on the contrary, that limited, bounded horizon of twenty-first-century capitalism under the sway of an overhanging audio-visual technology "verticalized" along an axis through which information flows from top to bottom, and is then channeled to be disseminated in each home transformed into a mini stadium lodge redoubling in an intimate space the stadium itself".

More generally, other authors have taken up the term 'sportivisation' put forward by Brohm and given it a different vision and nuance (e.g. Attali and Saint-Martin, 2004, Marsault, 2009, Lebreton, 2010). First of all, Attali and Saint-Martin (2004) speak of sportivisation to describe the generalization of sports practices, and more generally of physical practices as an educational issue from the 1960s onwards, notably with Michel Herzog's policy aiming to use sport as a means of education and training for the youth in France. Marsault (2009) summarises this thinking by seeing sportivisation as the enhancement of society's sporting practices through physical and sports education at school. Marsault then extends the concept by explaining that the extension of the sports phenomenon is such that one can speak of a global sportivisation of society. Thus, from the beginning of the 1960s onwards, culture was "sportivised", leading to the development of new mass culture (Marsault, 2009). However, the image of sport is changing alongside society, moving from a symbol of progress and technique to a destructive activity where participants are ready to do anything to win, thus leading to the questioning of the sports model. Similarly, the relationship between politics and sport seems to have evolved and become

more complex over time, notably through the gradual withdrawal of states from the organization of sport and the arrival of the economic logic in the practice (Amar, 1987). Thus, the symbolic value of sport gives way to economic value, and sporting activities become objects of consumption (Marsault, 2009). Lebreton (2010), for his part, speaks of a “total social fact”, in the sense of Mauss (1924) to describe the process of sportivisation, as it involves the whole of society and its institutions.

However, it is worth noting that the use of the term sportivisation is sometimes confused with the English term 'sportification', which is specific to the work of Allan Guttman (Suchet, 2004; Ramirez, 2015). Moreover, the two concepts seem to be confounded by some researchers. For this reason, we have decided to focus particularly on the work of Brohm and those who take up his research in our definition of sportivisation.

### Critics of Brohm's vision

The highly critical and sometimes partisan side of Brohm's work has led to critics on several aspects (Duret, 2019). The first critic concerns the fact that sport is not exclusively the property of totalitarian states. In the course of history, people have used sport as a means of protest (Bromberger, 1998). For example, in 1958, several professional players from the French championship deserted to join the Algerian National Liberation Front football team to promote Algerian independence. The team organized several world tours to make their situation known to the rest of the world, before being disbanded following the country's independence in 1962. Similarly, although the 1978 World Cup in Argentina was organized by the military dictatorship, many demonstrations took place in the country's stadiums afterward, and it was not unusual to hear chants calling for the end of the military dictatorship in the stadiums (Bromberger, 1998). More recent examples can also be highlighted. For example, the 2010 World Cup in South Africa served above all to show a state without apartheid, implementing a forgiveness policy. Therefore, sport would not be ideological by definition and would be a simple tool that could serve any ideology.



*Figure 18: The 1962 Algerian National Liberation Front football team*

Moreover, according to Ehrenberg (1991), sport is a non-political means of popularising the values of equality because it makes them work by rooting them in the banalest everydayness, that of distraction. Thus, through the prism of equality of opportunity, it seems that everyone can participate and compete against everyone else, with no predefined advantage. This is why all the passions that drive sport are unleashed. In Brazil, for example, where society is highly hierarchical, the space created by football even allows people to express themselves freely, thus going against Brohm's discourse (Da Matta, 1982). Football, and by extension sport, can thus allow each person to reveal himself or herself as he or she is, without jeopardizing personal relationships, and is thus a socialization machine of private individuals.

The second criticism of Brohm's work relates directly to sports spectators (Duret, 2019). Indeed, they are not as subject to the law of crowds and group effects as described by Brohm. They are not puppets, have their consciousness, and can dissociate the sporting spectacle from the elements associated with it. Finally, the criticism that all top sportsmen and women come from the right-wing also seems rather limited. There are as many left-wing figures as right-wing ones, and one of the strengths of the sports world is that it allows everyone to participate, regardless of their political orientation (Duret, 2019). Moreover, this political orientation also seems to be less and less visible among today's sportsmen and women than it was in the past.

The concept of sportivisation was therefore initially put forward as a critique of the sports movement. Sport, in this Marxist critique, is seen as a political tool allowing states to satisfy their capitalist ideology. Thus, the concept of sportivisation can, in a broad sense, designate the orientation of sport towards an economic logic, as well as its diffusion to all parts of society, be it from a political, economic, or sociological point of view.

Through the study of sportisation (Elias, 1974), sportification (Guttmann, 1978) and sportivisation (Brohm, 2001), interesting constitutive elements and characteristics of sport seem to emerge. The following table provides an overview of such elements.

<b>Sociological approach</b>	<b>Main authors</b>	<b>Name of the approach</b>	<b>Aspects highlighted in the literature</b>
Figurational sociology – Sportisation in the Civilizing Process	Norbert Elias Eric Dunning	Sportisation	Physicality, Competition, Culture, Social, Equality, Excitement, Rules, Political, Cheating, Institutions
Comprehensive Sociology – The Nature of Modern Sport	Allen Guttmann Bo Carlsson	Sportification	Equality, Specialisation, Rationalisation, Bureaucratisation, Institutions Quantification, Record, Event, Entertainment, Spectators, Economy
Marxist Approach – The Critical Theory of Sport	Jean-Marie Brohm Marc Perelman	Sportivisation	Ideology, Education, Politics, Institutions, Capitalism, Science, Merchandising, Economy, Sponsor, Entertainment, Media

*Table 5: The main constitutive elements of sport highlighted in the literature*

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esports as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the perceived sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the perceived sportivity scale to esports: the French League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- **Chapter 2: Individuals' perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport**
  - **Section 1: A perception-based approach – The contribution of categorization models**
  - Section 2: Introducing esport
  - Section 3: Esport under the prism of categorization theory – Similarities between sport and esport
- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes

## CHAPTER 2: INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTION OF LEGITIMACY AND CATEGORIZATION THEORY – STUDYING ESPORT AS A SPORT

### Section 1: A perception-based approach – The contribution of categorization models

#### **1.1 An institutional approach of sport – A quest for legitimacy**

As we can see from our historical and sociological review, sport seems to be primarily defined by its institutions that act as regulators. The history and sociology of sport can be summarised as a quest for legitimacy by participants, clubs and institutions. Indeed, whether it is Elias (1974), Guttman (1978), or Brohm (2001), institutions are always seen as one of the pillars of sport. In this research, we will focus on the individual perceptions of sport and their outcomes on brand perception and consumer outcomes. However, to acknowledge the importance of understanding consumer perceptions, we need first to focus on institutions, which are the classic sport regulating bodies.

From a marketing point of view, institutions have mostly been studied under the prism of neo-institutional theory (NIT) (Di Maggio and Powel, 1983; Suchman, 1995; Handelman and Arnould, 1999, Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014). Based on the work of Weber, Di Maggio and Powell (1983) argue that organizations always institutionalize to become legitimate and thus more successful in their market. Chaney and Ben Slimane (2014, p.1-2), building on Meyer and Rowan (1978), and DiMaggio and Powell (1983), define Neo-Institutional Theory (NIT) as: "the theoretical framework that has helped clarify and understand the process of institutionalization within and between organizations". Neo-Institutional Theory thus explains the similarity between the organizations faced with the same pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). The central postulate of NIT is that organizations achieve legitimacy by conforming to institutions (Singh, Tucker and House, 1986).

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) companies develop within fields that regroup similar companies, what they call an organizational field. Chaney and Ben Slimane (2014, p.3) define the organizational field as "all organizations that, in aggregate and through their repeated



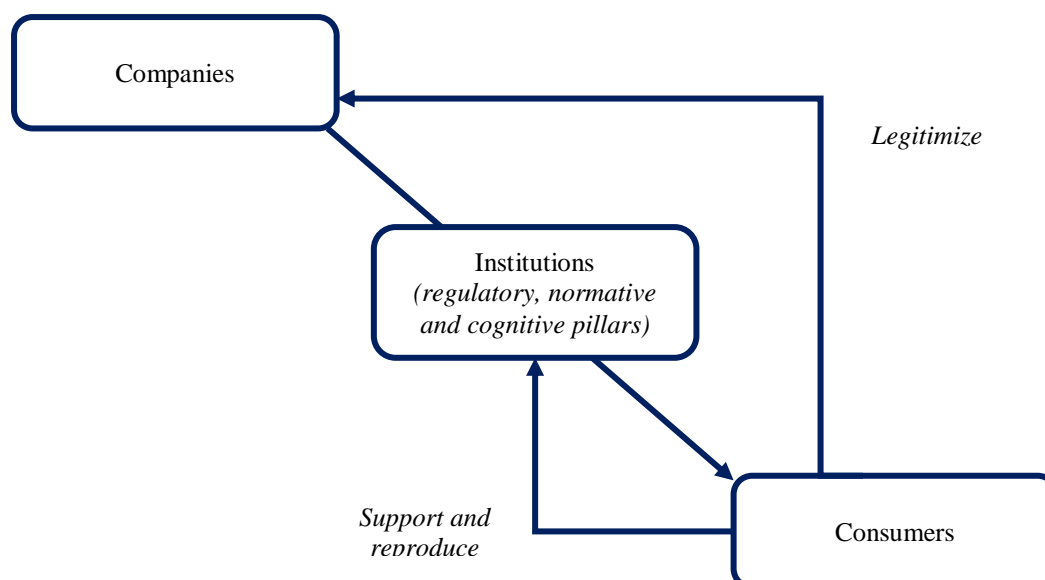
interactions, constitute an identifiable area of institutional life”. These organizational fields represent one pillar of legitimacy for companies. According to Chaney and Ben Slimane (2014) two other elements are central to NIT: the pillars of institutions (Scott, 1995) and the concept of legitimacy.

Scott (1995) argues that “Institutions are variously comprised of cultural-cognitive, normative and regulatory elements that, taken together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life”. He calls these three elements “pillars”. The first pillar is the regulatory pillar and constitutes the first building block for institutions. It is concerned with laws and formal rules, set up by States and regulatory bodies (North, 1990; Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014). The second pillar, the normative pillar is concerned with norms, standards and values that are set up by professionals and organizations that engage with institutions. Finally, the last pillar, the cultural-cognitive pillar, is defined by Chaney and Ben Slimane (2014, p.3) as the most characteristic element of NIT. According to Scott (2008, p57.), the cultural-cognitive pillars emphasize “the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made. While the normative pillar is focused on professionals and organizations, the cultural-cognitive pillar goes deeper, and relates to the meanings, beliefs, norms and set associated with the institutions in the consumer’s mind. These three pillars of institution support every consumption practice, and any change in these pillars directly affects how individuals consume an offering (Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014). The following table, adapted from Scott (2005), provides an overview of the three pillars of institutions.

	<b>Regulative</b>	<b>Normative</b>	<b>Cultural-Cognitive</b>
Basis of compliance	Expedience	Social obligation	Taken-for-grantedness Shared understanding
Basis of order	Regulative rules	Binding expectations	Constitutive schema
Mechanism	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
Logic	Instrumentality	Appropriateness	Orthodoxy
Indicators	Rules	Certification	Common beliefs
	Laws	Accreditation	Shared logic of action
	Sanctions		
Basis of legitimacy	Legally Sanctioned	Morally governed	Comprehensible Recognizable Culturally supported

*Table 6: The three pillars of institutions (from Scott, 2005)*

The objective of this institutional work is to achieve legitimacy. According to Chaney, Ben Slimane and Humphreys (2015), the global NIT process can be divided into two steps. The first step consists of the constructions of the regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars. The second step consists of institutional work through which companies will provide consumers with knowledge, meaning, identity, status, and standards of behaviors that will affect them. Finally, consumers will give sense and meaning to these institutions and their products, and will therefore accept them through legitimacy (Suchman, 1995; Handelman and Arnold, 1999). The following figure, adapted from Chaney, Ben Sliman and Humphreys (2015) provides an overview of the NIT process and the relationships between companies, institutions and consumers.



*Figure 19: NIT and company-institutions-consumers relations (from Chaney, Ben Slimane and Humphreys, 2015)*

As we can see from Figure 24, the objective of the institutions is to give meaning to consumers who will then judge companies as either being legitimate or not. The pillars of institutions are therefore only a basis for the creation of legitimacy. Legitimacy, as a social process, has been defined by Suchman (1995, p.574) as “a generalized perception, assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions”. This definition, which is at the basis of NIT contrasts with a previous view of legitimacy, called the determinist view, that considered legitimacy as being conferred on companies by actors in the organizational field (Chaney and Ben Slimane, 2014). Instead, legitimacy becomes a resource that companies seek to acquire through institutions and is only given by consumers. Therefore, legitimacy moves from being an operational tool to

becoming a set of constitutive beliefs (Suchman, 1988). According to Suchman (1995), there are several consequences of legitimacy for companies. First, legitimacy enhances the stability and comprehensibility of organizations. Then, legitimacy leads to persistence for companies, because their resources appear more desirable to consumers (Parson, 1960). Moreover, legitimacy also affects how people not only act towards companies but also how they understand them (Suchman, 1995). Consumers judge legitimate companies as being more meaningful and more trustworthy. Finally, legitimacy also leads to more active support from people.

Then, Suchman (1995) also describes three types of legitimacy that companies can seek to acquire and build a typology of legitimacy. The following table provides an overview of Suchman's typology of legitimacy and contains not only the three types of legitimacy described by Suchman but also their subtypes.

Type of Legitimacy	Subtype of Legitimacy	Definition
Pragmatic Legitimacy	Exchange Legitimacy	The basic level of pragmatic legitimacy. Support for an organization will be based on the actor's expected value of that organization's offering.
	Influence Legitimacy	A more social level of pragmatic legitimacy. Actors not only support the organization for their value but also because it answers their larger interests.
	Dispositional Legitimacy	The individual supports the organization due to the good attributes that he gives to the organization (trustworthy, decent, wise). This arises as a result of a personification of the organization.
	Consequential Legitimacy	The individual supports the organization because he judges the organization's actions as being moral according to his social values.
Moral Legitimacy	Procedural Legitimacy	The organization is considered legitimate by the individual because it embraces socially accepted techniques and procedures
	Structural Legitimacy	The individual views the organization as legitimate because its structural characteristics allow it to do specific kinds of work.
	Personal Legitimacy	Personal legitimacy refers to legitimacy that is derived from the charisma of individual organization leaders,
Cognitive Legitimacy	Comprehensive Legitimacy	Legitimacy is accorded to the institution because it is seen as being socially proper and desirable. The institution is in line with the individual's self-interest.
	Taken-for-Granted Legitimacy	The most subtle and powerful type of legitimacy. Alternatives become unthinkable and the institution is seen as an absolute necessity by the individual

*Table 7: The Legitimacy typology (adapted from Suchman, 1995)*

Suchman (1995, p587) also describes some strategies through which organizations can acquire legitimacy. In his opinion, legitimacy building can always be divided into three categories: efforts 1/ to conform to the dictates of pre-existing audiences within the organization's current

environment, 2/ to select among multiple environments in pursuit of an audience that will support current practices, and 3/ to manipulate environmental structure by creating new audiences and new legitimating beliefs. Suchman (1995) then focuses on one strategy that companies use to achieve legitimacy: isomorphism (Hawley, 1968; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Isomorphism is a “constraining process, forcing one part of the population to resemble another facing the same environmental condition” (Hawley, 1968, p.328-337.). Therefore, isomorphism can be seen as a coping mechanism used by companies to gain legitimacy in the consumer’s mind. Building on Meyer (1979) and Fennell (1980), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that there are two types of isomorphism: one that relates to competition between organizations within a field, and one that relates to institutions. Deephouse (1996) tested the direct effect of isomorphism on legitimacy in a 7-yearlong study and found that strategic isomorphism for companies had a positive impact on multiple measures of legitimacy, thus supporting propositions from Meyer and Rowan (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Suchman (1995). Therefore, isomorphism, or mimicking other actors to be classified as similar by consumers, affects organizational outcomes.

Recently, research on legitimacy has also focused on consumers’ attribution of legitimacy. According to Alexiou and Wiggins (2019, p.470) “To fully understand legitimacy as a complex construct, it is necessary to capture both collective perceptions and individual judgments”. Because legitimacy judgments occur across multiple levels both simultaneously and recursively; individual perceptions of categorical norms, provide shared cognitive templates with which consumers make legitimacy judgments. In this research, we agree with Alexiou and Wiggins (2019) and focus on individual processes of categorization that will then affect perceptions of legitimacy. We, therefore, move from an institutional approach of legitimacy to an individual-based approach, focusing on elements influencing legitimacy judgments.

## **1.2 Individual perceptions of legitimacy – The use of categorization theory**

In this research, we will build on categorization theory to explore the constitutive elements of sport that influence consumers’ perceptions of leisure activities and influence them by associating these leisure activities to the “sports category”.

Marketing scholars have started to explore how legitimacy is built and attributed by consumers to organizations, emphasizing once more the importance of the individual perception (e.g. Stanaland, Lwin and Murphy, 2011; Yang, Su and Fam, 2012; Humphreys and Latour, 2013; Panwar, et al., 2014; Chaney, Lunardo and Bressolles, 2016; Hu et al., 2018; Lee, Yoon and O'Donnell, 2018). Research has explored legitimacy processes in many contexts, such as retailing (Chaney, Lunardo and Bressolles, 2016), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Stanaland, Lwin and Murphy, 2011; Panwar et al., 2014; Lee, Yoon and O'Donnell, 2018), brands (Hu et al, 2018) or firms in general (Yang, Su and Fam, 2012).

In another context, Humphreys and Latour (2013) explored how media framing of online gambling affected consumers' perception of legitimacy using categorization theory (Higgins, Bargh and Lombardi, 1985). In this research, we extend Humphreys and Latour (2013) by positing that consumer categorization processes affect not only their perception of legitimacy but also other consumer outcomes. In this research, we build on previous research on categorization theory, and particularly on Humphreys and Latour's (2013) work on perceived legitimacy and categorization theory to propose that the categorization of leisure activities as being sporty influences not only brand legitimacy but also – and more generally – consumers' behavioral outcomes.

Research on consumer Categorization started in the late 70s and explored how priming effects influenced the naming of the stimulus (Forbach, Stanners and Hochhaus, 1974; Meyer, Schvaneveldt and Ruddy, 1975; Neely, 1977; Warren, 1977); on characterization and identification of the stimulus (Bargh and Pietro-monaco, 1982; Higgins, Rholes and Jones, 1977; Rholes and Pryor, 1982; Srull and Wyer, 1979); but also subsequent consumer processing (Hayes-Roth, 1977; Reder, 1983; Srull and Wyer, 1979, 1980; Higgins, Bargh and Lombardi, 1985).

In a marketing context, Categorization was first explored and applied in the seminal work of Alba and Hutchinson (1987) on familiarity and expertise. The authors (1987) built on psychological work on categorization models to propose that consumer expertise is dependent on 5 dimensions – Cognitive efforts, Cognitive structure, Analysis, Elaboration and Memory – and that these five dimensions have an influence on decision making for consumers. The following figure provides an overview of the categorization process through the five dimensions of consumer expertise and their relations.

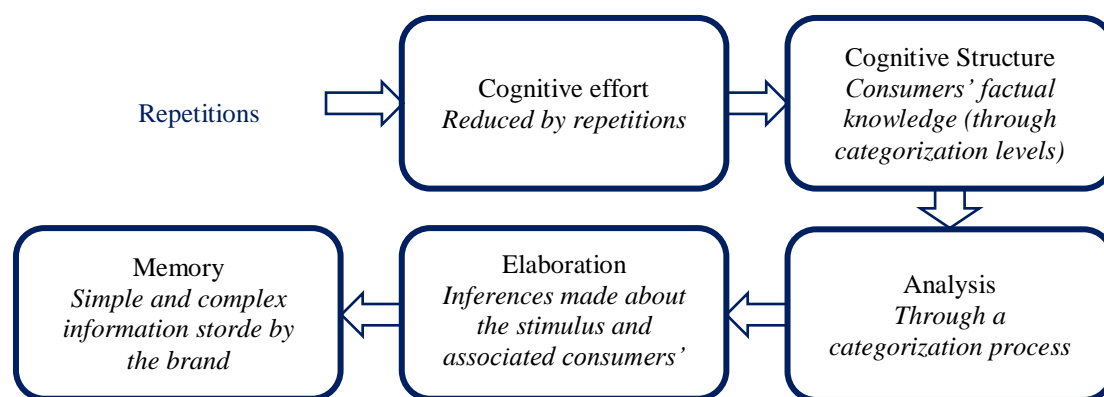


Figure 20: The Five dimensions of Customer Expertise (from Alba and Hutchinson, 1987)

Then, Cohen and Basu (1987) proposed an approach of categorization theory, based on psychology research (Mervis and Rosch, 1981). According to Mervis and Rosch (1981, p.341): “categories exist whenever two or more distinguishable objects or events are treated equivalently. This equivalent treatment may take any number of forms, such as labeling distinct objects or events with the same name or performing the same action on different objects. Stimulus situations are unique, but organisms do not treat them uniquely; they answer based on past learning and categorization. In this sense, categorization may be considered one of the most basic functions of living creatures”. Categorization can therefore be seen as a process through which consumers regroup similar objects and stimuli under similar categories. Moreover, according to Mervin and Rosh (1981), categorization is considered a fundamental cognitive activity that encompasses all forms of stimulus situations, making it a promising theory for marketers. Finally, in a cognitive psychology context, Srull and Wyer (1980) found that people categorize social experiences and associated expectations, and then use such categorization to attend to information, interpret and infer meanings, solve problems, set goals, or even select their behavior towards the social experience.

Applied to a marketing context, the categorization process explains that consumers’ knowledge about products, services, or brands forms at least partially integrated structures in memory (Cohen and Basu, 1987). These structures should be constructed using similar attributes and features. From a consumer perspective, categorization is used to enhance and facilitate information processing and cognitive stability (Lingle, Altom and Medin, 1984); Cohen and Basu, 1987). Boush (1993), for example, showed how priming a food-product extension’s advertisement with different qualities (nutrition, spicy or high quality) led to differences in the overall consumer evaluation of the product extension.

Using previous research, Cohen and Basu (1987) show how customer categorization affects evaluation, judgment and affective responses (Cohen, 1982; Fiske, 1982; Barsalou, 1983; Hutchinson and Alba, 1985; Sujan, 1985; Fazio, 1986). Then, they also present three views of categorization that differ in their analytical and non-analytical processes for consumers: the Classical view, the Prototype/Probabilistic View, and the Exemplar view.

The classical view, or the rule defined view, posits that people adopt conscious and unconscious concept identification strategies that maximize the information gained from each stimulus, and ensure that the concept will be attained with certainty, minimizing errors and cognitive strain on the way to solutions (Fink and Dominowski 1974; Bruner, 1986; Cohen and Basu, 1987). However, this view seems to only address easily definable and unambiguous concepts. Therefore, it is not the best suited in most consumer settings.

The prototype or probabilistic view proposes that categorization processes rely on mental category memberships that include “prototype” constructs. Prototypes are defined in terms of sets of features commonly associated with members of categories (Rosch and Mervis, 1975), with each feature having its weight in the category. This view proposes that people categorize stimulus based on the overall goodness of membership assessment, rather than on critical features.

Finally, in the exemplar view, stimuli are categorized by cueing the retrieval of specific category exemplars. According to Cohen and Basu (1987): “The more similar the target instance is to concrete exemplars of a category, the more likely it will be placed in that category”. The following table, extracted from Cohen and Basu (1987) provides an overview of the three views of categorization.

Category representation			
Comparison process	Classical / Rule defined	Prototype / Probabilistic defined	Exemplar defined
<b>Analytic</b>			
Automatic mechanisms	Preconscious dimensional analysis of target (e.g., brightness, shape, location for visual inputs) instigates serial comparisons to hierarchically organized memory representations until a "satisfactory" match is found. Illustrated in models of stimulus detection/identification and word recognition.	Target is compared to either a probabilistic rule or an ideal category member possibly via automatic (and exhaustive) retrieval of features associated to some degree with a category. The larger the number of "successful" comparisons, the closer the target is to the centroid of the category.	The category is represented by several "good" examples. These are specific concrete instances. Comparison to a target is carried out on a feature-to-feature basis following initial retrieval of "plausible" or available exemplars as in Rule Defined.
Deliberative mechanisms	Emphasis is on more conscious and top-down mechanisms. Key features of target are singled out for explicit comparison against a category-defining feature-based rule (which itself may be abstracted from prior learning experiences).	Same as the analytic automatic mechanism except mechanism is more similar to hypothesis testing wherein either a prescribed number of critical features tests must be confirmed or the matches must be "sufficiently close" on a requisite number of features to establish family resemblance.	Exemplar retrieval is probably guided by top-down or contextual factors. The closeness of match is determined by individual features tests based most likely on some combination of several feature matches and closeness of individual matches. Once exemplar(s) is (are) identified, idiosyncratic features may play an important role in all exemplar comparisons.
<b>Nonanalytic</b>			
Automatic mechanisms	Same as the analytic automatic mechanism except for configural or template representation of target and feature-based rules are compared directly using some overall "automatic" response to similarity/dissimilarity (possibly activation level following an unsuccessful comparison). No clearly specified model is available for this cell.	Though both representational versions of a prototype model are possible, a more "holistic" comparison to some hypothetical "ideal" category member is suggested. The mechanism is unspecified, possibly similar to the Rule defined nonanalytic automatic mechanism wherein a significant departure from a "good fit" leads to continued memory search.	Preconscious processing of target feature-level information produces an overall representation that is compared directly against an overall representation of an exemplar. Significant dissimilarity/incongruity leads to the search for better fitting exemplars. No well-specified model exists for this cell
Deliberative mechanisms	Same as the analytic deliberative mechanism except for a configural or template representation of target and feature-based rule are compared directly, and criterion centers on degree of overall fit (e.g., pattern matching). No clearly specified model is available for this cell.	This differs from the nonanalytic automatic mechanism in that a more "top-down" comparison process is suggested. The criterion, therefore, may be similar to a "nearest neighbor" rule proceeding from the most "plausible" or available category. Nonfeature-based comparisons are not well specified and may be difficult to distinguish from well-earned and rapid feature-based automatic mechanisms.	Similar to the prototype defined nonanalytic deliberative mechanism except that the matching process and criterion center on some direct determination of the degree of overall similarity to one or several exemplars. Configural properties (at a minimum, correlations among features) are possible as a basis for comparison; however, no more global model has been clearly specified.

*Table 8: Typology of information processing models of categorization (from Cohen and Bsu, 1987)*

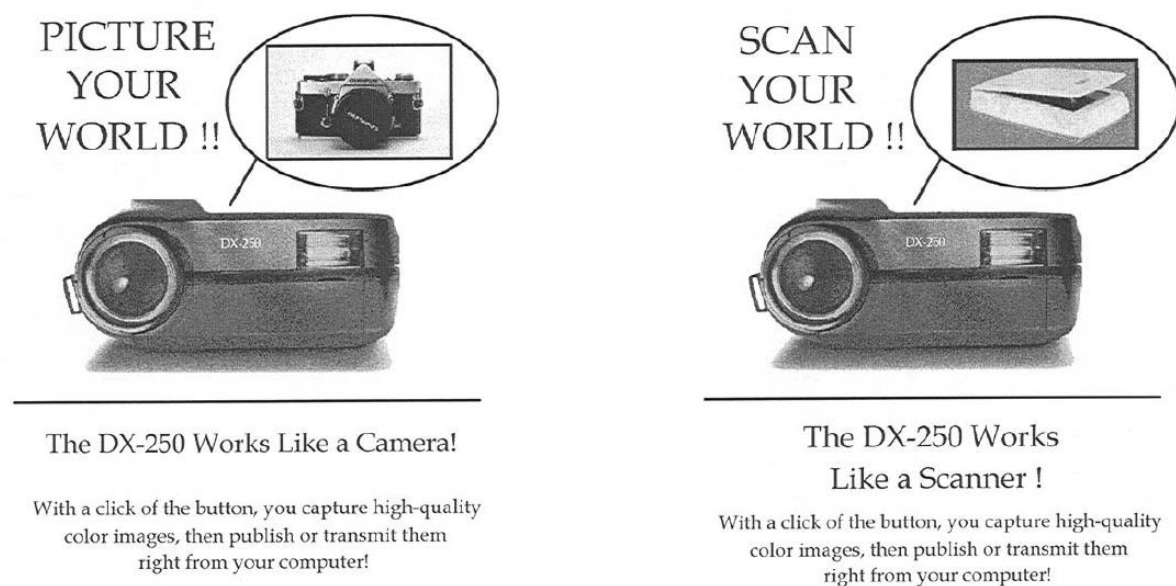


In a psychology context, Nosofsky (1988) and Nosofsky, Kruschke and McKinley (1992) explored these different types of models and compared them using experiments and previous research (Medin and Schaffer, 1978; Gluck and Bower, 1988). Nosofsky (1988) first focused on the exemplar view and tested an exemplar-based approach to interpreting old-new recognition memory data obtained in categorization learning situations with quantitative tests. He found that the tests revealed some success in using the exemplar model to account for detailed relations between categorization and recognition. Nosofsky, Kruschke and McKinley (1992) then conducted two other studies to test and compare the efficiency of a prototype-based model and an exemplar-based model in similar situations. Results showed the importance of using an exemplar-based category representation. Indeed, only that exemplar-based model accounted for all the major qualitative phenomena and achieved good quantitative predictions in terms of learning and transfer of data. From a psychological point of view, the exemplar view, therefore, seems to be the best in predicting categorization models.

Basu (1993) extended previous work from Cohen and Basu (1987) and Nosofsky, Kruschke and McKinley (1992) using two methodological paradigms, the first involving the outcome of categorization judgments made by consumers for unfamiliar products/brands. The second, based on the retrieval of exemplars acquired during category learning and verification of their match with the target, was subjected to an empirical examination. They found that both the category-judgment and verification paradigms were promising in terms of model identification. More precisely, they also focused on the analytic/nonanalytic dichotomy in their research. They found that the two categorization processes, analytic and nonanalytic, led to differences in accuracy in verifying inconsistent-associated and consistent-unassociated aspects of category exemplars that subjects had been exposed to in the learning stage of the study.

In the 1990s, market research using categorization theory emerged (e.g. Ozanne, Brucks and Grewal, 1992; Basu, 1993; Urban, Hulland, and Weinberg, 1993; Schmitt and Zhang, 1998). Most of this research focused on either product extension (e.g. Ozanne, Brucks and Grewal, 1992), brand extension (e.g. Urban, Hulland and Weinber, 1993; Michel, 2001; Michel and Salha, 2005) or co-branding (e.g. Cegarra and Michel, 2001). Other works, for example, Schmitt and Zhang (1998) explored how language affected not only consumer cognition but also their judgment and choice, highlighting once more how categorization models can help predict not only consumers' perception but also their behavioral attention.

In the 2000s, marketing research using categorization theory focused mostly on new product-categorization and knowledge transfer (e.g. Morau, Markman and Lehmann, 2001; Loken, Barsalou and Joiner, 2008). Morau, Markman and Lehman (2001) focused on customer responses to new products using two experiments. In their experiment, two ads for digital cameras were displayed, one framing the digital camera as a camera, and the other framing the digital camera as a scanner. Results showed that participants who were exposed to the “camera” framed advertisement perceived the pictures of the camera as being more qualitative than the other group. This can be explained by the fact that cameras, as a category, are seen as more qualitative when taking pictures. Therefore, only framing a camera as a scanner in an ad had an effect on consumers’ mental representation of the object and on their perceived quality of that same object. The following figure provides the stimuli used during the experiment (from Morau, Markman and Lehmann, 2001).



*Figure 21: The digital camera ads from Morau, Markman and Lehmann (2001)*

In an overview of existing consumer psychology research, Loken, Barsalou and Joiner (2008) provide a list of existing research using categorization theory. The following table provides an updated version of their work

Subject of research	Main Contributions
Product categories	Sujan, 1985; Herr, 1989; Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1989; Loken and Ward, 1990; Viswanathan and Childers, 1999; Rosa and Porac, 2002; Martin, Stewart and Matta, 2005; Jamerson, 2009; Van Horen and Pieters, 2017
Brand categories	Boush et al., 1987; Park, Milberg and Lawson, 1991; Boush and Loken, 1991; Hutchinson, Raman, and Mantrala, 1994; Wanke, Bless and Schwarz, 1998; Lee and Ganesh, 1999; Lee and Sternthal, 1999; Barone and Miniard, 2002; Cowley and Mitchell, 2003; Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2011; Liu et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2020
goal-related categories	Ratneshwar and Shocker, 1991; Ratneshwar, Pechmann, and Shocker, 1996; Ratneshwar et al., 2001; Redden, 2008; Lasaleta and Redden, 2018
cultural categories	Aaker and Lee, 2001; Briley and Wyer, 2002; Zuckerman and Kim, 2003, Hsu, 2003; Rindova, Petkova and Kotha, 2007; Schmutz, 2009; Jense, 2010; Humphreys and Latour, 2013;
product user categories	Pechmann and Knight, 2002
the self as a category	Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner, 1993; Aaker, 1999; Hornsey, 2008; Turner and Reynolds, 2011.
institutions as categories	Clark and Montgomery, 1999; Porac, Wade and Pollock, 1999; Labianca et al, 2001; McKendrick and Carroll, 2001; McNamara, Luce and Thompson, 2002; Labianca and Fairbank, 2005

*Table 9: Overview of existing research using categorization theory (adapted from Loken, Barsalou and Joiner, 2008; and Vergne and Wry, 2013)*

In a review of existing research on categorization, Vergne and Wry (2013) also offer some insights concerning future opportunities in the field. In their opinion, categories can be linked with audience perceptions, which then can improve the audience's willingness to support an organization. They also argue for the use of categorization in providing legitimacy. Finally, they also "envision exciting research in the area of strategic categorization. Whereas emergence studies focus on the processes of building new categories, opportunities abound to explore how organizations strategically signal their affiliation(s) within an existing category system. For instance, Vergne (2012) showed that organizations can manipulate how they and their competitors are classified to dilute a stigmatized identity". Therefore, companies could manipulate how consumers categorize to affect not only their brand perception but also consumer-related outcomes.

The same year, Humphreys and Latour (2013) also explored the link between legitimacy and categorization, by studying how media coverage affected customers' categorization of leisure activities such as gambling. In this research, we do not aim to extend work on media's influence on consumer categorization. However, we aim to extend that work and apply it to another context, where categorization is still subject to debate even at the individual level, esports.

More recently, research started to explore how visual and non-visual elements affect consumers' categorization of different stimuli (Koschman and Isaac, 2018; Chen et al., 2020). For example, Koschman and Isaac (2018) showed how representations of store format (e.g. Club stores, Drug stores, Grocery stores) affected consumer price expectation and choice decisions. Chen et al (2020) also showed how packaging shape, as a visual cue, had an impact on the brand status categorization, and ultimately on the brand choice for consumers. In our research, we aim to extend our logic to customer experiences.

Building on categorization theory, we explore the constitutive elements of sport that influence consumers' perceptions of leisure activities and influence them by associating these leisure activities to the "sports category". These constitutive elements will be explored further in the second part of this research, during the measurement tool development. The first section of the chapter focusing on the influence of categorization theory in marketing and consumer behavior, we can now turn to the object that we will analyze through consumer categorization: esport. In the following sections, we will first define esport as an object of study. Then, we will provide theoretical justification for the use of esport as an object of categorization.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- **Chapter 2: Individuals' perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport**
  - Section 1: A perception-based approach – The contribution of categorization models
  - **Section 2: Introducing esport**
  - Section 3: Esport under the prism of categorization theory – Similarities between sport and esport
- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes

## Section 2: Introducing esports

### 2.1 Defining esports

Hemphill (2006) proposed one of the first definitions of esports in research. In his paper, he explores the relations between sports game simulations and ‘real sports’, as well as the possible categorization of these simulations as sports. In his definition, cybersports are simulations of real-world sports and are sufficiently “physical” and “skillful” to be considered as sports, hereby suggesting that physicality and skills can be considered important dimensions that one may refer to characterize an activity as sporty. At the same time, Wagner (2006, p4.), in his quest to examine the scientific relevance of esports, defines it as “an area of sports activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies”. Let us note that here again, physicality appears as a dimension used to characterize sports, in addition to mental abilities.

However, sports simulations are only a small part of esports, and the most-watched and played esports games are other types of video games, which are not based on real-world sports. To have a better understanding of what esports represents, Witkowski (2012, p.350) proposes that esports “commonly refers to an organized and competitive approach to playing computer games”. More recently, more complete definitions of esports have also emerged. For example, Segal (2014, para.6) defines esports as “a catchall term for games that resemble conventional sports insofar as they have superstars, playoffs, fans, uniforms, comebacks, and upsets... But where all the action occurs online, and the contestants hardly move”. As we can see, most of the early definitions regarding esports make clear reference to sports. Jenny et al. (2017), p.15 proposed a more complete and detailed definition of esports, still related to sport. In their view, esports “include play and competition, are organized by rules, require skill, and have a broad following. However, esports currently lacks great physicality and institutionalization.”. In 2017, Hamari and Sjöblom also propose their definition of esports based on works from Witkowski (in Christopher and Scholz, 2009; 2012) and Taylor (2012). They define esports as “a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems. The input of players and teams, as well as the output of the esports system, are mediated by human-computer interfaces” (p.221).

Finally, in 2020, Reitman et al. propose a literature review of existing esports research, explore and define esports through the lens of different fields of research, namely business, sports

science, cognitive science and psychology, informatics, law, media studies and technology. Their first remark regarding the definition of esports is that, maybe due to the relative youth of the research object, there are many contested definitions of esports. It is defined as either competitive gaming, computer-mediated sport, or interactive spectatorship (Reitman et al. 2020), and definitions emphasize different aspects such as physicality, computer mediation, institutional infrastructure and spectatorship. However, the definition of esports as competitive gaming seems to be the most widely accepted. Indeed, this definition allows bypassing the eternal debate regarding the categorization of esports as a sport. Moreover, the status of esports as videogame makes consensus, and the competitive aspect of esports is at the center of its definition. According to Reitman et al. (2020, p.40) “proponents of this definition of esports do not consider the broadcast popularity and level of institutional infrastructure surrounding a game title to be factors in classifying a game as an esports”. Other definitions of esports that focus on aspects such as teams (Freeman and Wohn, 2017), technology (Zang, Wu and Li, 2007), law (Abanazir, 2019), or cultural significance (Taylor, 2012; Burk, 2013) exist but mostly focus on non-central aspects that do not help to define esports.

From what precedes, in this research, we adopt the most widely used and broadest definition of esports, and therefore, we define esports as “any form of competitive video gaming in which human players compete against each other”. With this definition, we follow the definition of France Esports, which defines esports as “a set of practices that allow players to confront each other through an electronic medium, mainly the video game, whether synchronously (simultaneous confrontation) or asynchronously (confrontation by high score or interposed time)” (<https://www.france-esports.org/>). Different types of esports practices can be introduced using that definition. Esports can be a leisure practice in which players play against their peers without any formal competition or ranking. It can also be an amateur practice where players engage in competition from time to time, be it through online ranking or physical events. Esports can also be seen as a professional practice where players have a contractual relationship with teams and engage intensively in competitions. Finally, esports can also be a show practice. This type of practice concerns streamers and video makers who share their practice on video streaming platforms such as Twitch and Youtube, to entertain their audience. The following figure provides an overview of the different types of esports practices.

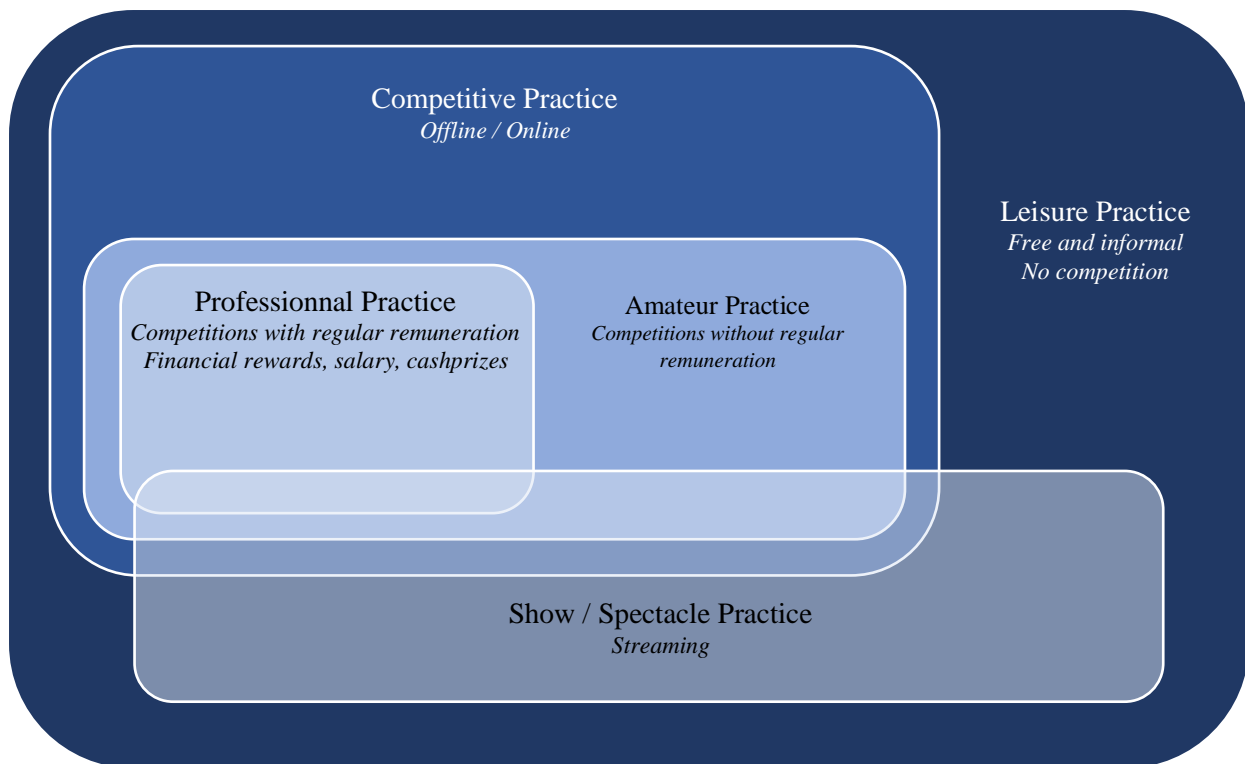


Figure 22: Typology of esports practices (from <https://www.france-esports.org/>)

Before going any further, it seems important to differentiate esports from sports simulation video games, as noted by Jenny et al. (2017). While sports video games aim to emulate real-life sports, with games such as FIFA, NFL, or NBA2K, esports titles are not bound in definition to a specific genre of game. They can be many types of games, such as shooter games, strategy games, arcade games, simulation games... Sports simulation games nowadays represent a niche market in esports, and very few people play them competitively. Sports simulation games are therefore part of esports but represent a minority. Most esports games are not based on real sports and are more centered on fantasy worlds. The following table, extracted from a Statista/Newzoo study (2020) proposes a list of the most played esports titles, with their genres, none of them being sports simulations games.



Video Game	Genre	Number of hours watched on streaming platforms (in millions)
League of Legends	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA)	348,8
Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	First-person Shooter (FPS)	215
Dota 2	MOBA	198,9
Overwatch	FPS	109,9
Hearthstone	Digital Collectible Card Game	37
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Siege	FPS	32,4
Arena of Valor	MOBA	31,6
PUBG Mobile	Battle Royale (mobile game)	27,9
Fortnite	Battle Royale	27,5
PLAYERUNKNOWN'S BATTLEGROUNDS	Battle Royale	26,8

*Table 10: Most watched esports games in 2019 (Statista, 2020)*

A 2021 market study from Statista provides a good overview of the esports market and its opportunities, despite the pandemic. Between 2019 and 2020, the esports market revenue remained roughly the same (from \$957,5 million to \$947,1 million) and is expected to grow in the next years to reach \$1091,1 million in 2021 and \$1617,7 million in 2024. Similarly, the global esports audience grew from 2019 (397.8 million) to 2021 (474 million) and is expected to reach 577,2 million in 2024. Similarly, cash prizes, media rights and sponsoring have also been growing up since 2019, and are expected to reach unprecedented heights in the next few years. Therefore, studying esports, if only from an economic point of view, represents huge opportunities for companies.

As we can see from the previously highlighted definitions of esports, the similarities between sport and esports and the fit between esports and perceived sportivity seem to be apparent already. However, to go deeper into the similarities and differences between sport and esports and to justify the use of categorization theory, we will need to look back at esports history. In the next part of this section, we will explore this history, but also the development of esports, and its relations to sport in both research and management. This section will allow us to better understand the choice of esports and its categorization as either a sport or not.

## **2.2 The history of esports**

Several authors have worked on the history of esports to better understand the phenomenon that it is today (Wagner, 2006; Borowy and Jin, 2013; Heere, 2018; Scholz, 2019). One of the most recent and complete reviews of the history of esports comes from Scholz (2019), who dedicates

one complete chapter to the history of the discipline in his book. First, he explains how a historical view of esports is needed to understand the path it took and how its strategic management evolved, using the population ecology theory (Aldrich et al., 1984) – a theory derived from Darwin that focuses on the battle for survival (Darwin, 1859). Wagner (2006), in one of the pioneering works on esports, dates back the first usage of the term to a 1999 press release published on the launch of the Online Gamer Association (OGA), a British governing body that aimed at helping online gaming in its growth period. According to him, the first esports tournaments took place after the release of the First Person Shooter (FPS) games *Doom* and *Quake*, which were the first to integrate online tournaments and rankings (Wagner, 2006).

Borowy and Jin (2013), in another attempt to explore the history of esports, linked the emergence of competitive gaming with the explosion of the arcade games industry in the late 70s and the early 80s. In their paper, they explain how the explosion of Arcades, with the experience economy, and the growing face-to-face competitions between players at that time encouraged the explosion of esports. They also propose that the first actual video game tournament (i.e. the first esports event) was the First National Space Invaders Competition that took place all over the USA in 1980, organized by the company Atari.

Scholz (2019) defines the Intergalactic Spacewar Olympics as the first competitive video game event in history. It took place in 1972, had a cash prize for the winners (a one-year subscription to the *Rolling Stone* magazine), and took place at Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab in California. In the following years, the video game market took off, consoles started to be sold all around the world, and games editors started to create competitive events. Similarly, arcades spaces opened everywhere. However, it remained difficult for the first video game companies to earn enough for their products and create lasting events. For example, even though the first National Space Invaders Championship seemed to be a relative success with more than 10 000 participants all over the USA in 1980, the second one, scheduled one year later happened to be a huge failure despite a 50000\$ prize money. Up to 10000 participants were expected, but only 147 showed up, due to the cost of traveling. Moreover, comments from the two winners, Eric Ginner and Ok-Soo Han revealed that they never received their prize money, highlighting once more the financial difficulties video games companies encountered at that time (Smith, 2012; Scholz, 2019).

However, we can also find some examples of success in the early days of competitive video gaming during the arcade era. For example, *Starcade* – a TV show in which contestants played against each other on arcade video games – aired for 4 seasons, with 137 episodes being recorded (Seehan, 2017). Nintendo also used competitions as a marketing tool with the Nintendo World Championships that took place in 1990 in 29 different American cities.

The real turning point in the history of esports happened in the late 90s, with the emergence of the internet and LAN parties. During the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, computers and consoles moved from being collective objects to individual properties, with consoles as famous as the GameBoy (1989), the Super NES (1990), the Playstation 1 (1994), the SEGA Saturn (1994) and the Nintendo 64 (1996) being released. With some consoles and computers integrating online functions, it was now possible to organize competitions without playing on the same device, thus marking a huge shift in the organizations of video game competitions (Scholz, 2019).

One of the first esports tournaments (using network possibilities) was the 1997 Red Annihilation Tournament. It took place on the video game Quake, released one year earlier. This time, the prize pool was not money, but a car, the Ferrari 328 GTS owned by the lead developer of the game. The event gathered nearly 2000 participants and was a success. At the same time, several organizations aiming at organizing tournaments emerged, representing a first form of institutionalization of events. The most notable ones are the Battle by the Bay (1996), the QuakeCon (1996), the Cyberathlete Professional League (1997), the Deutsche Clanliga (1997), the Clanbase League (1998), the French Electronic Sport World Cup (2002) and the US American Major League (2002) (Scholz, 2019). Most of the money for the events organized by these organizations came from electronic companies that acted as sponsors, such as Intel or AMD. Participating in this kind of event required good processors and components for the players' computers. Therefore, sponsoring these types of events represented a great marketing opportunity for companies such as Intel and AMD, companies that specialized in the development of such technology. At the same time, most of the events' organizers were able to generate some money with the events, but most of it was immediately used in new competitions (Scholz, 2019). Moreover, the broadcasting of such events was difficult, as video games were not built to be spectated but played, and only hardcore fans were able to watch tournaments through live streams.



*Figure 23: The 1997 Red Annihilation Tournament Logo*

One of the most important parts of the development of esports in the early 2000s took place in Asia, and more specifically in South Korea. In 1997, Asia was struck by an economic and financial crisis, and South Korea, one of the most affected countries with Indonesia and Thailand, decided to handle it through modernization. The government offered help to its citizens by subsidizing the purchase of a computer. They also greatly improved internet broadband access. Moreover, PC bangs, South Korean internet cafes also became extremely popular throughout the country (Yoo, 2014). Citizens could therefore buy a computer or rent one in these PC bangs, thus providing a favorable environment for the development of an esports scene (Scholz, 2019). After the release of Starcraft, a real-time strategy (RTS) video game in 1998, South Korea became an esports powerhouse. The game became very popular in the country, and it led to the creation of the Korean Esports Association (KeSPA), an association approved by the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism. The KeSPA worked for the regulation of esports, notably with the broadcasting of tournaments and the setting up of a regular league schedule. This led to an ever-increasing fan base in South Korea (Scholz, 2019). Moreover, the first international esports event was also born in South Korea, at the initiative of the company Samsung, and was called the World Cyber Games. The first edition, the WCG Challenge took place in 2000, had a global prize pool of 200 000\$, and had 180 participants from 17 countries competing against each other on four different games: Ages of Empires II, FIFA 2000, Quake III Arena and Starcraft: Brood War.

As we have seen above, South Korea implemented strong governance over esports in its infancy. However, the situation was not the same elsewhere at that time and South Korea represented an exception where business models could evolve more easily (Jin, 2010). In the rest of the world, the situation was more chaotic, and many organizations flourished, with only a few being professional (Scholz, 2019). A perfect example of the chaotic situation in NA and Europe was

the Cyber X Games in Las Vegas in 2004. This tournament, which was supposed to be the biggest esports tournament ever with a cash prize of 600 000\$ and sponsors such as ATI, AMD and Microsoft, became the biggest fiasco in history. Most of the tournaments were canceled, and some of them were even shut down during the competition, scaring off companies such as AMD for a while (Scholz, 2019).

However, even though such tournaments showed how difficult it was for event organizers to create financially lasting tournaments, they also showed opportunities in the new esports ecosystem. For example, the first “professional” contract between a team and a player outside of South Korea was signed in 2003 between Ola ‘elemNt’ Moum and his team, SK Gaming (Scholz, 2019). This event represents a first step in the professionalization and legitimization of esports. The first official player transfer occurred one year later, in 2004, when elemNt moved from SK Gaming to Team NoA. The first corporate team, ALTERNATE aTTaX, born in 2003 at the initiative of the company Alternat represents another first step of professionalization for esports outside of South Korea (Scholz, 2019). Starting from 2004, the Donau-Universität Krems, in Austria, also offered a first professional esports and competitive computer gaming master’s degree for its students, anticipating the emergence of the new economic sector (Scholz, 2019).

Finally, at the same time, game developers themselves started to see the potential offered by esports. For example, in 2001, Valve, introduced HLTV for its *Counter Strike* game, a website offering both news regarding the competitive scene, but also dedicated servers to watch matches. Following this initiative, more and more developers decided to include spectator mode and possibilities to watch matches in their games (Scholz, 2019). However, at that time, the sustainability of the market outside of South Korea was still prone to debate, and only a very small portion of the esports ecosystem was able to make an actual profit. If any player or team stopped performing at the top level for even a short amount of time, they were bound to disappear.

The following years, from 2005 to 2008, marked the first phase of stability for esports, with most of the pioneer organizations surviving in the ecosystem and some events showing yet other signs of the potentiality offered by esports (Scholz, 2019). For example, the final of the CPL World Tour, a tournament organized by the Cyberathlete Professional League in 2005 in 9 cities

all around the world for the game *Painkiller*, offered a cash prize of 1 000 000\$. The finals were broadcasted on TV by MTV.

China also showed its first interest in esports at that time with the World esports Games hosted for players living in South Korea and China in 2005. However, even though the audience for esports was growing, there were still problems regarding the broadcasting of events. One of the only ways to watch esports was through the use of IPTV, but it was too expensive, and advertisers were not interested in using such a medium. Television seemed to be the only reliable platform to broadcast esports (Lingle, 2016), and tournaments such as the ESL partnered with NBC GIGA, a television broadcaster to boost their growth (Scholz, 2019).

At that time, internet speed was still insufficient in most of the countries to be considered a reliable option for broadcasting esports. However, the fit between esports and television was not perfect, and some esports companies vanished after poor audiences. While in the USA the esports model developed around partnerships with TV broadcasters and such, Europe saw a more organic development, with increasing tournaments gaining in popularity every year (Scholz, 2019). Outside of European-based tournaments such as the ESWC launched in 2003, Asian-based tournaments also visited Europe, with the World Cyber Games taking place in Italy and Germany. Moreover, the launch of the Intel Extreme Master in 2006 also provided Europe with a huge tournament, focusing on a slower and more organic growth at first.

Meanwhile, in South Korea, events such as the Proleague finals attracted more than 120 000 people, and players' contracts continued to get bigger. For example, in 2005, the player Lim 'BoxeR' Yo-Hwan signed a contract with the team SK Telecom T1 for an annual salary of 180 000\$ with 80 000\$ in bonuses (Scholz, 2019), thus providing another example of the growth of the esports market.

In addition to these growing business opportunities offered by esports, new organizations emerged in the early 2000s (Scholz, 2019). For example, teams like Fnatic, or CompLexity, which acted like professional organizations since their birth, appeared, and federations emerged. A perfect example of such federations is the International esports Federation (IeSF), born in 2008 to act as an international governing body for esports. However, that federation did not get any recognition from national federations and the existing esports scene (Scholz, 2019). Some esports teams also tried to self-regulate between them. For example, the G7 teams were

founded at the initiative of seven *Counter-Strike* teams as a governance body aiming to ‘promote the cooperation, amicable relation and unity of the member teams’ (G7, 2007). The years from 2005 to 2008 showed a beginning of regulation and a stabilization of the esports ecosystem and business models, but also revealed several opportunities around it.

Similar to many industries, the financial crisis of 2009 had a huge impact on the esports ecosystem in general. Sponsors, which represented most of the revenue for teams withdrew most of their money dedicated to esports (Messier in Christopher and Scholz, 2011). To illustrate this crisis, we can have a look at the WCG 2010 prize pool, which was cut in half compared to 2009 (from 500 000\$ to 250 000\$). Some companies that supported esports also decided to reduce their investment because of the crisis, notably Nvidia. As a notable consequence, the ESWC did not recover from the loss of a sponsor like Nvidia and filed for bankruptcy in 2009. The crisis also revealed how teams were too dependent on money coming from outsiders, and thus they decided to reorganize themselves by dropping certain players and certain games after the crisis (Scholz, 2019). The crisis also showed opportunities for esports, notably in terms of broadcasting with the internet, and even game developers started to develop their game with audience and viewership in mind. During the crisis, three major events that have influenced esports since their existence need to be highlighted. First, the release of the video game *League of Legends* in 2009 has had a huge impact on esports. Secondly, the announcement of *Starcraft II*, the sequel of one of the most played esports games also had an impact.

Thirdly, the launch of Twitch, a video streaming platform dedicated to the broadcasting of video games, at the initiative of the website Justin.tv, in 2011 greatly contributed to the explosion of esports worldwide. We will come back to *League of Legends*, the video game we decided to focus on for our field study, later.



Figure 24: The first Twitch Logo

Twitch arrived at a time when esports was still struggling to find a viable way to broadcast competitive video games. Twitch was built as a website allowing any people to broadcast their video game freely, and video game content exploded on the platform. According to Scholz

(2019, p.32) “the principal competitive advantage [of Twitch] was the easiness of streaming, anybody could stream, and consequently, streaming or IPTV grew exponentially”. Not only did tournament organizers decide to use Twitch, but even professional esports players also started to broadcast their daily games or training and decided to create other events (Scholz and Stein, 2017).

Twitch used advertising as a way to monetize the platform, and it became an additional source of revenue for the players, thus stabilizing the esports ecosystem (Scholz, 2019). Additionally, spectators were finally able to watch games freely, without any major technical constraints, thus leading to an explosion in esports viewership. Moreover, from a strategic point of view, Twitch was the first reliable way for esports organizers and teams to show their viewership and to show metrics that would help in negotiations with sponsors. In return, the growth of esports content on Twitch also normalized the practice of watching casual video games for fun, without any competition (Partin, 2018). Consequently, esports companies were not only dependent on sponsors anymore, and could finally start to develop by themselves through their audience. Moreover, game developers that were still reluctant to esports finally saw its opportunities and started to build leagues and championships around their games, transforming esports into a “golden goose everyone was chasing” (Popper, 2013).

In 2014, Amazon saw the potential offered by Twitch and acquired the company, marking the first interaction between esports and non-video game-related companies. Nowadays, more and more companies are interested in esports, and some even invest in it without being of that particular domain or relating to sports in any way. This is for instance the case of some well-known luxury brands, like Louis Vuitton which achieved a partnership with League of Legends and Louis Vuitton, or even Gucci with 100 Thieves, an esports team.

Twitch, as we have seen before, it is the preferred broadcaster for esports. In 2017 there were ‘only’ 750 000 concurrent esports viewers daily (Statista, 2021). That number rose to 1,88 million in 2020 and is expected to reach 3,24 million in 2024. Similarly, while esports media revenues were \$21.5 million in 2017, they were \$196.02 million in 2020 and are expected to reach \$815.32 million in 2024. On their 2020 annual review, Twitch also published some interesting numbers. *League of Legends* was the most-watched game in 2020, with around 1.5 billion hours watched, highlighting, once more, the potentials offered by the game.



Similar to the audience, prize pools for tournaments also kept on growing, highlighting once more the beginning of economic stability for the esports ecosystem. The biggest esports prize pool was offered at the International, a tournament played on the game Dota 2. The 2019 edition had a prize pool of more than 34 000 000\$, and the 2021 edition is expected to have a prize pool of more than 40 000 000\$ (the 2020 edition was canceled due to the pandemic). Some new types of video games also emerged recently, and more and more video games have an esports component. For example, the Battle Royale genre (a type of shooter game where a lot of people gather on a map and only one team stays alive at the end) has been exploding since the release of *Fortnite* in 2018 (Scholz, 2019). Epic, the editor behind the game also offered a 100 000 000\$ prize pool distributed through many events throughout the year 2019.

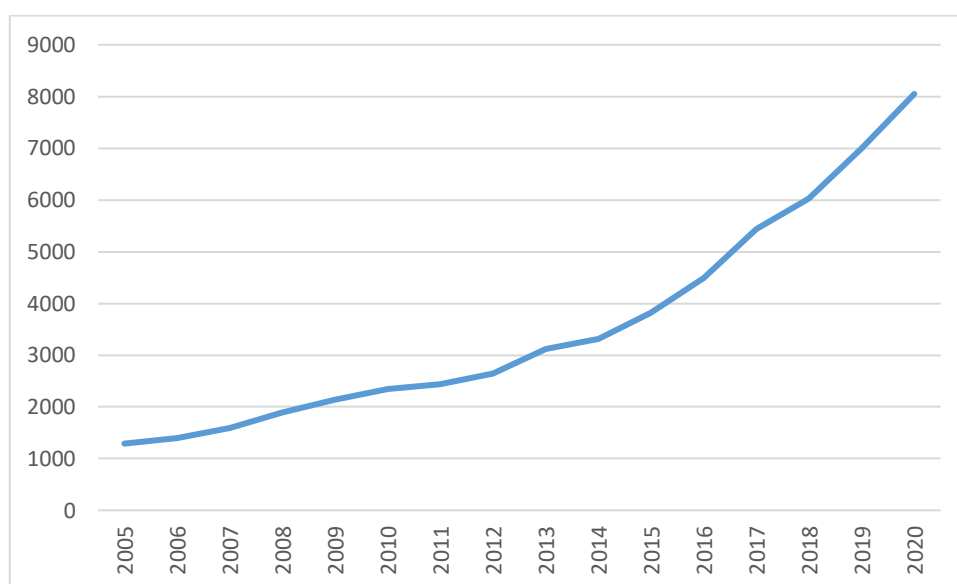
## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
  - Section 1: A perception-based approach – The contribution of categorization models
  - Section 2: Introducing esport
  - **Section 3: Esport under the prism of categorization theory – Similarities between sport and esport**
- Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes

## Section 3: Esport under the prism of categorization theory – Similarities between sport and esport

### 3.1 The similarities between sport and esport in research

As we have seen in the previous section, research interest in esport has been growing over the last few years, with more and more papers referencing terms such as ‘esport’ ‘e-sport’ or even “*League of Legends*’. The following figure provides a view of the numbers of research articles including the term esport, e-sport, or esports each year on Google Scholar.



*Figure 25: References to the term ‘esport’, e-sport’ or ‘esports’ in the literature since 2005 (source: Google Scholar)*

As we can see from the figure above, esport has gained attention not only from a managerial standpoint but also from researchers. Esports research started in 2005, with the seminal paper called ‘cybersports’ by Hemphill and published in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, thus providing the first link between esport and sport. Moreover, Reitman (2020) in his literature review of esport research, analyses 150 articles focused on esport and finds that 20 (13.1%) of them are published in sports science journals.

Beyond, even some definitions of esport include the term ‘sport’ (Reitman, 2020). In this section, we will focus on the highlighted links between sport and esport in prior research, thus justifying the study of esport under the prism of categorization theory. Before going any further, it is important to remind that this research does not pretend to solve the debate regarding the

categorization of esport as a sport. However, we propose that esport can be studied under the prism of sport due to their resemblance and similarities.

Witkowski (2012, p.369) was one of the first to highlight the sportivity of esport competition. In a participative study on the game *Counter-Strike*, she explained how “playing in these technologically complexified contexts brings up the notion of a “redescription of the body” as suggested in traditional sports”. Hamari and Sjöblom (2017, p.221) went even further by stating: “Esport is a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams, as well as the output of the esport system, are mediated by human-computer interfaces”, highlighting once more the possible similarities between sport and esport. In their paper, they explored consumer motivations for esport consumption using the MSSC, the measurement scale for sport consumption, a tool developed by Trail and James (2001) to measure sport spectators’ motivations to watch sport. They found that esport spectators have somewhat similar motivations to watch esport than sport spectators have to watch sport. Besides entertainment, people watched esport for utilitarian reasons such as training or knowledge acquisition.

Betting around esport has also started to exist, like in traditional sports. However, the aesthetic motivation that exists for sports spectators does not seem to exist yet for esport spectators, showing that, even though motivations to watch esport and sport have similarities, they are not the same. (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017). The authors pointed out that rather than being a limit to the inclusion of esport in sports studies, this lack of aesthetic motives represents an opportunity for game developers to propose content and games that focus on that element to attract new spectators. Pizzo et al. (2018) conducted a similar study one year later, comparing motivations for esport consumption and sport consumption, leading to similar results.

Heere (2018) also argues for the inclusion of esport in sports research. He views esport as a perfect example of the sportification of society. In his words: “Sport has many different meanings and usages, and as such, attempting to define sport might be an adverse exercise that limits understanding thereof. Thus, if sport represents an undefinable ambiguous construct, the debate of whether esport is a form of sport is a somewhat redundant exercise (p.21).” In his view, the question of the qualification of esport as a sport is important for legislation purposes mainly, but not for research. Studying esport under the prism of sport does not mean that researchers view esport as being a sport, it merely offers a context under which the growing

esport phenomenon can be studied. We follow Heere's recommendation by only studying esport under the prism of sport without judging of its qualification. Our concept of perceived sportivity represents, in our mind, a perfect compromise to study all sorts of leisure activities, esport being one of them.

According to most authors working on esport (Witkowski, 2012; Taylor, 2012; Heere, 2018; Abanazir, 2018, 2019; Reitman, 2020; Pizzo et al., 2021), the main barriers to the integration of esport as a sport is first its supposed lack of physicality. Secondly, the institutionalization of the esport ecosystem is also different from traditional sports, with esport games being properties of companies that act as governing bodies. Jenny et al. (2017) propose a detailed view of the fit between sport and esport. In their paper, they propose a review of the constituents of sport and apply them to esport. The only issues regarding the categorization of esport as a sport are the debatable lack of physicality, but also the lack of institutionalization. However, all the apparent similarities between esport and sport, such as the play element, the organization, the competitions, and the skills, are as many reasons that justify the investigation of esport under the prism of sport. The following table, from Jenny et al. (2017) proposes an overview of the fit between sport and esport.

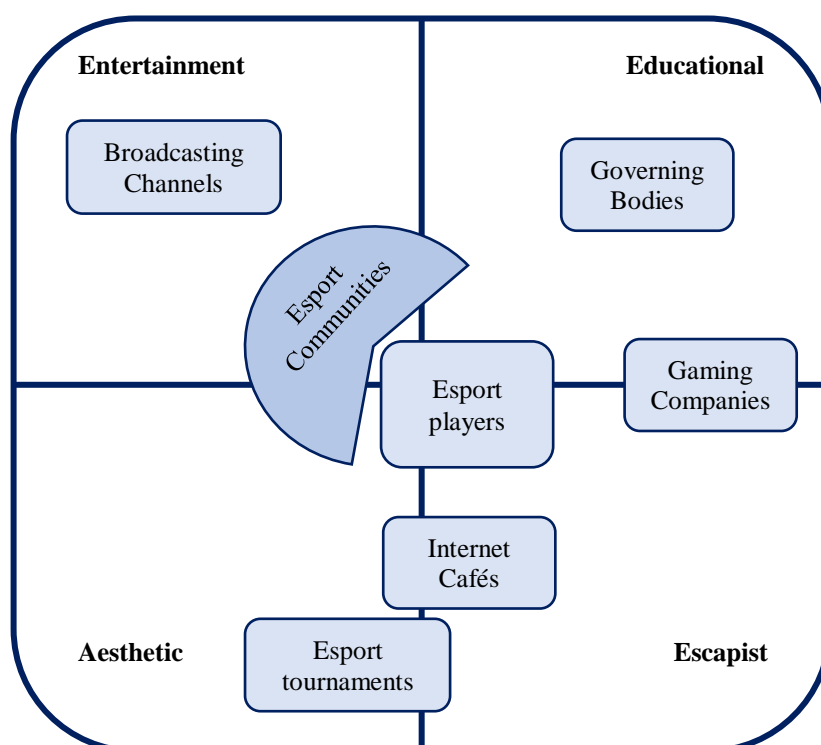
Sport characteristics	Example of activity not considered as a sport due to said characteristic	Does esport qualify?
It includes play (voluntary, intrinsically motivated activity)	Doing the homework to avoid punishment	Yes
It is organized (governed by rules)	Kendama	Yes
It includes competition (outcome of a winner and a loser)	Solitaire (Card game)	Yes
It is comprised of skill (no chance)	Dice games	Yes
It includes physical skills (skillful and strategic use of one's body)	Board games	Debatable
It has a broad following (beyond a local fad)	Hornuss	Yes
It has achieved institutional stability where social institutions have rules which regulate it, stabilizing it as an important social practice	Hula-hoop	Debatable

*Table 11: Where esports fit within the defining characteristics of sport. (from Jenny et al., 2017)*

More recently, Pizzo et al. (2021) argue that sports managers should embrace the esport phenomena in their strategy. Indeed, research has shown how sports managers struggle to adapt to new technology and to integrate innovation into their practices (Funk, 2009). Therefore,

esport, having redefined the frontiers of sport (Lopez et al., 2021), might represent an excellent opportunity for sports managers.

Marketing researchers have also focused on sport and esport (Hamari and Sjöblom, 2017; Pizzo et al., 2018; Andrews and Ritzer, 2018; Scholz, 2019) or solely on esport (Seo, 2013, 2015; Scholz, 2019). In 2013, Seo explained how esport marketing could represent a new marketing landscape for the experience economy, with his findings showing how “collaborative efforts of gaming companies, players, online communities, governing bodies, and many other stakeholders play important roles in enriching and sustaining the experiential value of esport consumption” (p.1542). Building on the Experience Economy framework (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), Seo showed how esport represents a good opportunity to create customer experiences by illustrating how it can provide escapism, aesthetics, education, entertainment and ultimately great value for consumers. The following figure proposes an experiential value network of esport consumption by Seo (2013).



*Figure 26: The experiential value network of esport consumption (from Seo, 2013)*

According to Seo (2013), escapism in esport can be seen through the way players and spectators are completely immersed, both online and offline at events, blurring the boundaries between the virtual and the real. Even though Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) state that esport consumers do not watch esport for aesthetic motivations, Seo (2013) argues that the entire esport

experience can provide aesthetic value. This value emerges mostly offline, with shows being organized around matches. For example, the 2019 finals of the *League of Legends World Championship* had an opening ceremony with music, lights, dancers and singers. Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) and Pizzo et al. (2018) also highlight the educational value in esport in their studies focusing on the exploration of consumers' motivations to watch esport. Indeed, esport events can serve as knowledge gathering tools, with players watching and learning pros' movements and strategies. Finally, the entertainment value has been highlighted by Seo (2013) and even earlier by Christopher and Scholz (2010; 2011). Besides the entire show, Christopher and Scholz (2010, 2011) have also found that consumers find pleasure not only in playing video games, but also in watching other people play, especially when they are skilled. Moreover, in Seo's (2013) view, esport represents a perfect example of cocreation, with players and supporters communities being highly engaged in every show.

More recently, Seo (2015) also uses esport as a subject through which he studies the serious consumption of leisure and how the consumer journey can affect his self-transformation, highlighting once more the potentiality offered by a field of study such as esport. Similarly, Andrews and Ritzer (2018) have also highlighted how prosumption is important for sports spectators, using esport events. Prosumption is defined as “the interrelated process of production and consumption. (Ritzer, 2015, p.1) In their view, esport might “represents a prophetic vision of a rapidly approaching future for sporting prosumption and the sport prosumer” (p.364), thus highlighting once more the interest of research focusing on esport. Here, the prosumer is defined as “one who engages in the process of presumption (Ritzer, 2015, p. 1).

As we have seen, sports researchers have already embraced esport research and have even argued for the inclusion of esport in sports research, despite some debates regarding some of its constitutive elements. Other researchers have also used sports research to analyze esport, thus proving that esport might represent a perfect opportunity to study perceived sportivity. More precisely, from a marketing point of view, esport has been mostly studied as an extension of sport, without actually debating its sports status. This research will also aim to reduce this gap, by studying individuals' mental representation and categorization of esport. In the following session, we will explore how sports managers deal with esport, and we will also see that many sports organizations have also embraced esport for quite a long time now.

### 3.3 The strategic implications of similarities between esports and sports

Many organizations within the sports industry are seeking growth opportunities by embracing esport (Huettermann et al., 2020). Recently, papers have highlighted the involvement of sports organizations in esport (Scholz, 2019; Scholz, Volkel and Uebach, 2021; Lefebvre, Djaballah and Chanavat, 2021). Sport and esport industries have been shown to collaborate for quite some time now, with sports organizations involving themselves in esport at both the local, national and international levels. At the local level, sports organizations use esport to fulfill a societal role in their community. At the national and international level, many sports businesses see esport as a potential market with huge opportunities (Hitt, 2020; Scholz, Volkel and Uebach, 2021). Schmidt and Holzmayer (2018) even position esport as one of the hottest topics for football clubs in terms of growth strategy. In this section, we will explore the existing business relations between sport and esport to highlight, once more, the usefulness and potentials of using our perceived sportivity scale in the context of esport.

The first official collaboration between sport and sports started in 2002, when the SSV Lehnitz, a German football organization decided to launch a *Counter-Strike* team in 2002 (Scholz, 2019). While the football organization was a relatively small club, the esport team of SSV Lehnitz was a powerhouse on *Counter-Strike* from 2003 to 2006, with an international focus (Scholz, Volkel and Uebach, 2021). The team had players from Austria and Sweden, competed in worldwide events such as the 2003 World Cyber Games, and even tried to expand to other competitive games, like Warcraft 3 and Battlefield. In their words, SSV Lehnitz added esport into their strategy to gain an international dimension and recognition, to reach a young audience, attract new sports consumers and increase their image and the global image of esport. (Scholz, Volkel and Uebach, 2021). However, because of their incapacity to form legal contracts with players due to their non-profit organization status and to the problems caused by the German legal framework of that time, SSV Lehnitz left esport in 2006 (Skrobek in Hiltcher, 2005).

The first professional sports team that entered esport was the Turkish sports organization Besiktas Istanbul in 2015 (Scholz, 2019). The multisport club entered the esport market through the acquisition of a League of Legends team. Since then, many global sports organizations have also entered esport. For example, the Paris Saint Germain, a famous French football club entered *League of Legends* one year later, before leaving in 2017 due to disagreements regarding the governance of the competitions by the editor Riot Games (PSG, 2017). However, this did not stop them from involving themselves in esport. Since then, the PSG has been active



mainly in Asia, using esport as a way to reach a new market with huge growth potential. Many teams, and especially football clubs have involved themselves in esport, such as Schalke 04 in Germany, or FC Barcelona in Spain. (Scholz, Volek and Uebach, 2021; Lefebvre, Djaballah and Chanavat, 2021). Scholz, Volek and Uebach (2021) propose an overview of the sports teams' involvement in esport. During their research, they found 418 sports organizations that were somehow affiliated with esport, using the snowball method (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). They also explored the form sports teams used to enter esport and found seven types of sports teams' involvement in esport. The following table, adapted from Scholz, Volek and Uebach (2021), provides an overview of the type of interaction that sports teams chose to enter esport.

Type of involvement in esport	Number	Percentage
1: Individual esport player for the digital version of the core business	101	24,2%
2: Esport team for a variety of games	52	12,4%
3: Joint venture with an existing esport team to create a new brand	9	2,2%
4: Creation of a dedicated esport league	189	45,2%
5: Buying of a franchise team	25	6,0%
6: Individual investment by sports actors	29	6,9%
7: Temporarily withdrawing from esport	13	3,1%
Total	418	

*Table 12: Typification of sports teams involvement in esport*

As we can see from Table 1, the two main types of interactions chosen by sports organizations to enter esport are either the creation of dedicated esport leagues (45.2%), and the recruitment of a player to play for the digital version of the core business (e.g a Football club recruiting a FIFA player to represent the club in competitions, 24.2%). Creating a dedicated esport league is mostly chosen by national sports associations that aim at creating a league on the simulation of their game. For example, in 2019 in Japan, the Japanese football league, the J.League, decided to have every division 1 and 2 clubs participate in an esport league on the football game simulation Pro Evolution Soccer (Scholz, Volek and Uebach; 2021). However, more recently, the French Basketball Federation, the FFBB decided to launch a new esport league on a game that was not a simulation of basketball, but an arcade game, Rocket League, thus highlighting new opportunities for business (FFBB, 2020).

However, we can also see from the table above that an important number of sports teams and organizations have also decided to enter esport through the creation of a team, the fusion with an existing esport team, or the buying of a franchise. Some esport games work with a franchising system, the same way American leagues such as the NFL or the NBA work. Two of the most successful esport titles, *League of Legends* (LoL), and *Overwatch*, a fast First Person Shooter (FPS), work with franchises. In the major leagues of LoL, we can see teams associated with sports clubs such as the Schalke 04 esport team competing under the same name and the same logo as the football club, the Brazilian football club Corinthians with the Immortals esport teams, or the Philadelphia 76ers, an NBA franchise, with the Dignitas esport teams. In *Overwatch*, franchises like the Los Angeles Gladiators, Philadelphia Fusion, or the Vancouver Titans, owned by organizations, also invested in traditional sports. Nowadays, even sports stars and legends use their name to invest in esport. For example, sports stars such as Earvin “Magic” Johnson, David Beckham, Shaquille O’Neal, or Antoine Griezmann have invested in esport, either by financing existing teams; what Magic Johnson and Shaquille O’Neal did, or by creating teams. David Beckham launched Guild Esport in 2020, and Antoine Griezmann launched Grizi Esport the same year (Seck, 2020).

According to Sholz, Volek and Uebach (2021), while early interest in esport was only focused on the highest level of competitions, the last few years allowed us to witness a more regional and local interest. For example, teams like the Eintracht Frankfurt and the FC St.Pauli invested themselves locally in Germany, and teams like the Olympique Lyonnais or the FC Nantes invested in national League of Legends teams in France.

Lefebvre, Djaballah and Chanavat (2021) explored professional football clubs’ strategies and motivations for their involvement in esport. They used qualitative interviews with 28 clubs in 24 different countries to explore the strategies used by professional sports clubs. They found many reasons for sports managers to enter the esport market. First, esport represents a way for sports entities to reach a younger audience who watches esport. Secondly, football clubs being known for having a capacity of influence beyond sport, esport is seen as one of the many areas in which sport can exert an influence. Thirdly, professional sports organizations are also known for their isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) especially when they address new issues (York and Miree, 2015), therefore some sports teams also invested in esport to imitate others’ strategies.

Moreover, Lefebvre, Djaballah and Chanavat (2021) identified four distinct types of strategies used by football clubs when entering esport.

- The first objective, highlighted by all the respondents was the opportunities offered by the esport market to develop brand awareness and brand image. Most of the clubs see esport as a way to rejuvenate their aging image.
- Following the first objective, the second objective highlighted by most of the clubs interviewed is the targeting of a new audience. Indeed, sports clubs are seeing their fan base getting older and older, and esport games, which are mostly followed by people under 30, represent a great opportunity to reach a new audience that is normally difficult to target.
- The third strategic objective highlighted by the clubs during the qualitative interviews was the possible increase of income that esport can provide. Some clubs still have that view of esport being a “golden goose” capable of providing clubs with good amounts of money.
- Finally, the fourth strategic objective highlighted by the majority of sports clubs echoes the main objective of their sports teams: performance. Some football organizations view sport as a way to reinforce their legacy. They view the esport team as a normal member of their sports team, and expect good results from them, to maintain coherence between the football team and the esport team.

Then, Lefebvre Djaballah and Chanavat (2021) also explored the actual strategies used by the football teams to enter the esport market. First, regarding the game chosen, two strategies were used. Clubs either entered football-related video games, or other esport titles, mostly the major esport games (*League of Legends*, *Counter-Strike*, *Overwatch*, *Hearthstone*, *DOTA 2*, *Fortnite* and *PUBG*). While the first option is more seen as “a way to reinforce the club’s connection with their existing football fans”, the second option allows clubs to reach that new audience identified in the clubs’ objectives highlighted previously. Concerning the technics used to enter the new esport market, most football clubs focus on partnerships with experienced people and organizations. Football clubs being known to use partnership quite often, the inclusion in the esport market did not seem to be a problem, neither did the cost of entering the market. Moreover, sports teams also have an advantage when they enter the esport market: legitimacy. Sports organizations have knowledge and experience, and are seen as attractive for players who have dealt with young struggling esport organizations. Most clubs have three main criteria when

it comes to recruiting esport players: videogame skills, communication skills, and visibility. Sports teams do not only look for successful players, they also look for players who can provide them with a good image, aligned with their objectives.

Besides the strategic choices made by football companies before entering the esport market, Lefebvre, Djaballah and Chanavat (2021) also explored the actual decisions made by sports teams for the esport segment. First, most of the strategies used by sports teams followed the principles of brand extension, which has been a common practice in professional football (Chadwick and Clowes, 1998). Esport audience also responds well to sports involvement. Secondly, football clubs have also used esport to revitalize their communication. Esport offers new content for social media and football clubs use this content. Then, to reach that new audience, most of the clubs have also created new accounts dedicated to esport on social media. Football clubs have also used esport to launch a Twitch channel on which they broadcast training and competitions.

But esport also offers new opportunities for football clubs. According to some of the interviewees, after entering esport, some football clubs were able to form partnerships with new entities that would have never collaborated with them if their esport section did not exist. For example, some clubs developed new partnerships with computer companies and with companies specialized in providing anti-blue light glasses for gamers. Secondly, football clubs have also started to develop merchandising related to their esport section, with jerseys for example. Football clubs are now also involved in the growing online and offline “eventization” of esport competitions (Clavio, 2017) by being involved in the organization of esport events. Some football clubs events created gaming space in their stadium to enrich the customer experience.

As we have seen, both from research and management, relations between sport and esport already exist, and are deemed to continue for a while. The following table provides an overview of the existing similarities and differences between sport and esport.

	Similarities	Differences
History	Editors act as governing bodies and institutions for esport Esport is still relatively youth compared to sport.	Editors and federations are not the same thing. International regulating bodies do not exist in esport. Regulation is different for both (due to the relative infancy of the esport law ecosystem)
Sociology	Motivations to watch and play esport have been shown to have similarities. Both esport and sport help in identity transformation and self-realization. Play, competitions, skill, rules, equipment exist in both, with an emphasis on competition The two phenomena are global and affect the entire world	Esport still seems to be generational, with young people being its main audience. Debates exist regarding the physicality and institutionalization of esport. Esport is born global, sport became global over time.
Research	Teams, spectatorship and supporters exist in both esport and sport. Esport audience also responds well to sports involvement The term "sport" is often used to define esport Sports researchers have been studying esport in sport-related reviews Esport represents a good opportunity in terms of experience, by illustrating how it can provide escapism, aesthetics, education and entertainment.	Some motivations to watch and play sport have been shown to differ from some motivations to watch and play esport. The aesthetic motivations to watch esport have not been shown to exist, compared to traditional sports.
Management	Sports industries have entered the esport ecosystem Betting around esport has also started to exist More than 400 football clubs have already invested themselves in esport.	In esport, media rights are not as important as in traditional sport. Esport is subject to intellectual propriety rights, game editors own their game. Sports clubs use esport to reach a new audience that they could not reach otherwise

*Table 13: Existing similarities between esport and sport*

Therefore, studying the perceived sportivity of esport seems promising, from both academic and managerial standpoints. It seems it is still impossible to judge the sports status of esport. These apparent similarities do not seem to be enough to define esport as a sport. However, using categorization theory, we can explore individuals' perception of leisure activities such as esport and see the outcomes of the categorization of such activities as being sports.

Here we are interested in the mental representation of esport consumers. Applied to esport, the categorization of esport as a sport in the consumer's mind could therefore affect the perceived legitimacy of esport, and therefore consumers. Due to the experiential nature of sport and esport, in the following chapter, we will look at the marketing consequences of categorization processes through the experiential approach. First, we will explain how sport and esports fit

into the experiential paradigm as a consumption object. Then we will look at this experiential approach. Finally, we will highlight work from sports and esport research that emphasizes the uniqueness of the sports and esport experience; this will allow us to introduce the need to understand and measure the process of categorizing leisure activities as sports through our tool for measuring perceived sportivity.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the perceived sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the perceived sportivity scale to esport: the French League of League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individuals' perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- **Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes**
  - **Section 1: Sport as an experiential game**
  - Section 2: Defining Customer experience
  - Section 3: The uniqueness of the sports experience – The need for a scale of perceived sportivity



## CHAPTER 3: PREDICTIVE MODELS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS AND BRAND-RELATED OUTCOMES – SPORT AS AN EXPERIENCE

### Section 1: Sport as an experiential game

The seminal article from Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) initiated a switch from a utilitarian view to a more subjective view of consumption. This article represents a paradigm shift in marketing research, from a transactional-rational approach of marketing to a more relational-experiential approach. Before this article, some authors advocated for a focus on “irrational” aspects of consumption (Howard and Sheth, 1969). However, this small change of focus was not enough to explain phenomena such as playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, aesthetic enjoyment, or even emotional responses, intensifying the need for a total paradigm shift from rational consumption to experiential consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) argue for the use of the experiential view to get a deeper understanding of what they call “playful activities”. These playful activities are defined using works from game theorists such as Stephenson (1967) and Huizinga (1970). These two game theorists view sport as a form of play. Game theory focuses on the definition of play and its role as a founding part of culture (Caillois, 1958). In Huizinga’s view, play is a central defining part of culture and is a necessary element to the generation of culture (Huizinga, 1970). Building on the same idea of game and play as central elements of culture, Caillois (1958) proposes a typology of games. In his view, games are “free, separated, uncertain, unproductive, regulated and fictive” p.9-10). Games are free in the sense that participation is based on the willingness of the players, no players in the game are forced to play, otherwise, the game would lose all its sense. Games being “separated” means that they are played in a delimited space and time. The uncertainty of the games means that no winner is predetermined, every player theoretically has his/her chances to win. Games are also unproductive in the sense that they do not create any goods, money, nor directly provide any wealth for the players. Games are also regulated, and every player has to abide by these rules to play. Finally, games are fictive in the sense that they are played outside of reality, in a dedicated space and time.

In his typology, Caillois (1958) proposes four types of games. The first one is called “Agon” and refers to all types of competitive games in which equality of chances is simulated and every contestant has the same chances of winning. Games under the “Agon” category are built in such a way that any contestant has the perfect conditions for winning the game. Sports fall under this category, as they are fictive contests in which participants follow rules that guarantee the players’ equality to win against their opponent. The others three categories are “Alea”, “Mimicry” and “Ilinx”. The “Alea” category refers to all types of games that are purely luck-dependent. In these games, everyone has the same chances of winning, but the win condition is attributed to luck, and not skill. The “Mimicry” category contains all games in which players will play a “role” in a fictive environment. Theatre or role-playing games are a good example of “Mimicry”. Finally, “Ilinx” games are all types of games that focus on vertigo or work on adrenaline. The main objective in this type of game is to reach a certain adrenaline level and to stimulate the senses. Carousels, slides, or even some dances have this objective and fall under this category.

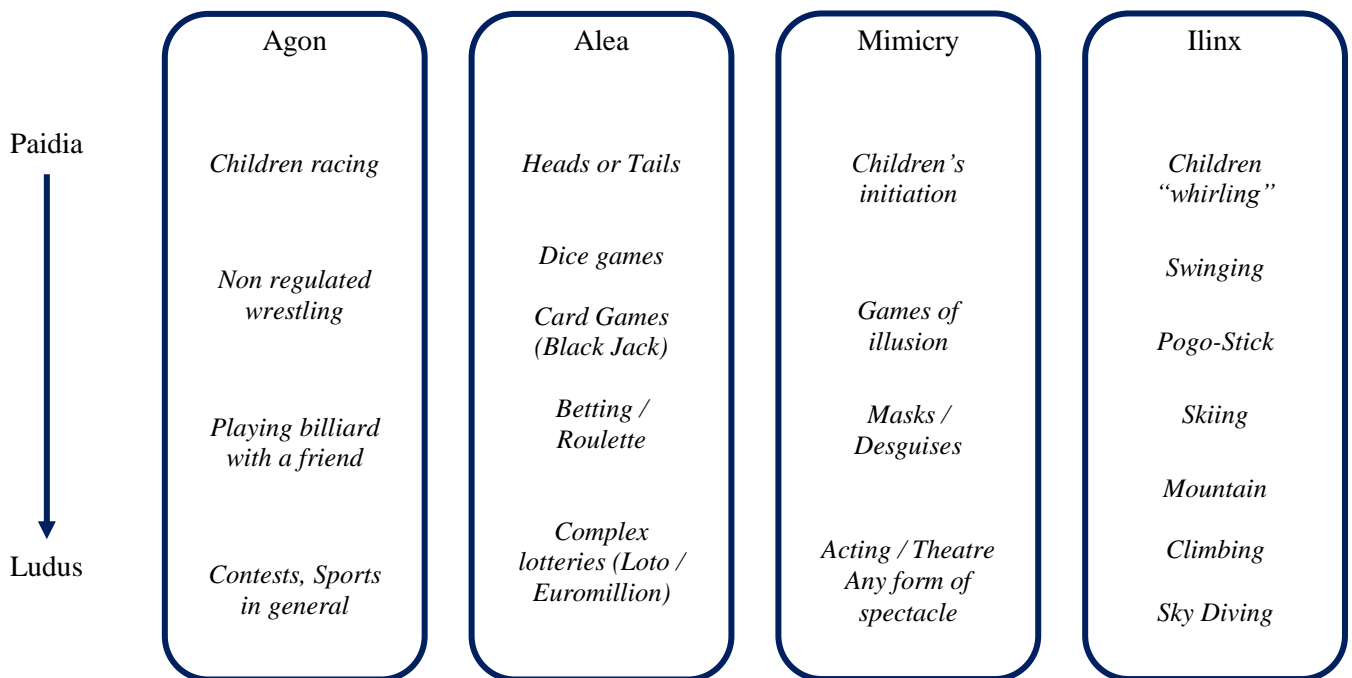


Figure 27: Caillois' typology of games (from Caillois, 1958).

As we can see from Caillois (1958) and Huizinga (1970), sports are a direct form of playful activities, and should therefore be put at the center of research on experiential consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). We could affirm that sport, in the first articles about experiential consumption, was even used as a perfect example of what an experience is. Sport should therefore be studied under the prism of experience.

Some of the earliest and the most influential works on customer experience used sporty activities as their field study (Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose and Leigh, 1993). For example, Arnould and Price (1993) conducted one of the first studies on experiential river rafting. River rafting is governed by the International Rafting Federation, which is, up to this date, still not a sports federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). However, the sporty nature of rafting is not subject to debate, and the term “sport” is used by interviewees in Arnould and Price’s to describe river rafting. In their study, Arnould and Price (1993) found that narrative was more important than the relations between expectations and outcomes in an extraordinary experience context.

At the same time, Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993) conducted a study on experiential high-risk leisure consumption with skydivers, an activity recognized as a sport by the IOC and considered as a team sport by its participants but not featured in the Olympics. Therefore, sport could be a perfect example of customer experience. Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993) explored consumers’ motives for high-risk experiential consumption and found that participation in high-risk activities is explained by an evolution of consumers’ motives over time.

Since then, many researchers have argued for, or used sports as a context in which customer experience is measured and managed (e.g. Holt, 1995; Kozinets et al, 2002, 2004; Madrigal; 2006, 2008; Decrop and Derbaix, 2010; Klaus and Maklan, 2011; Seo, 2013, 2016; Scott, Cayla and Cova, 2017, van Everdingen, Hariharan and Stremersch, 2019), highlighting once more the experiential nature of sports consumption. The following table provides an overview of existing marketing research focusing on studying sport and associated leisure activities under the prism of experiential consumption.

Author(s) (year)	Focus	Main Findings
Arnould and Price (1993)	Why do people engage in extraordinary hedonic experiences (River Rafting)	White water river rafting provides a dramatic illustration of some of the complex features of delivering an extraordinary experience. The narrative is central in the extraordinary experience, rather than relations between expectations and outcomes. personal growth and self-renewal, "communitas", and harmony with nature are significant in explaining overall satisfaction.
Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993)	Motivations for high-risk consumption (skydiving)	Different motives for high-risk consumption are highlighted. The authors build a model that explains both macro-environmental and inter-and intrapersonal influences and motives for high-risk consumption.
Holt (1995)	How sport spectators consumer (baseball)	Establishment of a typology of consumption practices: consuming as experience, consuming as integration, consuming as play and consuming as categorization.
Wakefield and Sloan (1995)	The effect of team loyalty and stadium factors on spectator attendance (US football)	Although team loyalty strongly affects attendance, stadium design and stadium services also directly influence spectators' desire to stay, and hence, attend games at the stadium.
Greenwell, Fink and Pastore (2002)	Influence of the Physical Sports Facility on customer Satisfaction (ice hockey)	Facility elements, when taken together, predict customer satisfaction. However, facility elements individually have little impact. Both perceptions of service personnel and the physical facility contributed to customer satisfaction over and above the impact of customers' perceptions of the core product.
Kozinets et al. (2002)	Sport-themed retail brand store (ESPN Zone Chicago)	The growing importance of themed environments in retailing to create experiences, Mindscape-related themes, which combine entertainment, therapeutics, and spiritual growth, are at the frontier of retail theming. Flagship brand stores not only promote a more engaging experience of the brand's essence but also satisfy consumers looking for entertainment alongside their shopping.
Kozinets et al. (2004)	Spectacular consumption(ESPN Zone Chicago)	Consumers resist the rules to a limited degree. Spectacular consumption possesses a do-it-yourself quality unrecognized in prior theory. Consumption still is negotiated dialectically between consumers and producers.
Madrigal (2006)	Sports event consumption	Development of a multidimensional construct of sporting event consumption comprising six dimensions: Fantasy, Flow, Evaluation, Personalities, Physical Attractiveness and Aesthetics).
Ross (2006)	Understanding brand equity in sport	Proposition of a framework for spectator-based brand equity with different types of antecedents (induced by organizations, markets, or experience) and different outcomes (team loyalty, media exposure, merchandise sales, ticket sales and revenue solicitation). Here, brand equity encompasses brand awareness and brand association.

Vosgerau, Wertenbroch and Carmon (2006)	Indeterminate consumption experience (live sports events)	Independently of other differences between live and taped broadcasts, the indeterminacy of events makes watching them live more exciting and more preferable.
Robinson (2007)	Customer expectations of sports organizations	From their review, authors report that there is little in the service quality field that applies expectations to sports organizations, thus leading to a call for future research.
Rowley Kupiec-Teahan and Leeming (2007)	Customer Community and Cocreation - Case study (kiteboarding)	The company's innovative product development acts as the basis for the co-creation of a customer experience. Its marketing actively helps in co-creating experiences with customers, fostering a sense of community among users, facilitating communication within that community, acting on the feedback, and continuously developing and maintaining the community relationship.
Madrigal (2008)	Effect of appraisal and attribution on emotion in a sports event context	Appraisal is a more efficient predictor of emotion than attribution. Appraisal also mediates the effect of attribution on the negative emotions, but only partial mediation is found for the positive emotions. Secondary appraisal is more highly related to negative emotion but the contribution of each appraisal type to positive emotion is nearly equivalent.
Miller and Johnson (2008)	Social identification process for sport clubs employees	Results showed significant effects of human resource management practices and employees' identification with the club and with customers, influencing employees' customer orientation
Decrop and Derbaix (2010)	Pride in contemporary sports consumption (soccer)	A multidimensional process view of pride is offered. Four types of pride are put into light (i.e. introspective, vicarious, contagious, and conspicuous). Making consumers proud of the brand/company may lead to stronger commitment and loyalty, increased consumption, positive WOM, and co-creation of value.
Simmons et al. (2010)	Crowd wisdom in a sports gambling context	When predicting against biased point spreads, crowds were systematically biased and ultimately unwise. People are likely to reinforce themselves for intuitive predictions and punish themselves for non-intuitive predictions. Although crowds are unwise when the question is posed as it usually is in real-world betting contexts, they may be wise when the question is posed differently.
Bodet and Bernach-Assollant (2011)	Consumer loyalty in sport spectatorship services	In a ice hockey context, consumer transaction-specific satisfaction was found to be the stronger predictor for consumer attitudinal loyalty alongside team identification and the average number of home games attended per year

Clemes, Brush and Collins (2011)	Spectators' perceptions of service quality (rugby)	Establishment of a conceptual model of professional sports experience with service quality influencing value and satisfaction; value influencing satisfaction, fanship influencing service quality, satisfaction, future attendance and recommendation, and finally satisfaction influencing future attendance and recommendation. Service quality encompasses three dimensions (interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality).
Klaus and Maklan (2011)	Modeling a sports tourism customer experience (mountain-biking)	Customer experience is conceptualized with five dimensions (i.e. hedonic pleasure, personal progression, social interaction, efficiency and surreal feeling). Hedonic pleasure and personal progression are the core experiences valued by customers. Core experience generates surreal feelings, incomparable and memorable evaluations of the overall experience. Social interaction facilitates the core experience, efficiency enables the core experience.
Ko et al. (2011)	Event quality in major spectator sports (baseball)	Development of a comprehensive model of event quality for spectator sport and a measurement scale of event quality in spectator sports (5 dimensions, 12 sub-dimensions).
Gal (2012)	Salivation to material rewards (sports cars)	Salivary secretion is stimulated by material rewards in the presence of a highly active goal to obtain the rewards and the motivation to acquire material rewards might more closely resemble physiological hunger than previously assumed.
Lee et al. (2012)	Development of a scale of sports attendees' sensory experience	The sensoryscape scale contains 5 dimensions: sight, sound touch, smell, taste and, combined with social interaction and sense of home, has a positive direct effect on fan satisfaction and subsequently on revisit intentions in both major and minor league venues.
Yang, Mao and Peracchio (2012)	the Role of Process and Outcome in Experience Consumption (a sports game)	As a game spectator, independents' (vs. interdependents') experience consumption evaluations are more likely to be influenced by outcome, while interdependent (vs. independent) consumers are more likely to be affected by process.
Seo (2013)	Esports under the prism of Experience Economy	Collaborative efforts of gaming companies, players, online communities, governing bodies, and many other stakeholders play important roles in enriching and sustaining the experiential value of eSports consumption.
Uhrich (2013)	Co-creation processes in team sports	Five customer-to-customer co-creation practices occur across these platforms: associating and dissociating, engaging and sharing, competing, intensifying, and exchanging. Implications: Identifying and classifying customer-to-customer value co-creation platforms is an important first step toward developing approaches for team sports firms to become involved in and manage value co-creation among customers.

Avourdiadou and Theodorakis (2014)	Impact of service quality and satisfaction on loyalty (fitness and sports centers)	results indicate that service quality consistently affects overall satisfaction across both customer groups; service quality is a major driver of loyalty only for novice customers, while overall satisfaction is a major driver of customers' future behaviors.
Calabuig et al. (2014)	Effect of price increase on future intentions (sport consumers)	Results show that the increase in the service price worsens the perception of service performance. As expected, satisfaction, perceived value and future intentions decrease following an increase in the service price. Perceived value also serves as a more effective predictor of future intentions than satisfaction. Finally, price increase has a low direct effect on predicting future intentions of sports users.
Chanavat and Bordet (2014)	Experiential marketing in sport spectatorship services (rugby)	Even if experiential marketing influenced brand awareness and brand associations, those associations were not always perceived positively, especially from the most committed and connoisseur fans. This marketing strategy did not seem to have any conspicuous positive result in terms of brand loyalty.
Fernandes and Neves (2014)	servicescape as a driver of customer value in an experiential context (football stadium)	Servicescape influences consumer perceived value, attitudes, and behavior when creating service experiences: value-in-context generates customers' satisfaction, which in turn has a positive effect on their desire to repeat the experience.
Guevarra and Howel (2015)	Effects of consuming experiential products (sports equipment)	Experiential products provide similar levels of well-being compared to life experiences and more well-being than material items. experiential products, when compared to life experiences, lead to more feelings of competence but less feelings of relatedness.
Woermann and Rokka (2015)	How consumption practices shape temporal experiences (paintball and freeskiing)	Five practice elements shape temporal experience (i.e. material set-up, bodily routines and skills, teleoaffective structures, rules, and cultural understandings). Misalignments of practice elements induce experiences of temporal drag or rush associated with experiences such as boredom and stress.
Seo (2016)	Professionalized consumption and identity transformation (esport)	Professionalized pursuits can be conceived as distinct fields of cultural production, characterized by the unique ethos that juxtaposes this form of consumption against both casual leisure and work. Consumer transformations occur by embarking on a serious leisure career, through which the consumer journeys away from the mainstream culture toward becoming a skilled adherent of the professionalized consumption field.
Funk (2017)	Development of a Sports Experience Design Framework	The framework consists of three interrelated elements: (a) the sport context in which a sports consumer navigates through an experience and interacts with touchpoints, (b) the sport user, with mental processes, psychological needs, and personal characteristics, and (c) the sports organization. The framework provides a holistic consumer-centered approach that considers

Scott, Cayla and Cova (2017)	Consuming painful experiences (Tough Mudder)	cognitive, organizational, and physical relevant design factors that enhance customer satisfaction and engagement. Why do people engage in consumption marketed as painful? Through sensory intensification, pain allows individuals to rediscover their corporeality. Painful extraordinary experiences operate as regenerative escapes from the self. Pain provides temporary relief from the burdens of self-awareness. Pain helps consumers create the story of a fulfilled life (when leaving marks and wounds).
Yoshida (2018)	Customer experience quality extended to sports management	Establishment of a framework explaining the sports customer experience. Series of propositions to understand the role of customer experience quality in sports customer decision-making, the conditions under which sports customers are more likely to be satisfied, behave and engage accordingly.
van Everdingen, Hariharan and Stremersch (2019)	Branding returns of gear manufacturers in sports competition (Formula One)	Only gear manufacturers with relatively high levels of R&D spending obtain a positive and significant breeding return from competing in sports contests. While most brands obtain positive branding returns, the lower the level of advertising spending for the brand, the greater the branding returns they obtain from competing in these contests.
Happ et al. (2020)	Customer experience in retail sports stores	Because sports products have several unique features, such as high emotional involvement or a sense of community, sports customers emphasize multisensory brand experience at the point of sale. Sports customers strive not only for functional benefits inherent in the interaction with customers and employees but also for social benefits.
Huston, Cruz and Zoppos (2021)	Understanding consumer journeys to professional play	Consumer journeys in the esports field are fluid, with consumers moving across the different dimensions according to their broader life context. Consumer journeys in esport can be dimensionalized on two axes "skill vs culture" and "serious vs casual".
Paek et al. (2021)	Fan behaviors in a professional sports League (volleyball)	Results showed that sports fan motives significantly affect relationship quality and behavioral intention regarding sports consumption, with emotional motivation exerting a considerable association. The study also demonstrated that relationship quality mediates the association between emotional motives and behavioral intentions.
Yuksel, Smith and Milne (2021)	Complementary digital experience to enhance fan experience (Fantasy football)	Complementary digital experiences are customer touchpoints that affect the core brand experience, several dimensions of the fan experience (cognitive, emotional, social). The fantasy football experience contains 5 dimensions: control, camaraderie, continuation, competition and customization.

*Table 14: Overview of existing research on sport consumption experience*



As we can see from Table 14, sports consumption and sport consumers' perceptions and outcomes have been extensively studied under the prism of experience in the last 30 years. Therefore, analyzing the effect of the categorization of leisure activities as sports should also be done under the prism of experiential consumption. In the following section, we will first go back to the notion of experience and explore behavioral intention models that have been developed to measure experiences' effects. Then, we will focus on sports literature, to explore the possible uniqueness of sport as an experience.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individuals' perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- **Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes**
  - Section 1: Sport under the prism of experience
  - **Section 2: Defining customer experience**
  - Section 3: The uniqueness of the sports experience – The need for a scale of perceived sportivity

## Section 2: Defining customer experience

### 2.1 The foundations of experience – Experiential marketing

According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982; p.132), the experiential perspective is “phenomenological in spirit and regards consumption as a primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria. Holbrook and Hirschman categorize these elements into two categories: “Environmental (external) inputs” and “Consumer (internal) inputs”. Holbrook and Hirschman argue that prior research focuses too much on tangible benefits extracted from material goods that perform utilitarian functions and that a focus on symbolic meanings, such as sociability or aesthetics is needed. In their view, every product, even a toothbrush or a pack of pasta carries a symbolic meaning in the sense of Levy (1959; Levy and Kotler, 1979).

The work of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) argues more for an expansion of research by including the emotional and subjective aspect of consumption, rather than a total shift in marketing practices. They conclude their research by highlighting seven neglected research topics that should benefit from an experiential view: the role of aesthetic products, multisensory aspects of product enjoyment, the syntactic dimensions of communication, time budgeting in the pursuit of pleasure, product-related fantasies and imagery, feelings arising of consumption, and the role of play in providing enjoyment and fun. Even though a lot of work has been done in experiential consumption research, we here go back to the origins of the field. Specifically, we position our research in one of the topics mentioned by Holbrook and Hirschman, namely “the role of play in providing enjoyment and fun”.

A few years later, after some research on specific customer experiences (e.g., Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose and Leigh, 1993; Holt, 1995; Miller, 1998; Ritzer, 1999; Vézina, 1999) Pine and Gilmore (1999) propose the first definition of experience in what they call the “Experience Economy”. In their view, we now live in an economy in which customer experiences represent the most premium and differentiated offering possible. In their opinion, this experience economy represents the fourth stage of the progression of economic value. The first stage, called the commodity stage, was not concerned with providing experiences or even building products. According to the authors, the first stage was merely about extracting raw materials and substances from all around the world. Then, the second stage started, according

to the authors, began with the Industrial Revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the manufacturing of products. This stage did not entirely replace the first one but rather represented its extension, by adding economic value with the transformation of commodities into products. The third stage emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the beginning of services as intangible offerings. Finally, the experience economy started in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in developed societies where businesses started to stage more educational and entertaining experiences to consumers. In their view, there are seven differences between customer experiences, services, goods and commodities. Table 4 below, adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2011) highlights these distinctions.

<b>Economic Offering</b>	<b>Commodities</b>	<b>Goods</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Experiences</b>
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic Function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of Offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key Attribute	Natural	Standardized	Customized	Personal
Method of Supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of Demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

*Table 15: The seven characteristics of memorable customer experiences (From Pine and Gilmore, 1999, 2011)*

Therefore, experiences, contrary to commodities, goods and services, appear to be staged, memorable, and personal. They are only revealed over a certain time, are provided by a stager for guests, and are sought after for the sensations they provide (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, 2011).

Building on that idea of memorable customer experience put forward by Pine and Gilmore (1999), Arnould, Price and Zinkham (2002) propose a first temporal conceptualization of all the possible interactions with marketing objects that can result in experiences. They position their four “consumptions experiences” on a temporal axis, where phase 1 is called “anticipated consumption”, phase 2 “purchase experience”, phase 3 “consumption experience” and phase 4 “remembered experience”. Table 5 summarizes and defines these four consumption interactions.

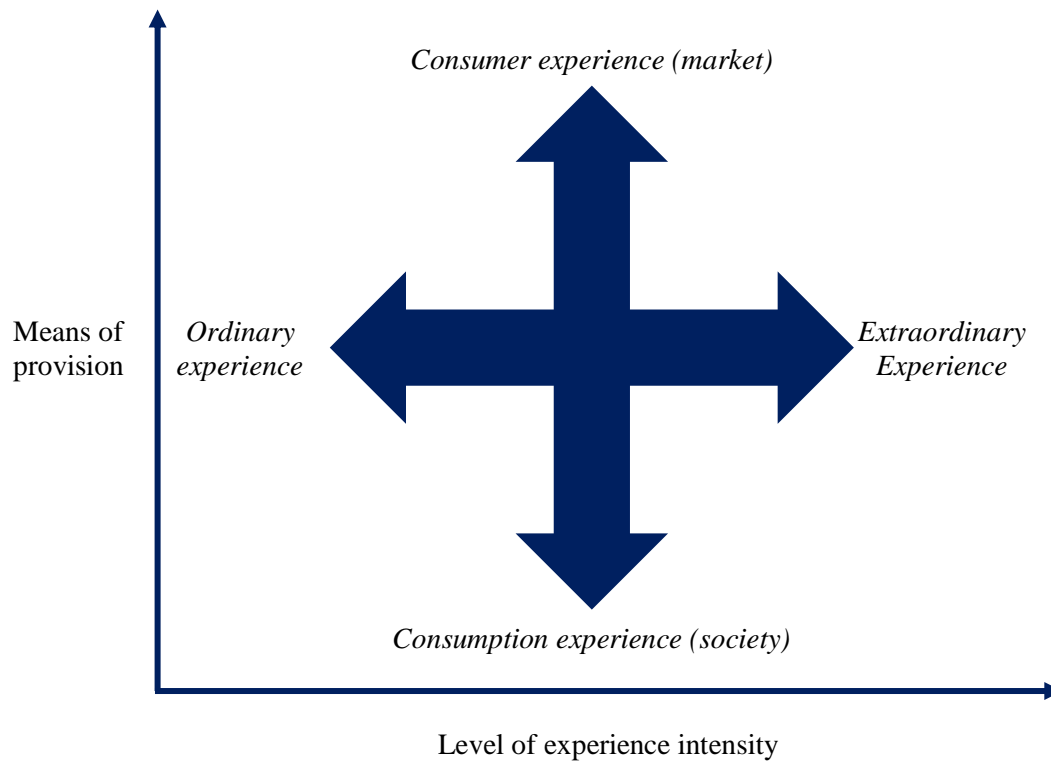
Phase	Definition
Anticipated Consumption	It involves searching for and planning for future purchases, daydreaming, foreseeing, budgeting, fantasizing, or imagining the experience.
Purchase Experience	It refers to the choice, the payment, the packaging, and the encounter with the service and the environment (the atmospherics).
Consumption Experience	It includes the sensation, the emotion, the satiety, the satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the irritation/flow, and the transformation that come with the sensory experiences.
Remembered Consumption	It is related to memory; it activates them to relive an experience through history, nostalgia, talks with friends. It can be about comparing old and new, playing "what if", daydreaming, or other mementos.

*Table 16: The four phases of consumption's interactions (Arnould et al., 2002; Carù and Cova, 2003)*

Carù and Cova (2003) propose a first critical review of customer experience and the concept of Experience Economy. They argue that there is a lack of a solid foundation and definition regarding experiential consumption. Moreover, they argue that the "experience" is ideological and only includes an American view of the term. In their opinion, experiences do not have to be extraordinary (Arnould and Price, 1993; LaSalle and Britton, 2003) or even memorable (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) to be considered experience. To explain their opinion and propose a more "humble" view of experience (Carù and Cova, 2003), they explore the nature of the term in different disciplines. First, in science, the word "experience" is similar to the word "experiment", and the meaning of "scientific experience" is different from "experience". The objective of an experience in a science context is to provide universal knowledge, valid for everybody. The subject in a science experience moves from common sense and subjectivity to proof, validity (Carù and Cova, 2003). In philosophy, an "experience" has a transformative component". Contrary to the scientific definition of "experience", it is viewed as individual and not universal (Dilthey, 1976). In sociology and psychology, Dubet (1994) defines experience as "a cognitive ability, a test or a means to construct reality and, above all, to verify it." Through multiple experiences, individual subjectivity is constructed. Moreover, in sociology, experiences have a special connection with aesthetics, and when they are very strong – such as peak experiences (Maslow, 1964), flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997), or epiphanic experiences (Denzin, 1992) –, they are important in constructing individualities (Denzin, 1992). Finally, in anthropology and ethnology, experiences are "how individuals live their own culture and, more precisely, how events are received by consciousness" (Bruner, 1986).

Even in consumption behavior and marketing, Carù and Cova (2003) argue that the definition of experience is not consensual and that many distinct interpretations of the term exist. For example, while for Arnould and Price (1993) experiences are extraordinary in nature, for Vezina (1999), they are a central element of consumers' life. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach to experience is needed, taking into account a more general view of the concept and not only the American approach (Carù and Cova, 2003). In their opinion, the American bias of the term "experience" comes from the European romantic view of the term, which can be found in two of the most influential work on experience, from Holbrook (1997) and Schmitt (1999). Romanticism is a philosophy that can be found in the books of authors such as Byron (1788-1824), Hugo (1802-1885), or Stendhal (1783-1842) to state a few. It is associated with the search for intense pleasures and high arousal, in contrast to the tepid mediocrity of everyday life. A parallel can be drawn between the experiential view of consumption that contrasts with the classic utilitarian view of consumption and the Romanticism quest for intense pleasure that emerged to contrast with the former Classicism philosophy that argues for rationalism. Building on that idea, early research on experiential consumption positioned the consumer as the "hero" of his novel (Holbrook, 1997) who strives for exceptional experiences to escape the boredom of his daily life. However, how can this view explain ordinary experiences such as reading a book, watching television, or playing a game?

To answer this question, and building on what they call a "Latin perspective" Carù and Cova (2003) propose that ordinary experiences also exist and that they do not have to be extraordinary to be called experiences. They build on work from philosophers (Agamben, 1989; Bruckner, 2000) emphasizing the importance of ordinary in providing experiences to propose a general model of the consumption experience (see figure 1).



*Figure 28: The “less ideological” view of consumption experience (from Carù and Cova, 2003)*

As we can see from Carù and Cova (2003), research on consumption experience emerged at a time when researchers did not see and define experience the same way. More recently, several authors have proposed a review of customer experience and experiential marketing (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli, 2018). In the next section, we will focus on these authors to propose our view of experiential marketing and customer experience.

In 2013, after 30 years of research on experiential marketing, Schmitt and Zarantonello propose a critical review of the field. After building on that idea of “Experience Economy” and defining the term “experience”, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) propose a literature review of the term and its use in different disciplines and scientific fields based on Carù and Cova (2003). In their work, the authors first point out the importance of understanding customer experiences, not only for academics but also for practitioners who could gain insight for positioning and providing appealing experiences for consumers through “experiential marketing”, an area of marketing dedicated to understanding customer experiences (Schmitt, 1999). However, even though many researchers coined the term “experience”, what is its concrete definition? According to Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013), and Webster’s Third New International

Dictionary, the term “experience” has two distinct meanings. Experience can be defined as a “direct observation of or participation in events: an encountering, undergoing, or living through things in general as they take place in the course of time”. It can also be a reference to the past, in the sense of “knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events: practical resulting from what one has encountered, undergone, or lived”.

In their paper, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) adopt a broader view of experience, not focused only on extraordinary experiences. In their paper, they first argue that one of the key tenets of experiential marketing is that value does not only reside in the utilitarian and functional benefits of objects and services, but it also resides in what they call “experiential elements” that surround the product/service. They also go back to Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) idea of experience being a new stage of economic offering. In their words, experience does not represent the next level of offering as Pine and Gilmore proclaimed: “Rather than entering a new economic stage, it may be more appropriate to view what is happening in today’s economies and markets as a new way of marketing products and services, and perhaps even commodities” (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; p.27).

Experience can be direct (direct participation) or indirect (through advertising or media for example), focus on products or services, and can occur online or offline. Regarding direct or indirect experiences, some authors argue that they both can be studied objectively through experimentation, while others argue for an interpretive approach to experiences due to their subjective nature. That interpretive approach, taking into account the subjectivity of consumer and their ability to model their consumptions depending on their mood, desires, and emotions has been acknowledged since then by the majority of customer experiences researchers (Jantzen et al., 2012; Gilovich, Kumar and Jampol, 2015; Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli, 2018). Moreover, using Holbrook’s (2006) definition of consumption experience – or “an emergent property that results from a complex system of mutually overlapping interrelationships in constant reciprocal interaction with personal, environmental, and situational input” –, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) argue that the concept of consumption experience is broader than the product and service, or offline and online experience.

More recently, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) have also proposed a general definition of customer experience. In their view, customer experience “is a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer’s cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm’s



offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey." Experiences can relate to specific aspects of the offerings, such as a product (e.g. Kempf and Smith, 1998), a service (e.g. Helkkula, 2011) a brand (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009), or technology (e.g., McCarthy and Wright 2004). In this research, we will follow this definition to position the categorization of a leisure activity as sporty, that its perceived sportivity, as an experience element that firms can manage to influence consumer outcomes.

With this definition, Lemon and Verhoef agree on the multidimensional nature of experience. They also argue for the consumer's role in the experience they live. Consumers are not the only recipient of their experiences; they are also actors and interact with them. Building on Pucinelli et al. (2009), Lemon and Verhoef (2016) go further and argue that experience "consists of individual contacts between the firm and the customer at distinct points in the experience, called touchpoints" (Schmitt, 2003; Homburg, Jozic and Kuehnl, 2017). Therefore, experiences should be influenced by a various range of different interactions between the firm and the customer, what we call "touchpoints".

To fully understand the concept of experience, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also argue that customer experience integrates multiple existing marketing concepts and streams of literature. They integrate seven of them chronologically to fully develop and contribute to customer experience. Table 6 proposes a review of these seven streams of literature based on Lemon and Verohef (2016).

Marketing concept	Authors	Period	Contribution
Customer buying behavior process models	Howard and Sheth (1969), Webster and Wind (1972), Sheth (1973)	1960s - 1970s	Foundation for the holistic thinking of the customer experience as a process the consumer goes through (i.e. the consumer journey). Highlights the three phases of interaction between a consumer and a brand (pre-purchase, purchase, post-purchase)
Customer satisfaction and loyalty	Oliver (1980), Bearden and Teel (1983), Oliver and Winer (1987)	1970s - 1980s	Provides the first metrics for measuring the customer experience (satisfaction and loyalty). Integration of consumer expectations in the measurement of satisfaction. First inclusion of consumer emotions
Service Quality	Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988); Bitner (1990, 1992);	1980s	Brings a focus on the experience's context and the journey mapping through the integration of influential exterior elements such as the atmospherics or the environment (the context of the experience)
Relationship Marketing	Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Berry (1995)	1990s	Expansion of the experience into the B2B context. Expansion of the theoretical facets of the customer experience with the introduction of new constructs to measure experience outcomes (e.g. trust, commitment) and new emotional aspects (e.g. passion, intimacy).
Customer Relationship Management	Reinartz and Kumar (2000), Winer (2001), Verhoef (2003), Mithas, Krishnan and Fornell (2005)	2000s	Focus on value extraction; customer acquisition and customer retention optimization. Introduction of new concept linked to equity perception from consumers (e.g. brand equity, value equity). Focus on the links between customer experiences and business outcomes
Customer Centricity and customer focus	Sheth, Sisodia, and Sharma (2000), Gulati and Oldroyd (2005), Fader (2012)	2000s - 2010s	Shift of focus from the mass to the individual, focus on consumer's perception (e.g. buyer's persona). The main objective is to understand the consumer to provide him with the most adequate offering
Customer engagement	Van Doorn et al. (2010), Hollebeek et al. (2011), Brodie et al. (2011)	2010s	Recognizes the value of non-purchase interactions. Focus on consumers' attitudes and behaviors that go beyond purchase. Incorporation of new technologies (e.g. social media platforms). Clarification of the consumers' role in the experience they live

*Table 17: The foundations of customer experience (adapted from Lemon and Verhoef, 2016)*

With this table, we can see that the customer experience concept finds its roots in most of the most widely used consumer behaviors concepts over the past 60 years. It also highlights the evolving nature of the concept. Even though the term was coined in the 80s (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), the way we conceptualize, measure, and link customer experiences to cognitive, affective, and behavioral intention outcomes has changed.

Many researchers have highlighted the importance of these “touchpoints” when conceptualizing and defining experience (LaSalle and Britton, 2002; Frow and Payne, 2007; Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; De Keyser et al., 2020). These touchpoints reflect all the possible individual contacts between a customer and a firm/brand across the entirety of his/her consumer journey and are perceived as the elements through which the customer experience is lived or managed. They serve different purposes, such as the gathering of information, the payment, the unpacking, the usage, or the feedback (De Keyser et al., 2020).

While Lemon and Verhoef (2016) differentiate touchpoints in terms of temporality (pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase) to explain the customer journey (see Figure 2), De Keyser et al. (2020) extend this work to differentiate touchpoints in terms of control, nature, and stage of the consumer journey.

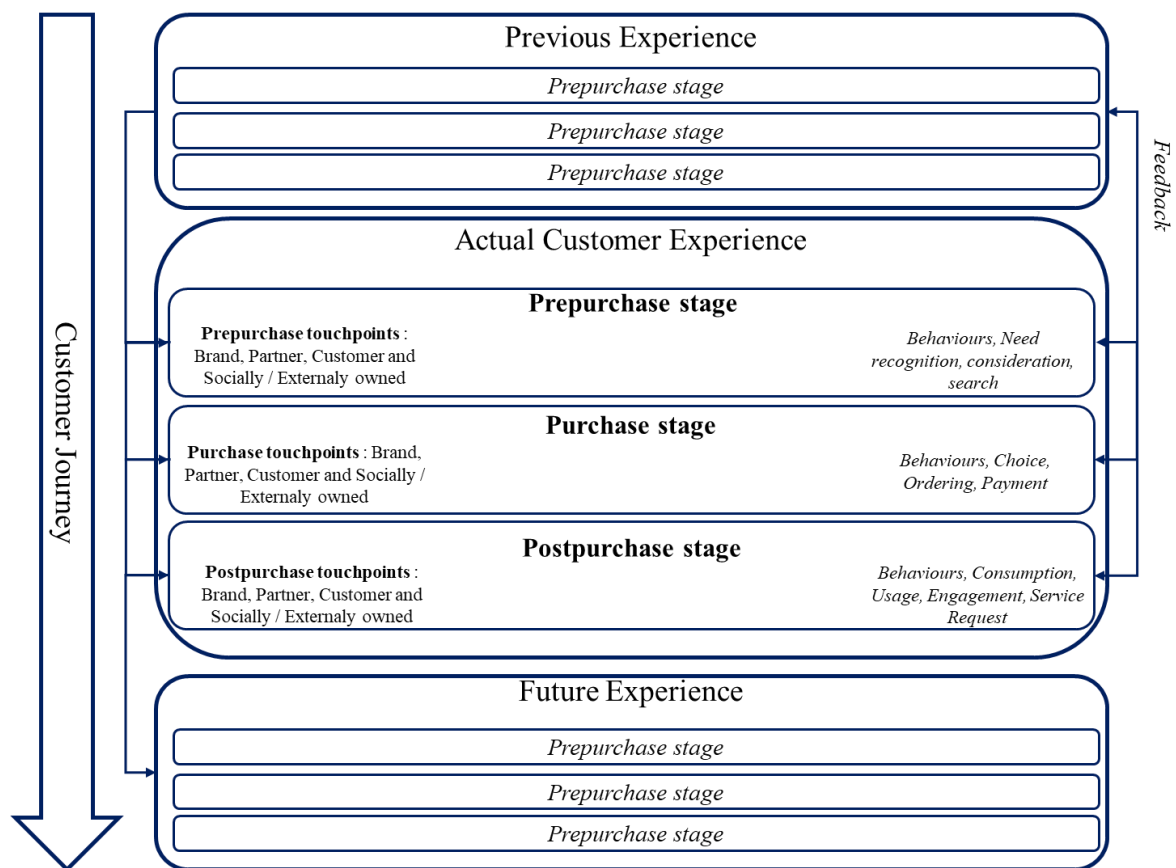


Figure 29: Customer journey and experience process model (from Lemon and Verhoef., 2016)

According to De Keyser et al. (2020), the “control” elements of touchpoints refer to the entity in charge of the contact point between the customer and the firm/brand. In their opinion, companies are not always in charge of the touchpoints, even though most of the research on

customer experience focuses on firm-initiated touchpoints (Verhoef et al., 2009; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). However, recent research has also acknowledged non-firm controlled touchpoints by recognizing the growing importance of customers in the contact with a firm (Gao, Melero-Polo and Sese, 2020; De Keyser et al., 2020). Finally, researchers have also paid attention to the role of a third party in the touchpoint control, such as competitors or other brands/firms (Tax, McCutcheon and Wilkinson, 2013; Kranzbühler, Kleijnen and Verlegh, 2019).

The second criterion used by De Keyser et al. (2020) to differentiate touchpoints is their nature. According to the authors, touchpoint nature “reflects the way in which the brand/firm is represented in the touchpoint. A touchpoint can be human (e.g., frontline employee), digital (e.g., ATM, website), physical (e.g., store environment) or a combination thereof”. Most of the early literature on experience focused on human and physical touchpoints (e.g., Arnould and Price 1993; Hui and Bateson 1991; Schouten, McAlexander, and Koenig 2007). However, the growing usage of digital technology has encouraged recent research to explore digital touchpoints, with many papers focusing on online customer experience (e.g., Rose et al. 2012; Klaus and Maklan 2013; Mclean, Al-Nabhani, and Wilson 2018; Bleier, Harmeling, and Palmatier 2019). De Keyser et al. (2020) also highlight the emergence of new research focusing on touchpoints of a new nature: smart services (Hoffman and Novak, 2018).

Finally, the third element of touchpoint categorization is the stage (De Keyser et al., 2020). It refers to the temporal categorization of touchpoints that Lemon and Verhoef (2016) highlighted (the pre-purchase stage, the purchase stage, and the post-purchase stage). The pre-purchase stage refers to all the possible interactions between the consumer and the brand/firm before the act of purchasing. It mostly refers to phases of need recognition, information seeking, and evaluation of alternatives (Puccinelli et al., 2009). The purchase stage refers to all the interactions between the firm and the consumer during the buying process. It encompasses different moments, including consumer choice, ordering, paying, pick-up and delivery (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The post-purchase stage refers to all the contact points that relate to the actual usage and consumption of the product/service. It can refer to brand communities (Schouten McAlexander and Koenig, 2007; Carù and Cova, 2005) or product-return points (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). As we can see from this review on touchpoints, experiences can occur at any moment in the relationship between the consumer and the brand.

To summarize, customer experience is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the entirety of the relationship between a consumer and a brand. It can also refer to a particular interaction at a certain point in time. It describes the consumer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm/brand or its offerings. Customer experience finds its root in the entirety of the consumer behavior literature. In the next section, we will first distinguish experience from other marketing concepts. It is of the utmost importance considering how broad customer experience is. Then, we will focus on the motivations and outcomes of customer experiences and on how firms can manage them to create value.

## **2.2 The nomological network of customer experience**

When it comes to conceptualizing customer experience, it is important to distinguish it from other constructs. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) do so by differentiating the construct from satisfaction, service quality, trust, commitment, brand involvement, brand attachment and consumer engagement. According to Lemon and Verhoef, satisfaction is a component of the global experience. Moreover, the experience might be a way to broaden consumer satisfaction, which is one of the most studied consumer outcomes in a marketing context. Therefore, satisfaction can be seen as an outcome of customer experience.

Regarding constructs such as trust and commitment, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) classify them as outcomes of experience. In their view, a positive experience with a product/service/brand will provide commitment and trust on the consumer's side, even though trust and experience are not directly related. However, we could also argue that trust in a brand might influence brand experience. It is logical to think that, our experience with a brand, a product, or a service will be different depending on how much we trust it.

According to Brakus et al. (2009), experience, and more precisely brand experience, is related to brand involvement and brand attachment. In their work, Brakus et al. used attachment and brand involvement to assess the discriminant validity of their brand experience scale, without specifying the nature of the relations between the constructs. According to Lemon and Verhoef (2016), customer experience is also related to consumer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2011). In their view, even though extant research has neglected the relationship between experience and engagement, engagement or what they call "reaching out", constitutes consumers' journey touchpoints that result in cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial and social responses from

the consumer and are part of the overall customer experience. In that sense, consumer engagement might represent a component of customer experience through specific interactional touchpoints. Finally, brand loyalty in addition to satisfaction represents one of the main outcomes of customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Other authors have also proposed antecedents and outcomes of customer experience (Aaker, 1997; Berry, 2000; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli, 2018; Pizam and Tasci, 2019; Tasci and Pizam, 2020). For example, Aaker's work on brand personality (1997) has been used to show how brand personality judgments are formed based on consumers' experiences with brands and any contact or touchpoints with the brand (Berry, 2000; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014). Brand personality is an important cue that marketers can use to signal the brand's relevance to consumers. It also generates value and strengthens consumer-brand relationships (Aaker, 1996; Ramaseshan and Tsao, 2007; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014). Ramaseshan and Stein's study aimed at identifying the links between brand experience and brand loyalty. They found links between brand experience and loyalty, attachment and commitment, but also the mediating role of brand personality in the relationships between brand experience and consumer outcomes.

More recently, Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018) position experience as an outcome of brand usage that "depends on the positioning of and meanings conveyed by the brand and that can explain why consumers decide to create and maintain a relationship with a specific brand". In that sense, brand usage could also be considered as a touchpoint in the brand experience. Based on Verhoef's (2009). In a research context, Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018) also propose different elements that influence experience: the social environment, the service interface, the retail atmosphere, the assortment, the price, the retail brand, and alternatives experiences. To resume, the entire physical environment surrounding an offering, i.e. the servicescape (Bitner, 1992) also influences experience. Moreover, even prior experiences influence actual and future experiences. Finally, Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018) also mention a link between customer experience and consumer value. The relation between value and experience has been studied both ways, either with experience as a driver of value, or with value as a driver of experience. The view that considers experience as a driver of value creation finds its foundation with Holbrook (1996) who conceptualized experience as "an interactive, relativistic preference that underlies the creation of all customer value" (Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli, 2018). Most of the research studying the relation between experience and value

adopt this view (e.g., de Ruyter et al., 1997; Babin and Attaway, 2000; Mathwick Malhotra and Rigdon, 2002; Jones, Reynolds and Arnold, 2006; Bonnefoy-Claudet et al., 2015; Terblanche, 2018).

However, others researchers, such as Sandström et al. (2008), or Heinonen, Strandvik and Voima. (2010) adopt the opposing view by positioning customer experience as an outcome of consumer value. The problem in the clarification of this relation might come from the lack of a clear conceptualization of value in some research. For example, Helkkula, Kelleher and Pihlström (2012) even merge the two concepts in one called “value in the experience”. In that sense, value might be a component of experience, or even a measurement of experience. In this work, we adopt the classical view of experience as a driver of value. The following table provides an overview of the antecedents and outcomes of customer experience.

Construct / Element	Status / Relation	Reference
Physical Environment / Servicescape	Antecedent	Verhoef (2009)
Prior experience	Antecedent	Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018)
Usage	Antecedent	Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018)
Alternative experiences	Antecedents	Chaney, Lunardo and Mencarelli (2018)
Brand Engagement	Antecedent / Outcome	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Trust	Antecedent / Outcome	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Perceived Value	Outcome	Mathwick Malhotra and Rigdon, 2002
Attachment	Outcome	Brakus et al. (2009)
Brand involvement	Outcome	Brakus et al. (2009)
Loyalty	Outcome	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Brand Personality	Outcome	Ramaseshan and Stein (2014)
Commitment	Outcome	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Satisfaction	Outcome	Lemon and Verhoef (2016)
Brand attachment	Outcome	Brakus et al. (2009)

*Table 18: Antecedents and outcomes of customer experience*

Finally, Tasci and Pizam (2019, 2020), in a tourism context, propose the experiencescape, an extension of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992), to explore the nomological network of experience, based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model (Mehrabian and Russel, 1974). Their work proposes the different components of experiences, the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and consumer outcomes, but also some moderators of customer experience. The following figure,

based on their work, proposes a nomological network of experience, including all the variables and components we mentioned before.



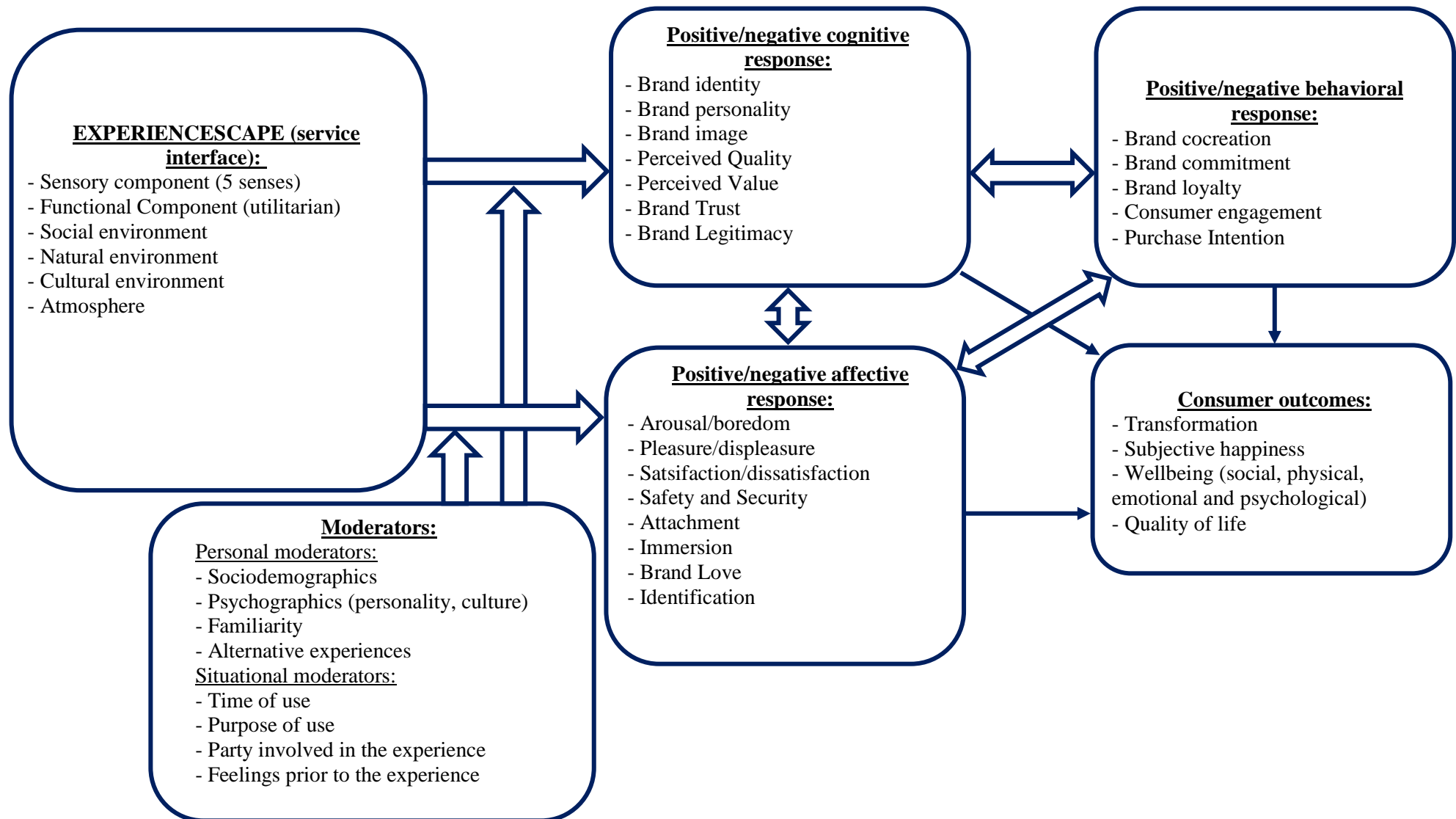


Figure 30: Nomological network of customer experience (adapted from Tasci and Pizam, 2020)

As we can see from the above figure, the nomological network of customer experience appears to be complex, with experience having a multitude of cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes for consumers. The figure also shows how many moderators can affect customer experience. In the following section, we will explore customer experience from the firm's point of view, and explore how they can manage experience to suit their consumers' needs.

### **2.3 Customer Experience Management – Experiential marketing**

In this section, we will focus on companies' efforts to manage and foster customer experiences, and explain why managing experience is important for companies. We also propose perceived sportivity as a tool that companies can use to design their offering and that will foster more engagement from consumers. Several authors have pointed out the need for experience management for companies (e.g. Berry, Carbone and Haeckel, 2002; Grewal, Levy and Kumar, 2009; Puccinelli et al., 2009; Palmer, 2010; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Gilovich and Gallo, 2019; Klink, Zhang and Athaide, 2020).

As early as 2002, Berry, Carbone and Haeckel wrote one of the first papers on the importance of managing customer experience for companies in the MIT Sloan Management Review. They focus on five important elements needed to create a positive experience for customers, namely "Recognizing the clues", "Building new competency", "Emergency room connections", "Trying harder – and succeeding", and "Competing with experiences". "Recognizing the clues" is the first step in managing the experience for companies. There are two types of clues in an experience: clues related to the actual functioning of the good / service provided, and clues related to the emotions and senses of the consumer during his / her encounter with the offerings. According to Berry, Carbone and Haeckel (2002), companies must understand and manage the emotional component of experience at the same level as their offer. Next, "Building a new competency" refers to the process that companies must follow to create adequate clues for the consumer. "Emergency room connections" is all about following up with the provided experience, and listening to consumers' opinions. Then, "Trying harder" is similar to step three and concerns the understanding of consumers' need to provide them with an adequate answer. Finally, "Competing with experiences" points out the need of paying attention to what the competition is doing. At the same time, in France, Aurier and Passebois (2002) highlighted how, understanding customer experiences could be usefull in imporving customer relationships.

However, international academic interest in customer experience management emerged in the late 2000s with a special issue of the *Journal of Retailing* and works from Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009), Puccinelli et al. (2009), Verhoef et al. (2009) and Brakus et al. (2009). While the first two papers focused on customer experience management in a retailing context, Brakus et al. focused on brand experience management and developed a first tool to measure and interpret brand experience. In the retailing context, Puccinelli et al. (2009) listed all the elements that constitute the customer experience and affect it, namely goals, schemas and information processing, memory, involvement, attitudes, affect, atmospherics and customers' attributions. In their opinion, firms can influence all these elements to create a better experience for consumers that will ultimately lead to enhanced satisfaction and better sales. During the same year, Verhoef et al. (2009) argue for the importance of store environment, service interface, past customers' experiences and store brand on future experiences. Therefore, the customer experience seems to contain elements that firms can control (e.g. service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, and price) but also factors outside of the firm's control (e.g. influence of others, purpose of shopping). Verhoef et al. (2009) also point out the need of considering the customer's experience in the store but also with other channels. Similarly, firms must also pay attention to the evolution of the experience over time.

Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009) provide an organizing framework for managing customer experience. In their view, two elements strongly influence customer experience: Macro Factors and Firm Controlled Factors. Macro Factors influence both the customer retail experience and the Firm Controlled Factors. They are factors that the firm cannot control and that have an influence on consumer's behavior, such as the 2009 financial crisis or the recent Pandemic. Firms controlled factors refer mainly to the elements highlighted by both Puccinelli et al. (2009) and Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009).

More recently, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) provided an overview of existing research on customer experience management. In their view, before any management action regarding the customer experience, firms must focus on two aspects. First, they must analyze their actual customer journey. The goal of a customer journey analysis is to "describe it and to understand the customer's options and choices for touchpoint in multiple purchase phases" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Customer journey analysis finds its roots in both service management and multichannel management according to Lemon and Verhoef (2016). In service management, Bitner et al. (2008) propose the service blueprinting methodology, a customer-focused approach

for service innovation and service improvement as a tool to understand and analyze the customer journey. Service blueprinting maps out the entire service delivery process from back-office internal processes to front-facing customer interactions and has been used extensively by firms since its implementation. However, the service blueprinting also has some limitations. According to Bitner et al. (2008), the service blueprinting lacks a strong customer focus, which may explain why some internal process-oriented customer journey approaches are not effective (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). However, the service blueprinting literature suggests two key insights for marketers in the analysis of the customer journey. First, it provides a valid and robust starting point for companies to map their customer journey. Secondly, in addition to the service blueprinting, the customer journey analysis should also take into account the customer perspective and thus requires input on the customer's side. Service blueprinting might therefore offer a starting point in the customer experience analysis but should be completed with insights from the customers.

Then, before the proper customer experience management, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also point out the importance of measuring customer experience. Indeed, being able to measure the customer experience plays a critical role for firms. This research offers a tool to measure experiences in terms of their perceived sportivity. Usually, firms attempt to measure the overall experience through several metrics that have been developed over the last few years. The first real tool to measure experience was the brand experience scale, developed by Brakus et al. (2009). This scale measures four aspects of the customer brand experience, namely "sensory", "affective", "intellectual" and "loyalty". Following Brakus et al. (2009), other authors also developed tools to measure experience (e.g. Maklan and Klaus, 2011; Klaus and Maklan, 2011, 2013; Verleye, 2015). While many of these scales focus on similar aspects, Klaus and Maklan (2013) focus on four different aspects to measure experience: "peace of mind", "moment of truth", "outcome focus" and "product experience".

However, these overall customer experience measures are not widely used by practitioners (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016), and firms tend to use single-item measures that are easily understood by both managers and respondents. Usually, satisfaction is the most measured outcome to evaluate an experience. However, some authors have also proposed other single-item measures, such as the Net-Promoter Score (NPS; Reichheld, 2003) or the Customer Effort Score (CES; Dixon, Freeman and Toman, 2010) to measure the overall experience. Even though these indicators are intuitive and easy to use and comprehend, they lack a strong theoretical

foundation, and some authors have also argued that they show no difference with classic satisfaction measures (De Haan, Verhoef and Wiesel, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Consequently, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) posit that there is no agreement on measurement indicators for the global customer experience, even though service management approaches such as SERVQUAL or the blueprint might offer good starting points to analyze the experience and manage it.

Regarding the actual management of the customer experience, existing literature is rather scarce. Schmitt (2003) published the first framework on experience management, consisting of five phases: analyzing the experiential world of the customer, building the experiential platform, designing the brand experience, structuring the customer experience, and engaging in continuous innovation. However, touchpoints do not appear to be central in Schmitt's book despite their growing interest for practice-oriented, authors such as Rawson, Duncan and Jones (2013) or Edelman and Singer (2015). Similarly, academics also point out the importance of touchpoints in managing experience (Homburg et al., 2015; Lemon and Verhoef; Becker and Jaakola, 2020).

According to Homburg et al. (2015), customer experience can only be managed through touchpoints and firms should analyze and focus on their customer journey through these touchpoints and the use of data analysis. Similarly, Lemon and Verhoef (2016) state that the best way to manage customer experience is to focus on the customer journey design through touchpoints during the different phases of the customer experience.

More recently, Becker and Jaakola (2020), in a review of customer experience, focus on stimuli and the manageable aspects of customer experience. In their view, the global customer experience cannot be properly managed and measured. Instead, practitioners should focus on all the stimuli that affect it. This statement relates and offers yet another justification for the study of perceived sportivity. Indeed, in an experiential context, perceived sportivity might act as a stimulus affecting consumers' perceptions and ultimately consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes. In their framework, they develop four premises of customer experience, with a research agenda and potential research topics for each of them. The following table, extracted from Becker and Jaakkola (2020) provides an overview of these premises.

Premises	General guidelines for research	Potential new research topics
<p>P1a: Customer experience comprises customers' non-deliberate, spontaneous responses and reactions to offering-related stimuli along the customer journey</p> <p>P1b: Customer experience ranges from ordinary to extraordinary representing the intensity of customer responses to stimuli.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer experience should be distinguished from stimuli (e.g., the offering) and evaluative outcomes (e.g., satisfaction)</li> <li>• Timing is relevant for measuring customer experience Researchers across traditions should adopt consistent labels for types of customer responses</li> <li>• Ordinary and extraordinary customer experiences are a representation of customers' responses and reactions, and not of the context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating the weight of types of responses of customer experience across different contexts</li> <li>• Using technological innovations to capture customer experience in real-time</li> <li>• Investigating interaction effects between different types of customer responses to stimuli</li> <li>• Investigating extraordinary experiences in ordinary contexts and vice versa</li> </ul>
<p>P2a: Customer experience stimuli reside within and outside firm-controlled touchpoints and can be viewed from multiple levels of aggregation</p> <p>P2b: Customer experience stimuli and their interconnections affect customer experience dynamically.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emergence of customer experience can be analyzed at different levels of aggregation: (1) cues, (2) touchpoints, (3) the customer journey and (4) the consumer journey</li> <li>• Researchers should make choices regarding the types of touchpoints and the level of analysis they investigate and acknowledge the implication that only a part of the phenomenon is addressed</li> <li>• Researchers should consider interactions between stimuli within and across levels of the customer journey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding the types of stimuli examined within and outside the firm's control</li> <li>• Investigating how the interplay of diverse stimuli across different types of touchpoints affects customer experience and its evaluative outcomes</li> <li>• Analyzing the formation of customer experience longitudinally</li> <li>• Building dynamic scales of customer experience (e.g., self-adaptive scales)</li> </ul>
<p>P3: Customer experience is subjective and context-specific because responses to offering-related stimuli and their evaluative outcomes depend on customer, situational, and sociocultural contingencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies should account for various contingencies that may influence the effects of offering-related stimuli on customer experience and the effects of customer experience on evaluative outcomes</li> <li>• A particular customer experience should not be considered "universally good" or "universally bad" but the dependency of this evaluation on context should be acknowledged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadening the set of contingency factors by drawing on supplementary literature fields or theories</li> <li>• Understanding how institutions and institutional arrangements influence the impact of offering-related stimuli on customer experience</li> <li>• Understanding key contingencies for the effect for types of customer responses on evaluative outcomes</li> </ul>

4: Firms cannot create the customer experience, but they can monitor, design and manage a range of stimuli that affect such experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researchers should acknowledge that the focus of customer experience management is stimuli along the customer journey to trigger intended responses</li><li>• Researchers should adopt a more nuanced definition of customer experience, focusing on intended types and intensity of responses</li><li>• Stimuli vary in the degree to which firms can control them, requiring different management approaches</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzing how particular intended experiences, i.e., combinations of responses can be triggered</li><li>• Investigating how firms can understand and affect touchpoints outside the firm's control, such as social touchpoints</li><li>• Investigating how contextual factors can be used for the segmentation of customers who are responsive to particular stimuli</li></ul>
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*Table 19: The four Premises of customer experience: an integrative framework (adapted from Becker and Jaakola, 2020)*

In this research, following previous research on customer experience, we propose that perceived sportivity is a factor that influences the customer perception of the stimuli he/she experience, ultimately leading to positive consumer outcomes. We also propose that firms, through perceived sportivity, can manage stimuli and even some touchpoints.

In the next section, we will discuss the uniqueness of the sports experience, and explain why a scale of perceived sportivity is needed.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study – The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individuals' perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esport as a sport
- **Chapter 3: The sports consumption experience – Brand-related outcomes and consumer behavioral outcomes**
  - Section 1: Sport under the prism of experience
  - Section 2: Defining Customer experience
  - **Section 3: The uniqueness of the sports experience – The need for a scale of perceived sportivity**



## Section 3: The uniqueness of the sports experience – The need for a scale of perceived sportivity

### 3.1 Sport as a unique type of experience

In the previous sections, we first explored how esport can be studied as a sport if it is categorized as such by consumers. We also linked sport and experience and explored customer experience as a concept. In this section, building on existing research and examples from sport and marketing literature, we will propose that sport can affect brand experiences, and therefore customer outcomes in different ways. Moreover, we will also explore the uniqueness of the sports experience. Finally, we will discuss the usefulness and the need for a perceived sportivity scale, both for practitioners and researchers.

Research linking customer experience and sports consumption emerged as soon as the 1990s, both in the sports literature (e.g. Wakefield and Sloan, 1995) and in the customer experience literature (e.g. Arnould and Thompson, 1993; Celsi, Rose and Leigh, 1993; Holt, 1995). Wakefield and Sloan (1995) were among the first to recognize the importance of factors outside the game in predicting fan attendance. More specifically, they studied the effect of several customer experience elements, such as stadium parking, stadium cleanliness, perceived crowding, food service, other fans' behavior, and fan loyalty on fans' willingness to stay and attend games at the stadium. Results showed the direct influence of fan loyalty, stadium design and stadium services on desire to stay and attend games at the stadium. Miller and Johnson (2008), a few years later, adopted a managerial view and developed a model of sports customer experience focusing on employee identification with the sports club. They found results similar to Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) and argued that expenditure on service alone is not sufficient for organizational success and that supporting elements are equally important. They also found that identification processes play a central role in creating the customer experience in the leisure sector. Klaus and Maklan (2011) also proposed a model of customer experience in sport, but focused on extreme sports. Studying mountain bikers, they found how the core extreme sport experience was influenced by not only the company but also by other participants. Therefore, the sports experience could be dependent not only on the customer's perception of the sport and the organizer's efforts, but also on the relationship with other participants.

More recently, Yoshida (2017) proposed a review of existing customer experience research and applied it to the sports management context. Building on Grewal, Lévy and Kumar (2009), Verhoef et al. (2009), and Lemon and Verhoef (2016), Yoshida points out the importance of understanding the very essence of experiential consumption for sports organizations. In his view, the sport customer experience is defined as “sport consumers’ cognitive, affective, social, and physical reactions to direct (e.g., purchase and consumption) and indirect (e.g., media and social network) encounters with a sports organization, its products, and other consumers”. Yoshida (2017) also proposes a conceptual framework including all the possible direct and indirect encounters between the customer and the firm (i.e. touchpoints). The following figure represents Yoshida’s sports customer experience framework.

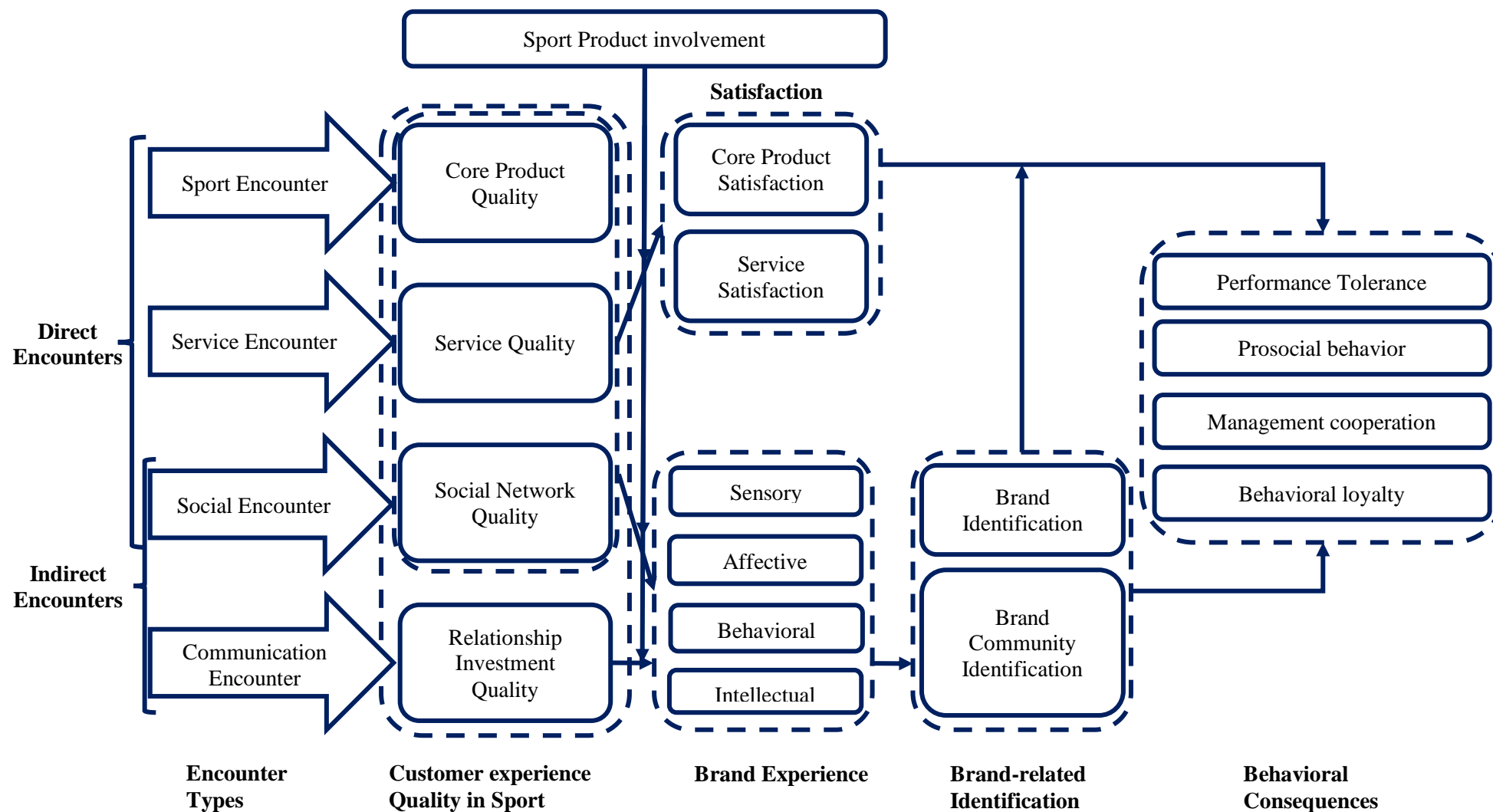


Figure 31: Sport customer experience framework (from Yoshida, 2017)

As we can see from the above figure, the sports experience could represent one of the many touchpoints of a classic customer experience and should be linked to all the other types of encounters in the customer journey. As with any other service encounter, the sports encounter is expected to provide satisfaction for the consumer and influence its brand experience. This brand experience should then influence brand identification, ultimately leading to behavioral consequences for the consumer, such as loyalty, or purchase intention. Finally, Paek et al. (2021), focusing on professional sports consumption, developed a model that explains the antecedents and outcomes of relationship quality initiatives in the context of professional sports, and a professional sports fan motivation framework. Consistent with previous findings on the role of emotional motives on consumer behavior (Fournier, 1988), they found that emotional motives have a strong influence on relationship quality for consumers and sport consumption behavioral intention. However, they also found a non-significant relationship between cognitive motives, behavioral motives, and relationship quality and consumption intention. Therefore, one might conclude that the aforementioned importance of the emotional component in the sports customer experience may be explained by a certain degree of uniqueness in the sports experience. This uniqueness will be discussed in the following part.

Even though sport seems to represent a perfect example of customer experience, it also appears to have its specificities. First of all, as highlighted by Holbrook and Hirschman's comments (1982) and by Holt's typology of consumption (1995) the play element is central in sports consumption and could play a unique role for the consumers. Then, emotional motives appear to be the most important predictors of relationship quality and behavioral intention in the sports context (Rageh Ismail et al., 2011; Paek et al., 2021). This could represent a certain form of uniqueness. Many authors have explored motivations for sports consumption and have developed instruments to measure consumers' motivations in both online and offline contexts (Wann, 1995; Trail and James, 2001; Allen, 2003; Kim, 2003; Mallet et al., 2007; Seo and Green, 2008).

Moreover, as we have seen previously, the sports encounter represents a specific type of touchpoint in the sports customer experience (Yoshida, 2017). Therefore, the sole perception of an activity as being sporty could influence the entire customer experience. Authors have also pointed out the unique importance of loyalty in the sports context. (Smith and Stewart, 2010). Other research has also highlighted how elements such as nostalgia (Fairley, 2003), pride

(Decrop and Derbaix, 2010), or fanaticism (Chung et al., 2008) can have a special influence on sport consumption behaviors.

Therefore, a multitude of elements could influence the sports experience, and we argue that, because of the unique nature of the sports experience, even the sole perception of sportivity in any activity could influence consumers' perception and ultimately their behaviors.

### **3.2 Why are a conceptualization and measurement scale of perceived sportivity needed?**

As highlighted above, the sports experience is thought to be unique, and the sole categorization of an activity as being a sport in the consumer's mind could lead to different outcomes in brand perception and consumer behavioral intention. Moreover, all the previous sports studies have focused on one type of customer experience in a particular context, and findings in a sports context might not replicate in other sports, rendering them difficult to generalize. To fill this gap, a scale of perceived sportivity could offer a first way of examining the influence of the experience categorized as sporty in a wide set of contexts, sports and leisure activities.

In addition, the sports definition seems to be constantly evolving, as evidenced by instances of leisure activities becoming sports (e.g. surf, skateboard, climbing, MMA, etc.). The recent inclusion in the Olympics of new sports such as skateboard, surf, or even climbing provides the perfect example of such evolution. Therefore, studying the elements that influence consumers' perception and categorization of any activity as a sport could help firms in managing their offerings to position them as sporty or not depending on consumers' perception and categorization. Perceived sportivity could represent a way to create a good fit between consumers' perceptions and a firm offering.

As we have seen in the introduction with the polls from YouGov in the UK and the USA, there is a discrepancy between consumers' perception of sport and the institutional view of sport. Activities such as Chess are not considered as a sport by the majority of respondents despite its sports status being recognized by the IOC, and other activities recognized as sports by consumers have gained an official sport status and are now featured in international sport mega-events such as the Olympics.

Recent research on sport has also started to study objects outside the classic sports realm, such as esport (e.g. Seo, 2016; Jenny et al., 2017; Cunningham, 2018; Funk et al., 2018; Hallmann and Giel, 2018; Lefebvre, Djaballah, and Chanavat, 2020; Scholz, Volek and Uebach, 2021). Therefore, the use of a perceived sportivity scale could help researchers study different objects under the prism of sportivity more easily.

Our research aims at building and using such a scale in a real-life context, using both existing literature reviews on sport and consumer insights. The following table - numbered 8 and based on Kuehnl, Jozic and Homburg (2019) – provides an overview of existing research fields related to our research and this work's contributions.

Research Field	Customer Experience	Customer Experience Management	Sport Experience	Sport Management
<b>Key Studies</b>	Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Holt, 1995; Schmitt, 1999; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Carù and Cova, 2003; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016	Brakus et al., 2009; Grewal et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Lemke et al., 2011; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Homburg et al., 2017	Klaus and Maklan (2011)	Wakefield and Sloan, 1995; Miller and Johnson, 2008; Klaus and Maklan, 2011; Yoshida, 2017; Paek et al., 2021
<b>Focus of studies</b>	Understanding the drivers and behavioral outcomes of customer experience	Managing customer experience for firms	Understanding the drivers and outcomes of the sports experience	Factors enhancing the sports customer experience
<b>Gaps in research</b>	→ No actual definition of what activity falls under the category of sport or not → There is still a need for a better understanding of "playful activities" → Does the sole perception and categorization of an activity as a sport influence consumer behavioral intention?			
<b>Other constructs considered</b>	Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Service Quality, Customer engagement, Value, Equity, Atmospherics, Environment, Emotions	Emotions, Social touchpoints, context	Motivations, fanaticism, pride, nostalgia	Stadium features, fan loyalty, social factors, communication factors
<b>Contributions</b>	→ Developing a scale of perceived sportivity to study consumers' perceptions of leisure activities and their categorization → Developing and testing a model explaining how perceived sportivity influences consumers and brand outcomes			

Table 20: Overview of existing research fields and contributions of this research

As we have seen in this chapter on predictive models of behavioral intention in experiential marketing, the importance of consumer perception is emphasized. In a sports context, for

example, many have studied consumption motivations. However, to date, no scale measures consumers' mental representation and categorization of the sportivity of activities, even though categorization processes have been shown to influence consumers' perceptions. However, it seems that this variable plays a determining role in the cognitive, affective and behavioral process that the consumer goes through when engaging in a consumption process. Thus, in our context, measuring consumers' perception and their mental representation and categorization of - what we refer to as "perceived sportivity" – esports seems to offer many academic and managerial opportunities. In the following chapter, we present the development of the perceived sportivity scale, using an updated version of Churchill's paradigm (1979).

**PART 2: MEASUREMENT  
AND APPLICATION OF  
THE PERCEIVED  
SPORTIVITY  
MEASUREMENT SCALE**



## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esports as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale to esports: the French League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- **Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale**
  - **Section 1: Perceived Sportivity scale development – Methodology**
  - Section 2: Qualitative interview guide – development and administration
  - Section 3: Refining the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale
  - Section 4: Testing the Perceived Sportivity scale's validity
- **Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends**
- **Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion**

## CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY SCALE

### Section 1: Perceived Sportivity scale development – Methodology and Qualitative Exploratory Phase

#### **1.1 Methodology for the development of the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale**

This measure aims to find out whether, for a given activity, attitudes and behavior change according to the perception of the activity as being sporty or not. To answer this question, one may be able to measure perceived sportivity and its outcomes. However, because the conceptualization of Perceived Sportivity has to our knowledge not been the object of attention so far, no measure for this construct exists. Therefore, in this chapter, we aim to provide a measurement of Perceived Sportivity to examine its influence and see if there is an attitudinal or behavioral change following the perception of the sporty dimension of an activity from consumers.

To construct such a scale, some essential steps must be followed in a meticulous manner (Didellon, 1997). First of all, it is crucial to put forward all the characteristics that make an activity be categorized as a sport or not by consumers. These elements were first brought forward through a comprehensive literature review on the different definitions and interpretations of sport, as seen in the previous section. Because we here focus on the consumers' perceptions of sportivity, we present a qualitative exploratory phase looking at the different perceptions of consumers. Once this qualitative phase is carried out, a set of quantitative analyses will be carried out to study and classify the different dimensions of Perceived Sportivity highlighted during the qualitative phase (Pham, 1992) accordingly with their importance. Finally, a test phase will allow us to analyze the validity of the scale and its effectiveness.

Once the scale is developed, we will use it in an experiment and in a field study to verify the underlying relationships associated with Perceived Sportivity. These possible relationships will be put forward through research hypotheses. The experiment and the field study mentioned above will be the focus of the next chapters. Chapter 4 focuses solely on the whole process of scale development. This process follows an updated Churchill (1979) paradigm which describes 8 steps for the construction of better measurement scales. To be even clearer in the process, we

also rely on the work of Anderson and Gerbing (1988, 1992), Gerbing and Anderson (1992), as well as that of Fornell and Yi (1992), which allow us to reflect more on this process and give us a clearer and more detailed methodology. Finally, the work of Peter (1979) on construct validity in marketing, which we have also followed, provides us with a guarantee of the validity of our construct.

Another method detailing a scale development process – the C-OAR-SE method – was put forward by Rossiter (2002). This method is considered more flexible and less focused on empirical indicators than Churchill's (1979) method. However, there have been many criticisms of this method, such as the use of face validity and expert opinion as the only indicators of validity (Diamantopoulos, 2005; Finn and Kayande, 2005). Furthermore, although Rossiter (2002) defines his approach as 'rationalist', thus being the opposite of empirical approaches, the use of experts in the whole scale creation process appears to be a paradox. Moreover, as Rigdon et al (2011) note, the C-OAR-SE method sometimes seems to go back to a time before that of Churchill, when “most measures were measures only because someone defined them as such, not because they met standard evaluation criteria” (Jacoby, 1978, p.91). However, Rossiter's criticisms of reliability indicators seem justified, and it is therefore important that we do not rely solely on these indicators when developing the scale and that we give equal value to experts' opinions. This is why, during the different stages of the construction of the scale, we chose to consult experts.

Beyond Rossiter's approach, Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001) have also proposed a method for developing scales based on formative indicators. Indeed, even before focusing on the relations that may exist within a construct, it is essential to concentrate on the very nature of the measurement items and the dimensions that make them up. Indeed, these indicators and dimensions may be reflective or formative. Measurement items are often considered to be reflective, or a reflection of the construct they measure. In contrast, formative items are items that define and describe the construct they measure (Diamantopoulos, Riefler and Roth, 2008; Petter, Straud and Rai, 2007). Formative items are often harder to identify and require special attention. Indeed, mishandling of these items can frequently lead to Type I and Type II errors (Jarvis et al., 2003; MacKenzie et al., 2005). Furthermore, the presence of formative items would require a modification of the structural model of the scale to effectively analyze the data (MacCallum and Browne, 1993). It is, therefore, appropriate to consider the nature of the measurement items when developing a scale.

When one uses reflective items, the internal consistency of the model is very important. This is not the case for formative items. This is because formative models minimize the amount of residual variance within the model (Fornell and Bookstein, 1982), and therefore errors should be addressed at the construct level, not at the item level (Jarvis et al., 2003).

In our case, our methodological approach, as well as the very nature of our concept, encourages us to see our items as reflective and not formative. Indeed, our concept of Perceived Sportivity exists independently of its dimensions, and it is the basis of our review and our various studies. It is from the concept of Perceived Sportivity that we have determined different dimensions. Moreover, because formative models may vary in the number and structure of measures and factors used (Howell, Breivik, and Wilcox 2007; Bagozzi 2011; Edwards 2011), it makes their use less appropriate in our context.

Finally, to ensure the quality of our scale development process, we also decided to explore similar research dedicated to scale development. With this objective, we conducted a benchmark and tracked papers detailing a scale development process in the 6 FT ranked marketing journals – namely Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, and Marketing Science – over the last 10 years. We found 37 papers detailing a scale development process, and for each of them, analyzed the steps followed in the development of the scales. The following table provides an overview of these papers and of the different steps that were followed to develop the measurement scales.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Dimensionality</b>	<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>	<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (internal)</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (external)</b>	<b>Nomological Validity</b>
Consumer Wisdom for Personal Well-Being and the Greater Good	Luchs Mick and Haws	2021	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (6 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	With the EFA	Within the nomological network	Yes
Identifying Picky Shoppers: Who They Are and How to Spot Them	Cheng, Baumgartner and Meloy	2021	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	With the EFA	Within the nomological network	Yes
Consumer Minimalism	Wilson and Bellezza	2021	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	With the CFA	Within the nomological network	Yes
The Concept of Authenticity: What It Means to Consumers	Nunes, Ordanini, and Giambastiani	2021	Journal of Marketing	Multidimensional (6 dimensions)	Yes	Yes (VIF)	No (formative)	No (formative)	Within the nomological network	Yes
Digital business capability: its impact on firm and customer performance	Wielgos, Homburg and Kuehn	2021	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes with factors loadings	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes
The Association Between the Attitude of Food-Waste-Aversion and BMI:	Raghunathan and Chandrasekaran	2020	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes (VIF)	No	No (unidimensional)	Yes	No info
Beliefs about Whether Spending Implies Wealth	Kappes, Gladstone and Hershfield	2020	Journal of Consumer Research	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	No	No (unidimensional)	Yes	No
The Preference for Moderation Scale	Drolet et al.	2020	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	With the EFA	Within the nomological network	Yes

<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Dimensionality</b>	<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>	<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (internal)</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (external)</b>	<b>Nomological Validity</b>
Love, Lies, and Money: Financial Infidelity in Romantic Relationships	Garbinsky et al.	2020	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (6 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Within the nomological network	Yes
Understanding the feasibility and value of grassroots innovation	Gupta	2020	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Unidimensional	No	No	No	No	No	No
Brand Coolness	Warren et al.	2019	Journal of Marketing	Multidimensional (7 dimensions, 10 subdimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Within the nomological network	Yes
If at First You Do Succeed, Do You Try, Try Again? Developing the Persistence–Licensing Response Measure	Zemack-Rugar, Corus and Brinberg	2019	Journal of Marketing Research	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Effective customer journey design: consumers’ conception, measurement, and consequences	Kuehnl, Jozic and Homburg	2019	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes
Brand Positioning Based on Brand Image–Country Image Fit	Klein et al.	2019	Marketing Science	Unidimensional	No	Yes	No	No (unidimensional)	No	No
Food as Ideology: Measurement and Validation of Locavorism	Reich, Beck and Price	2018	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (2nd order level)	Yes
More than Fit: Brand Extension Authenticity	Spiggle, Nguyen and Caravella	2018	Journal of Marketing Research	Multidimensional (4 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (2nd order level)	Yes (indirectly)

<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Dimensionality</b>	<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>	<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (internal)</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (external)</b>	<b>Nomological Validity</b>
Measuring Processing Fluency: One versus Five Items	Graf, Mayer and Landwehr	2017	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Unidimensional	Yes	No	No	No (unidimensional)	No	No
The Fresh Start Mindset: Transforming Consumers' Lives	Price et al.	2017	Journal of Consumer Research	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (unidimensional)	Within the nomological network	Yes
Customer Inspiration: Conceptualization, Scale Development, and Validation	Böttger et al.	2017	Journal of Marketing	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes
Decision Comfort	Parker, Lehmann and Xie	2016	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (2nd order level)	Yes
The Ant and the Grasshopper: Understanding Personal Saving Orientation of Consumers	Dholakia et al.	2016	Journal of Consumer Research	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (2nd order level)	Yes
Value co-creation: concept and measurement	Ranjan and Read	2016	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (2 dimensions - 6 subdimensions)	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes (indirectly)
An offer you can't refuse: consumer perceptions of sales pressure	Zboja, Clark and Haytko	2016	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (2nd order level)	Yes
New Product Design: Concept, Measurement, and Consequences	Homburg, Schwemmler and Kuehn	2015	Journal of Marketing	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes (indirectly)



<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Dimensionality</b>	<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>	<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (internal)</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (external)</b>	<b>Nomological Validity</b>
Lay Rationalism: Individual Differences in using Reason versus Feelings to Guide Decisions	Hsee, Yang and Zheng	2015	Journal of Marketing Research	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	No	No (unidimensional)	Yes	No
Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale	Morhart et al.	2014	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (4 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (first and second-order level)	Yes
Individual differences in interpersonal touch: development, of the “comfort with interpersonal touch” scale	Webb and Peck	2014	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Within the nomological validity	Yes
Avoiding poor health or approaching good health: Does it matter?	Gomez, Borges and Pechmann	2013	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	With the predictive validity	Yes
Seeing the world through GREEN-tinted glasses: Green consumption values and responses to environmentally friendly products	Haws et al.	2013	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	No	No (unidimensional)	Classic and within the nomological network)	Yes
Brand Love	Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi	2012	Journal of Marketing	Multidimensional (7 dimensions, 14 subdimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes
The “Response-to-Failure” Scale: Predicting Behavior following Initial Self-Control Failure	Zemack-Rugar, Corus and Brinberg	2012	Journal of Marketing Research	Multidimensional (2 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Within the nomological network	Yes
Individual Differences in Brand Schematicity	Puligadda, Ross and Grewal	2012	Journal of Marketing Research	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Within the nomological network	Yes

<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Dimensionality</b>	<b>EFA</b>	<b>CFA</b>	<b>Convergent validity</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (internal)</b>	<b>Discriminant validity (external)</b>	<b>Nomological Validity</b>
Keeping it all without being buried alive: Understanding product retention tendency	Haws et al.	2011	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Not really	No	Yes	Yes
Consumer Disidentification and Its Effects on Domestic Product Purchases: An Empirical Investigation in the Netherlands	Josiassen	2011	Journal of Marketing	Unidimensional	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No (unidimensional)	Within the nomological network	Yes
Brand personality appeal: conceptualization and empirical validation	Freling, Crosno and Henard	2011	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (3 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
An examination of consumer sentiment toward offshored services	Thelen, Yoo and Magnini	2011	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional (5 dimensions)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (at the first and second-order levels)	Yes
Measuring personal cultural orientations: scale development and validation	Piyush Sharma	2010	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Multidimensional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Within the nomological network	Yes
<b>TOTAL 37</b>					<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>

*Table 21: Overview of recent scale development paper from the FT50 top marketing journals*

As we can see from the table, the most used steps in developing a scale are the performance of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and the tests of the external discriminant validity and nomological validity. Convergent validity is often overlooked, and internal discriminant validity seems to only apply when the measures developed are multidimensional. Therefore, following previous research focusing on scale development, we decided to follow the steps recommended by Hair et al. (2014), that is EFA, CFA, convergent validity, discriminant validity (internal and external for the second-order factor) and finally nomological validity. Regarding the item generation processes used in scale development papers, most of the research used either qualitative interviews with experts or consumers, literature reviews, or both, thus comforting our idea of conducting qualitative interviews in addition to our literature review.

To specify the domain of the construct, a thorough literature review was carried out, focusing on different sociological concepts related to sport. This review was developed in the previous section notably through explanations of the concepts of sportivisation, sportification, and sportisation – three concepts focusing on the sociology of sport – as well as their components and influences on society and consumers. A historical review on the evolution of sport was also carried out to explore other aspects of the subject. Once the review was completed, potential dimensions related to sport were highlighted.

The interview guide was divided into 3 distinct parts. The first part used projective methods with nine images of various activities (images are available in Appendix 1). to allow the respondents to highlight the different characteristics of each activity that could make them be seen as sporty. The value of using projective methods in marketing was first highlighted by Haire (1950) and has been highlighted in several research studies (Boddy, 2005; Ramsey, Ibbotson, McCole, 2006; Soley, 2010; Pich, Armannsdottir and Dean, 2015). Projective methods have many advantages. Firstly, they allow us to enter the “private world” of the consumer and gain access to their subjective perception of the product (Haire, 1950). Secondly, projective techniques facilitate the expression of repressed thoughts by allowing the respondent to project their thoughts onto someone or something else (Boddy, 2005). Finally, projective techniques help to overcome how market research is conducted; that is, in a functionalist, technical, and narrow-minded manner (Caterall and Ibbotson, 2000).

However, projective techniques are not quick fixes, and several authors have pointed out the need to compare the results obtained after a study using projective methods and a similar study not using them (Will et al., 1996; Boddy, 2005). Similarly, their effectiveness has also been questioned (Yoell, 1974). However, the advantages of using these techniques in the study of ambiguous, abstract, and consumer-interpreted topics have encouraged us to use them. Indeed, several studies have demonstrated their usefulness in the study of motivations (Cooper and Tower, 1992; Hussey and Duncombe, 1999; Hofstede et al. 2007). In the context of qualitative research, projective methods are said to offer “a pathway to the invisible layers of the mind” (Chandler and Owen, 2002), thus enabling “the unlocking and clarification of elements that are out of consciousness or difficult to express” (Wardle, 2002). Finally, the use of projective methods also allows respondents to fill a possible vocabulary gap by relying on the use of images or other stimuli (Hofstede, 2007).

Even though sport has been defined from an institutional point of view, as we saw in the previous chapter, the multiple aspects it has taken on over time, as well as the multiple debates regarding its nature, encouraged us to use projective methods in the qualitative interviews, to allow respondents to express themselves as easily as possible.

The projective methods used in the first part of the interview put forward nine images of activities for the respondents to describe. The second part of the interview focused on the nine dimensions highlighted in the literature review by studying the respondents' perceptions when these dimensions were highlighted in activities. Finally, the third and last part looked at the respondents' overall perception of sport, as well as their socio-demographic profile.

The next subsection will present the entire process carried out during the qualitative exploratory phase, i.e. the entire phase preceding the generation of items. The second part will focus on the quantitative phase, which will lead to the creation of an 8-item, 2-dimension scale.

In the next section, we focus on the scale development methodology, as well as the qualitative exploratory phase that led to the generation of 130 items. The second part will focus on the quantitative phase.

## 2.2: Qualitative exploratory phase

The first qualitative phase took place over several months during the first year of the thesis, from December 2018 to April 2018. Following readings on different concepts related to sport, we realized that it was impossible to elaborate on an objective definition of the subject. Indeed, the numerous concepts put forward in the first part of the thesis mention many elements to characterize an activity as sporty, but none of them proposes a finite definition of sportivity. Thus, the categorization of an activity as sporty would mostly be a matter of individuals and their perceptions. For this reason, we also decided to carry out individual qualitative interviews.

Therefore, a first definition of Perceived Sportivity can be put forward. In an experiential paradigm, Perceived Sportivity is concerned with the consumers' viewing practices of leisure activities of a professional or amateur nature. The professional character is defined by the legal and economic regulation of the activity by a supervisory institution. In this context, Perceived Sportivity seeks to highlight the different elements that enable a consumer to define an activity as being sporty or not. Perceived Sportivity is therefore concerned with the perception of consumers, and not with the legal status of the leisure activity. It can therefore be applied to any type of leisure activity that is likely to be viewed by consumers. Through the development of the scale, the definition of Perceived Sportivity will be refined, in particular by highlighting the different dimensions that make it up.

However, although the different concepts and theories seeking to characterize sport do not propose a finite definition of the construct, they do allow us to highlight several possible dimensions. All the dimensions put forward by the different concepts studied are presented in the table below. All of these dimensions are highlighted in a section during the creation of the qualitative interview guide.

Concepts	Authors	Possible dimensions	Definition / Justification
Sportisation	Norbert Elias Eric Dunning	Social	Sport is one of the components of the process of civilization and is also born of the desire of citizens to participate in less and less violent activities.
		Entertainment	Sport plays a role as a simulacrum of war, allowing a break with the routinization of the daily lives of citizens living in newly industrialized societies.
		Regulation	Sport is above all a practice that has been able to spread, while remaining the same, in England, then in Europe and the rest of the world thanks to rules.
Agon / Ludus	Roger Caillois John Huizinga	Competition	The term "Agon" groups all types of competitive games. All sports fall under this category.
		Equality	In competitive games, opponents face each other under ideal conditions, where equality of opportunity is artificially created, whether by rules, a defined playing space, or similar Equipment.
		Training	The practice of Agon presupposes appropriate training, as well as assiduous efforts and a will to win.
Sportivisation	Jean-Marie Brohm Marc Perelman	Politics	Sportivisation was first used to illustrate the institutional and ideological imposition of sport in Physical and Sports Education (EPS) by the French state.
		Physical	sportivisation is associated with a practical ordering of bodily sports. The process of sportivisation described by Brohm was initially intended to maintain and perfect bodies through controlled physical practice.
		Diffusion	While Brohm mentions an ideological subjugation of PE to qualify sportivisation, Attali and Martin (2004) mention a generalization of physical and sports practices as the main educational issue.
Sportification	Allen Guttmann Bo Carlsson	Equality	Sport puts forward conditions that theoretically allow everyone to participate on an equal footing, with the same rules for all participants.
		Training	Defined as a specialization by Guttmann, the notions of training and professionalization also seem to be at the heart of modern sports. Indeed, already in ancient Greece, athletes were specialized, trained and paid for their practice.
		Institutions	All modern sports have become bureaucratized, with the setting up of national and international federations regulating all practices.
		Quantification (Science)	The notion of quantification is omnipresent in modern sport. Indeed, this has even allowed science to intervene in practices (with Equipment). Quantifying a result or a performance is the first step to follow to aim at a constant improvement for the athletes.
		Record	All modern sports tend towards the achievement of records, exacerbated by the use of statistics and Equipment allowing the quantification of all the performances of an athlete.

*Table 22: The highlighted possible dimensions after the sociological and historical literature review of sport*

Having highlighted all these concepts in the literature review, we also looked at the different measurement tools that exist in marketing and sociology to measure the different changes in

consumer behavior in sport. Unfortunately, no research investigating differences in consumer perceptions was found during this research. However, several scales dealing with consumer behavior and motivations for sports consumption have been put forward. These different studies, presented below, are of interest in terms of investigating differences in consumer perceptions based on perceived levels of sportivity.

Scale	Authors	Measurement objectives
Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption	Trail and James (2001)	Motivations explaining sport consumer behaviors
Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption	Seo and Green (2008)	Online motivations for sports consumption
Sport Motivation Scale	Mallett et al. (2007)	Motivation for practicing sport
Sport Spectator Involvement Scale	Kim (2003)	The degree of involvement (both psychological and behavioral) in sport
Sport Fan Motivation Scale	Wann (1995)	Factors allowing to measure the degree of “fan” identification of consumers
Perceived Belonging in Sport Scale	Allen (2003)	Factors highlighting the sense of belonging in sports, with social connections associated

*Table 23: Existing measurement scales dedicated to consumers' motivations and behaviors in sport*

The creation of a scale highlighting the elements that can influence consumers' perception of sport in a leisure activity is therefore of real managerial interest, both for marketers and for all leisure activity organizers. Indeed, sport is associated with the notion of effort, whose influence on the concepts of value and consumer engagement has already been highlighted in the literature (Kruger, 2004; Morales, 2005 Passyn and Sujun, 2012; Leung, Kim and Tse, 2020). For example, Kruger et al (2004) through an experiment using 3 stimuli (a poem, a painting and a suit of armor) showed that the more effort consumers perceived in the design of products, the more they defined them as being of better quality and having more value. The following year, Morales (2005) extended the research of Kruger et al. (2004) to the company-consumer relationship, studying consumers' perception of organizational transparency. Through several experiments, she highlights the fact that when a company is perceived to put in more effort, consumers are more likely to buy its products, to choose it over another company, and even to

evaluate it positively, even if the products are not of better quality. Passyn and Sujan (2012) also looked at the perception of effort, this time in the context of the business relationship between an employee and a customer. The results showed that employees who were perceived as putting in more effort by consumers were seen as warmer. Going further, Leung, Kim and Tse (2020) showed that when the employee was seen as putting in effort rather than being naturally good, consumers were more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at helping the employee. Similarly, several authors have highlighted consumers' appreciation of effort (Cho and Schwartz, 2008; Buell and Norton, 2011; Norton, Mochon, and Ariely, 2012; Buell, Kim, and Tsay, 2016). Therefore, because effort is associated with forms of consumer engagement, and sport is, by definition, associated with the notion of effort, it is interesting to study the constituent elements of sport for consumers from both a theoretical and managerial perspective.

To explore consumers' perception of sport, we decided to go for qualitative individual interviews. We decided to ignore focus groups for several reasons. Firstly, focus groups are more useful when we are interested in intra-group relations linked to a concept, which is not our case. Secondly, as the object of study is sport, and therefore has an important social connotation, the setting up of focus groups might facilitate various social and affective biases, and thus prevent certain elements, particularly negative ones, to emerge. (Dovidio et al., 1995). In the context of the study of sport, an object with a strong social and cultural influence, as we saw in the first part, it seems more than essential to opt for individual interviews, so that the respondents can express themselves as freely as possible, without the slightest pressure. Regarding the form of these interviews, we decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions, to leave as much space as possible for the respondents. Closed questions could effectively limit the responses.

We also decided to ignore direct observation. Indeed, direct observations are more efficient when analyzing actual behaviors, and not subjective perceptions (Wells and Lo Sciutto, 1966; Gobb and Hoyer, 1985).



## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- **Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale**
  - Section 1: Perceived Sportivity scale development – Methodology
  - **Section 2: Qualitative interview guide – development and administration**
  - Section 3: Refining the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale
  - Section 4: Testing the Perceived Sportivity scale's validity
- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## Section 2: Qualitative interview guide – development and administration

### 2.1 Elaboration of the interview guide

As we identified in the first phase of the literature review, the main concepts used to highlight possible dimensions of sport were all institutional in scope, often leaving out the individual perception of consumers. As our research is concerned with consumer perception, it was considered essential to study the different perceptions of consumers concerning these dimensions via interviews. Therefore, we decided to conduct a second qualitative exploratory phase, this time in the form of individual interviews.

Firstly, we turned to exploratory analysis for several reasons. Firstly, we are not studying the importance of sportsmanship, or its quantification, but its possible existence, its composition (Walker, 1985), as well as the perception that individuals have of it, which justifies the interest of a qualitative study rather than a quantitative one (Heyink and Tymstra, 1993; Spiggle, 1994). When creating an interview guide, we do not aim to measure the importance of each element of the construct but to explore its dimensions; we are still in an exploratory phase. The quantification phase will come later in the process of creating the scale.

The first part of the interview guide, therefore, included nine images of different activities: esports, dance, football, chess, golf, Uno, MMA, drone racing, and pogo stick. The respondents were asked to describe and characterize these images. These nine images were not randomly chosen, however, and all had different elements to allow respondents to express themselves as much as possible.

- Esport: This activity was chosen because it is a hot topic, at the heart of a debate concerning its categorization as a sport or not. In addition, esports contains both a generational and technological aspect that can lead to debate.
- Dance: Also an activity at the between sport and art. In addition, the image of a dance class containing a teacher at the center, a teaching aspect could also be identified and discussed by the respondents.

- Football: This image was chosen because of the importance of football, the most-watched and played sport in the world. In addition, the large presence of the public in the image is intended to provide food for thought for the respondents.
- Chess: The French Chess Federation is recognized as a sports federation since January 2000, and its status as a sport is very often contested. Moreover, it is an activity where physical performance is minimal, and where strategy and reflection are emphasized.
- Golf: Although golf is considered a sport, it is often perceived as a solitary activity, far from technological considerations. Furthermore, golf is also perceived by some as being reserved for a certain, more affluent category of people and is not seen as being accessible.
- Uno: Uno is an American card game sold since 1971. Here the activity has no obvious sporting characteristics. However, it does involve the notion of chance, and the image chosen emphasizes feelings such as well-being and cohesion.
- Mixed Martial Arts: MMA was chosen to represent a purely physical activity. MMA is defined as a full combat sport, combining pugilism and hand-to-hand combat. It is extremely associated with the notion of physical strength and is sometimes seen as very violent. Furthermore, MMA acquired the status of a sport in France in 2020, via the French boxing federation, which makes its study among our respondents fully justified.
- Drone Racine: The eighth activity chosen for the interview was an activity using new technologies. Halfway between classic racing and new technologies, the study of a new unknown activity can also bring new elements from the respondents.
- Pogo Stick: This last activity highlights another notion from Caillois, that of vertigo (1958), or the search for strong sensations. In addition, an aspect of artistic representation, which may be similar to the dance put forward earlier, will also make it possible to gather new elements from the respondents.

## 2.2 Results of the qualitative interviews

The interview guide was presented to 24 people ( $M_{age}=42.5$  years,  $N_{women}=12$ ). Of these, 41.7% declared themselves to be sportsmen and women. The interviews were all conducted face-to-face and ranged in length from 21 to 87 minutes. The interview administration period was quite

short, with the first interview being recorded on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, and the last interview being recorded on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Thereafter, all transcriptions were made between November 21<sup>st</sup> of 2019 and January 7<sup>th</sup> of 2020.

Furthermore, in order not to bias the answers, the word sport was never mentioned or written by the interviewer when using projective techniques. Firstly, respondents were shown an image of the activity (esport). Then, respondents were asked to identify, among 8 images, the one that was the furthest from the first one. The objective of this first question was to allow the respondent to highlight various elements of the images by forcing a comparison between two very distinct activities. Next, the respondent was asked to describe and characterize the other 7 images. Here, we aimed to study the characteristic elements of different activities, independently of their level of sportivity. Indeed, as the objective was to study Perceived Sportivity, we decided to start our interview with images that did not represent sport only. It is the quantitative analysis, which will come later, that will allow us to associate, or not, the different elements put forward by the respondents with sport. Below you will find a table summarising the different activities used during the interview, as well as the main characteristics of these activities put forward by the respondents. The full interview guide is available in the annex.

The main elements highlighted by the respondents for each activity are derived from a lexical analysis of word frequencies carried out using the Sphinx software. Lexical analysis is useful because it allows for a link between the coding of qualitative data and the analysis of quantitative data by providing an automated coding method (Bolden, Moscarola, 2000). As the set of questions in the interview guide is open-ended, textual data analysis seems to be crucial.

Activity	Dimensions highlighted
Esport: Video-gaming competitive practice	Public (66,7%); Competition (66,7%); Equipment (33,3%); Game (29,2%); Spectacle (20,8%)
Danse: Latin Danse collective class	Cohesion (50%); Well-being (41,7%); Training (37,5%); Sport (33,3%); Concentration (29,2%); Physicality (29,2%)
Football: Professionnal football international competition	Public (83,3%); Sport (45,8%); Competition (37,5%); Physicality (33,3%); Equipment (29,2%)
Chess: Local individual competition of chess	Thinking (75%); Focus (58,3%); Competition (54,2%); Sport (33,3%); Game (25%)
Golf: Individual golf course	Sport (66,7%); Physicality (54,2%); Equipment (45,8%); Focus (45,8%); Competition (25%)
Uno: 4 people playing a card game	Sharing (83,3%); Well-being (75%); Game (41,7%); Equipment (37,5%); Competition (33,3%)
MMA: Individual competition of Mixed Martial Arts	Physicality (95,8%); Sport (62,5%); Public (29,2%); Competition (25%); Equipment (16,7%); Training (16,7%)
Drone Racing: Individual drone races	Equipment (83,3%); Competition (75%); Physicality (20,8%); Concentration (20,8%); Focus (20,8%); Sport (20,8%)
Pogo Stick: Synchronized pogo-stick show	Physique (66,7%) ; Equipment (50%) ; Sport (45,8%) ; Public (33,3%) ; Spectacle (33,3%)

*Table 24: Dimension highlighted by respondents in the first part of the qualitative interview.*

Thus, as we can see in the table above, many dimensions, not mentioned in the literature, were highlighted by the respondents. As a reminder, the interview first focused on the perception of different activities. The sporty character will come into play later in the guide and even more so in the exploratory factorial analysis.

The second part of the interview guide focused on the different dimensions highlighted in the literature review. It consisted of 10 open questions. Each question focused on the perception of the different dimensions of the literature. Among the different dimensions highlighted in the literature review, nine were retained, namely the dimensions: Sponsor, Physicality, Media, Diffusion, Regulation, Competition, Social, Quantification and Record, Science/Equipment. Here, the analysis was done around the term “sport”. Again, to avoid possible bias, the term

“sport” was not mentioned in either the first or second part of the interview. Thus, this formatting allowed us to analyze the occurrences of the term 'sport' for each activity as objectively as possible. The table below presents a summary of the occurrences of terms from the “sport” vocabulary for each of the 10 questions. As a reminder, since the physical dimension seems to be at the heart of the debates concerning the inclusion of certain activities as sport, we decided to allocate two questions to it: one concerning the presence of a single physical activity, and another concerning the absence of a physical dimension in an activity.

Studied dimension	Question wording	Occurrences
Sponsor	In my opinion, when an activity is sponsored, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 50%
Physicality (absence of)	In my opinion, when an activity is not physical, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 25%
Physicality	In my opinion, when an activity is purely physical, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 58,3%
Media	In my opinion, when an activity is largely broadcasted on different media, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 58,3%
Diffusion	In my opinion, when an activity is practiced worldwide, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 50%
Regulation	In my opinion, when an activity is controlled by umbrella institutions (such as federations), it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 58,3%
Competition	In my opinion, when an activity put teams or people in opposition; it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 50%
Social	In my opinion, when an activity favors social integration, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 66,7%
Quantification and record	In my opinion, when practitioners of an activity face each other to achieve records, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 29,2%
Science/Equipment	In my opinion, when an activity uses science to enhance practitioners' performance, it is:	Mention of the term “Sport”: 62,5%

*Table 25: Summary of sports vocabulary occurrences for part 2 of the interview guide*

Thus, we can see that some of the dimensions highlighted in the literature review do not seem to naturally be linked to sport by consumers. This is notably the case for the dimension “Quantification and record” which was only linked to sport by 29% of respondents. For the other dimensions, the results are fairly homogeneous, but not unanimous. The dimensions highlighted in the literature review, therefore, require further investigation. They do seem to be related to sport, but not exclusive to it.

Finally, the last part looked at the respondents' perception of sport. This time, the term “sport” was explicitly mentioned, and respondents were asked three questions about their perception of sport. This part came last to avoid biasing respondents by misusing the term “sport”. The first two parts were also intended to make respondents think about what sport is, first by a projective method and then by open questions. The table below provides a summary of the responses to each of the sport-related questions.

Questions	Highlighted elements
In your opinion, what is a sport?	Physicality, Mental, Well-being, Sharing, Competition, Health, Thinking, Training, Money, Values, Rules, Equipment, Spectacle, Public, Focus, Game
What is the difference between an amateur sport and a professional sport?	Money, Performance, Well-being, Competition, Training, Marketing, Physicality, Sharing, Health, Equipment, Public, Media, Time, Mental, Rules
What are the words you associate the most naturally to sport?	Physicality, Mental, Pleasure, Health, Performance, Competition, Sharing, Well-being, Training, Money, Emotion, Public, Equipment, Marketing, Media, Focus, Thinking

*Table 26: Respondents' perception of sport - Occurrences*

As the subject of these questions is sport, we decided to retain all the terms that were highlighted by the respondents in their answers, including items that were mentioned only a few times.

After this first lexical analysis, several dimensions seem to influence consumers' perception of sport. However, to go further, a manual analysis of all the responses was also carried out. This allowed us to isolate certain turns of phrase and vocabulary elements to highlight several verbatims. This analysis enabled us to put forward a list of potential items to be tested via an exploratory factorial analysis. This analysis makes it possible to associate, or dissociate, the

items highlighted by the two qualitative analyses with sport. Even before the EFA, four marketing experts were contacted to judge the facial validity of the 130 items. As a reminder, "face validity estimates the extent to which the scale under consideration reflects the construct under study. For the researcher, it consists of studying the items of the scale one by one to ensure that each of them truly measures the phenomenon being studied and that it truly adapts to the research context" (Touzani, 2006, p.115). In a similar vein, Holden (2010) defines face validity as the degree to which respondents to a test see its items as actually falling within the defined construct. Face validity and the use of experts are an integral part of Rossiter's (2002) C-OAR-SE method. Although we decided to focus also on the psychometric characteristics of the scale by following an updated Churchill (1979) paradigm, we also decided to focus on the facial validity of our scale by using experts. We contacted four academics from KEDGE Business School and submitted the 130 items and the definition of Perceived Sportivity to them. Some of the items were subsequently modified according to the experts' comments. However, the novelty of the scale and the experts' comments encouraged us to test all our items.

#### The themes of Perceived Sportivity:

After the first analysis, all the 130 items were grouped into 10 themes. In the following section, we will detail these 10 themes of Perceived Sportivity. The exploration of sport being done with French respondents for convenience purposes, we back-translated all of them in English with the help and approval of two English-speaking experts. The original French version of the items is available in Appendix 2.

#### The physical theme:

The physical theme contains 22 potential items, divided into 4 sub-themes. As the name suggests, this theme seems to correspond to the level of Physicality of activities. An activity, to be considered as a sport by the respondents, should have a physical component, including an effort dimension. Indeed, for an activity to be considered a sport, the physical notion would be essential, which seems to correspond to previous literature on the subject. The four sub-themes are strength, technique, movement, and skill. These sub-themes highlight the diversity of the physical notion, which therefore does not seem to be limited to simple physical strength, but also contains elements related to movement or agility.



The mental theme:

A second theme highlighted during the qualitative interviews by the respondents is the mental theme, comprising 20 possible items classified into four sub-themes. These sub-themes, called tactics, concentration, reflection and spirit, seem to refer to all the elements that take place in a person's head when practicing an activity, and which influence that practice. Moreover, the tactical aspect also refers to elements decided before the practice of an activity, elements prepared by the different participants of the same activity. Thus, the spontaneous character of an activity could perhaps allow it to be dissociated from sport. The practice of sport, beyond the simple physical component, would therefore also include a so-called mental part, which is more invisible and also takes place in the heads of the participants.

The commercial and financial theme:

The third theme identified through the analysis of the qualitative study is the commercial and financial theme, comprising 8 items classified in three sub-themes: money, marketing and media. This theme refers to activities that are external to the practice, and would rather be consequences of a practice at a professional level. Indeed, professional sport is mediatized, used for marketing purposes, and allows practitioners to earn money. Thus, the evolution of sport, as presented in the first part of this work, since the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984, would have been such that it would have changed consumers' perceptions. Consumers now see the whole commercial process associated with sport as one of its defining elements.

The institutional theme:

An institutional theme was also put forward by the respondents during the various interviews. This theme includes an institutional sub-theme, with two items, and a sub-theme called regulation, with three items. Thus, an activity, to be a sport, should take place within a precise framework, delimited by rules, and regulated by institutions, as described by Guttmann (1978) for example. This theme, although invisible in the context of practice, should therefore exist in the eyes of consumers for an activity to be perceived as a sport.

The performance theme:

A theme that was highly mentioned by respondents was the performance theme, with 24 possible items highlighted after analysis of the literature review and qualitative interviews. This theme also includes four sub-themes: Training, ranking, records, competition. They all refer to the idea of repetition of practice, as well as to the famous victory/defeat dichotomy, mentioned as early as the 1930s by Huizinga. Thus, its confrontation aspect would also define sport, always including at least a winner and a loser.

#### The health theme:

The health aspect was also very much emphasized by the respondents during the qualitative interviews, especially in the last part, which dealt with the respondents' perception of sport in general. This theme was divided into two sub-themes during the qualitative analysis: mental health and well-being, and physical health, containing 23 items. Indeed, sport, via the practice of physical activity, would not only allow for good physical health, but would have a positive influence on the respondents' well-being and mental health. However, as with the commerciality, this theme seems to be more of a consequence of Perceived Sportivity rather than one of its components, as we will see in the next session.

#### The scientific/material theme:

Sport could also have a scientific component. Indeed, several respondents highlighted this theme during the interview, under three different forms: Equipment, technology, and medicine. Indeed, sport is practiced with specialized Equipment and has benefited from science to improve, which has sometimes led to drug abuse such as doping. Moreover, this theme also seems to relate to performance, as all the sub-dimensions, namely Equipment, technology and medicine, exist to improve practitioners' performance. It, therefore, seems interesting to study these sub-themes via the 9 items extracted from the analysis of the qualitative interviews.

#### The social theme:

Another theme often put forward by the different respondents during the interview was the social theme, comprising two sub-themes: integration, with 3 items, as well as gathering, with 6 items. Thus, according to the respondents, sports activities bring people together. According

to the respondents, sport is also a vehicle for social integration. This theme should therefore be tested in the exploratory factor analysis. However, as with the financial and the health theme, this social theme also seems to be more of a consequence of Perceived Sportivity rather than one of its components.

#### The ludic theme:

The ninth theme highlighted in the various interviews was the ludic theme. This is the only theme, with its 5 possible items, that does not have a sub-theme. Indeed, in line with Caillois' (1958) typology, which includes sports in the Agon, which he calls "competitive games", respondents also highlighted the playful and fun aspect of the activities. Sport, although competitive and focused on performance and winning, would therefore have retained its playful and enjoyable component, even for viewers.

#### The environmental theme:

Finally, the tenth and last theme identified after the analysis of the qualitative interviews was the environmental theme. This theme was divided into two sub-themes: place, representing the physical environment, and atmosphere, representing the non-physical environment, or mood. Indeed, according to the respondents, sport would take place in defined, prepared and dedicated places, all in a particular atmosphere and ambiance. Therefore, this theme and its 8 items should also be included in the exploratory factor analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the second part of this chapter will therefore deal with the testing and reduction of these 130 items from both the literature review and the various qualitative interviews, via an EFA and then a CFA. These analyses were carried out between January 2020 and June 2020 and led to the creation of a measurement scale comprising 8 items and 2 dimensions. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the various validity tests to ensure that the scale works.

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- **Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale**
  - Section 1: Perceived Sportivity scale development – Methodology and Qualitative Exploratory Phase
  - Section 2: Qualitative interview guide – development and administration
  - **Section 3: Refining the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale**
  - Section 4: Testing the Perceived Sportivity scale's validity
- **Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends**
- **Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion**

## Section 3: Refining the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale

As mentioned in the previous section, the literature review and the qualitative interviews yielded 130 potential Perceived Sportivity measurement items. Referring to the process of creating a measurement scale according to Roehrich (1993), the fourth step consists in the verification of the structure of the measure. To achieve this objective, we decided to turn to EFA, a tool frequently used in scale creation (Shook et al., 2004, Marsh et al., 2013). Although EFAs are an important precursor to CFA (Cudeck and MacCallum, 2007), they are often seen as less useful, because they are considered to be solely exploratory, and should only be used when researchers have absolutely no opinion about the structure of their construct (Marsh et al. 2013). However, by nature, EFAs freely compute the set of cross-factor weights, whereas they are forced to a value of zero in CFAs. Because of these parameters, many CFAs fail to explain results that are evident in EFAs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1992; Marsh et al., 2009, 2010). For these reasons, and also because researchers usually go for both an EFA and CFA when developing a measurement scale, we decided to go for a combination of both analyses, first conducting an exploratory analysis to reduce our items and get a first structure, and then using a confirmatory analysis to check all the fit indicators in the model. The following section focuses on the EFA.

### 3.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Following the formulation of 130 items that were possibly related to Perceived Sportivity, we decided to carry out an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This analysis had two objectives. The first objective was the identification of a multidimensional structure of Perceived Sportivity. Secondly, the EFA aimed at reducing the number of items on the scale, based on psychometric characteristics.

#### Development and administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was set up via the Qualtrics website, a website frequently used for questionnaire creation and data collection in research. Among the reasons that led us to choose this site, the main one is that the site offers us to export our data directly in SPSS format, which is the software we used to analyze our results. The questionnaire was distributed on the Prolific platform. As the questionnaire was in French, we decided to limit access to our questionnaire to French-speaking respondents on the Prolific platform, where the majority of respondents are English-speaking.

We were aware that the qualitative questionnaire incorporated the use of projective techniques involving images of activities that were not, a priori, of a sporting nature. However, the need to obtain as much variance as possible from our respondents reinforced our choice to use Qualtrics. Indeed, using a single stimulus to highlight a single activity would not have allowed us to study sport as a whole. Therefore, for each respondent, a randomly selected stimulus from sports images was used. To justify our stimuli, we restricted our choice to activities registered as sports within the IOC, the International Olympic Committee, which is responsible for the recognition of all sports institutions and federations. However, as the study focuses on individual perceptions of sport and not on the institutional recognition of sport, we also decided to include the number of French license holders as an inclusion criterion, our respondents being French people. Thus, we selected the 10 activities recognized as sports by the IOC with the most members in France. The results are available in the table below. These data are retrieved from the report "*Tableaux statistiques relatifs au recensement des licences sportives de 2018*" of the *Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Education Populaire* (INJEP), a French national service.

Name of the federation	Remark	Number of licensees (2018)
Football FF		2 108 811
Tennis FF		985 551
Equestrian FF		628 262
Handball FF	(Data from 2017)	549 295
Judo-jujitsu and associated disciplines FF		546 954
Basketball FF		525 040
Golf FF		412 726
Rugby FF		334 853
Gymnastics FF		317 270
Athletics FF		314 692

*Table 27: The 10 most practiced sports in France – Number of licensees (source: INJEP)*

After being exposed to the image, the respondents were asked to answer the 130 possible items from the qualitative research phase using a Likert scale (1932). This Likert scale contained 7 points, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Once the 130 items were completed, respondents were asked their age and gender. However, the admission of a questionnaire with 130 items can lead to many problems. A long questionnaire can discourage respondents (Festinger and Katz, 1965; Brook, 1977), encourage respondents to abandon the questionnaire without finishing it (Rossi, Wright and Anderson, 1983), or reduce the quality of

responses due to fatigue caused by the length of the questionnaire. To avoid these problems and to limit a possible fatigue bias, two solutions were implemented. Firstly, the order in which the items are displayed in the questionnaire was made random, so that the same items were not always proposed at the end of the questionnaire. Secondly, we introduced an attention measure with the item "If you read this item, please answer 'Strongly disagree'".

Authors have shown that at least 5% of respondents answer measurement scales without paying attention (Johnson, 2005). This number can be as high as 60% in cases where respondents perceive no motivation to complete a questionnaire (Berry et al., 1992; Meade and Craig, 2012; Hauser and Schwarz, 2016). These figures call into question the validity of many scales and can lead to poor results and misinterpretations (e.g. Maniaci and Rogge, 2014; Huang, Liu, and Bowling, 2015; Bowling et al., 2016). It is for these reasons that we decided to include an attention measurement item in our questionnaire and to financially reward our respondents. These attention check items are recommended by many researchers. (e.g. Berinsky, Margolis, and Sances, 2014; Huang et al., 2015; Curran, 2016). Their purpose is to identify unfocused respondents during their interview, so that they can be discarded during the various statistical analyses, to obtain the purest possible measures (Schmitt and Stults, 1985; Maniaci and Rogge, 2014).

However, some authors have also highlighted certain limitations related to the use of attention check items (e.g. Curran, 2016, Curran and Hauser, 2019). Indeed, recent studies have shown that the use of these attention measurement items altered the way respondents approached the questions (Hauser and Schwarz, 2016). This study highlighted a new risk of invalidity for scales using attention check items, which led to further research. In interviews, respondents emphasize a scientific side when answering a questionnaire, and always seek to know the purpose of the questionnaires they answer (Schwarz, 1994, 1999). When subjected to questions measuring their intention, respondents understand the purpose of the question, which is not the case when subjected to other items (Hauser and Schwarz, 2016). Thus, the use of attention check items may lead respondents to be more reflective and deliberate in their responses following the attention measurement item. Several studies have already highlighted the fact that when in a more reflective state of mind, respondents tend to show a different judgment, as well as to modify their decision-making process (e.g. Frederick, 2005; Stanovich and West, 2000, 2008).

Based on this literature and to answer the various questions raised above, Kung, Kwok and Brown (2018) conducted two studies using attention measurement items. The results of both studies contradicted existing literature. Indeed, neither study found evidence of a change in responses as a function of the presence of attention measurement items, thus comforting the use of attention check items in research.

For this reason, we chose to include an attention check item in our questionnaire. Regarding the form of the attention check items, we decided to choose the most commonly used form. This form is called the indicated response item (Bowling et al., 2016; Meade and Craig, 2012; Ward and Pond, 2015). These items are used in scales and contain, in their formulation, an obvious correct answer. Among these items, the most common formulations are: "Please select four for this item" or "Please select 'somewhat disagree' for this item" (Huang, et al., 2012). For these reasons, we formulated our item in this way. In addition, as our items are mostly positive, we chose to ask respondents to answer: "Strongly disagree", as this answer is the least likely to appear throughout our questionnaire.

After analysis of the attention measurement item, 19 responses were deleted, bringing the number of respondents to 319 (49.8% women;  $M_{age}= 29.7$ ;  $S.D=12.5$ ).

Results of the exploratory factor analysis:

Once the data was cleaned and prepared, we turned to the exploratory factor analysis. Two methods are commonly used in exploratory factor analysis: principal component analysis (PCA), and factor analysis (Hair et al., 2014). Although these two analyses share the same objective, that is reducing the number of dimensions within a matrix called R-matrix via the highlighting of inter-variable correlations, there are still some differences between them (Field, 2018). Firstly, it should be noted that, for both types of analysis, the models obtained are linear, and the weights of the items are expressed in matrices where the factors/dimensions are present in columns, with the respective weight of each item being indicated for the corresponding dimension. Regarding factor analyses, they work based on the common variance of the measured items and aim to use a maximum number of factors. (Hair et al., 2014). They also aim to measure and highlight constructs that cannot be measured directly. In contrast, in principal component analysis, or PCA, it is the total variance, not the joint variance, that is used in the exploratory analysis. In a PCA, we seek to predict the components, or factors, from the



measured variables. Thus, according to Hair et al. (2014), PCAs are used when the main objective is to summarise as much of the original information as possible in a small number of factors. Conversely, factor analyses are used when the objective is to identify factors or dimensions, not emphasized, that reflect the common variance of the items. Furthermore, one of the main assumptions of factor analysis is that the factors highlighted by the analysis are supposed to represent 'real world' dimensions. However, this notion remains unclear, and some researchers believe that the reality of these dimensions is purely statistical (Field, 2018).

For our exploratory analysis, we decided to use factor analysis, and not a principal component analysis (PCA), for several reasons. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the notion of Perceived Sportivity, and the concept of sport itself, has always been defined from an institutional point of view, and never at the individual level. Moreover, even the institutional definition of sport is often questioned and subject to much debate. Our main objective of identifying the underlying dimensions that allow for the identification of an activity as a sport is, therefore, more akin to the use of factor analysis. We do not aim to reuse, and reduce items into reduced dimensions, but rather to identify the whole components of the construct. Moreover, the choice of analysis is often left to the discretion of the researcher, and the results are often similar (Guandagnoli and Vilecer, 1988). Usually, most of the solutions provided by PCA differ very little from the solutions provided by factor analysis, as long as more than 30 variables are analyzed, and low factor scores (below 0.4) are discarded (Stevens, 2002). Since our study involved more than 130 items and discarded all factor scores below 0.65, we have every reason to believe that the results would be very similar if we had used principal component analysis. However, other authors are also more critical of PCAs (Cliff, 1987). Thus, our choice to go for factor analysis was comforted.

Secondly, regarding the number of factors/dimensions to be extracted, we followed standards by determining the number of dimensions to be retained based on the eigenvalue greater than 1. Although the use of the eigenvalue as a criterion for determining the number of factors to be retained in an EFA has been criticized in the past, it remains the most widely used indicator in marketing (Patil et al., 2008). Indeed, as the study concerned a previously unmeasured concept, we decided to go for a statistical verification, rather than choosing a predefined number of factors based on the literature.

Once the type of analysis was chosen, we also had to consider the different rotation techniques possible in the context of exploratory factor analysis. Two types of rotations are generally proposed, orthogonal rotations and oblique rotations (Hair et al., 2014). Orthogonal rotations aim to maintain independence between different factors, while oblique rotations allow for inter-factor correlations. Among the different possible orthogonal rotations, we opted for the Varimax rotation, whose main objective is the simplification of the factor matrix. Also, according to Hair et al. (2014), Varimax rotations are the ones that seem to offer the most distinct separations between factors. Moreover, it is one of the most widely used rotations and is considered to be a good general approach for a simplified interpretation of the factors (Field, 2018). Finally, to keep only the items with a real influence on the scale, we decided to keep only the items with a factor weight higher than .65 in our scale to avoid possible validity problems later on (Hair et al., 2014).

After a first run of the EFA, a structure grouping the items into 28 factors emerged, thus approximating the 27 classes put forward during the qualitative analysis and the literature review. After analysis of this structure, 38 items with a factorial weight greater than .65 were kept for a second factorial analysis. Only 10 of the 28 factors contained items with factor loadings higher than .65. The following table includes all these 38 items, with their respective Factor.

Items	Factor	Factor Weight
This activity requires endurance	Physicality	0.808
The practice of this activity requires a lot of movement		0.770
This activity is physically exhausting		0.762
This activity requires a certain physical condition		0.748
This activity requires a good physical preparation		0.733
This activity implies a lot of action		0.731
You sweat a lot doing this activity		0.730
This activity implies a lot of movement		0.728
Practicing this activity allows you to exercise while moving		0.714
This activity demands a good physical shape		0.711
In this activity, we need some physical capabilities		0.703
This activity requires a lot of energy		0.702
After doing this activity, you should be very tired		0.675
You have to be athletic to do this activity		0.673
This activity makes you feel good in your head	Well-Being	0.781
Doing this activity feels good		0.751
This activity allows you to relax your mind		0.722
Doing this activity is a pleasure		0.697
This activity makes you feel good about your body		0.687
This activity is a stress reliever		0.686
For this activity, certain movements need to be mastered	Dexterity	0.667
This activity requires skill		0.662
This activity is generally very sponsored	Commerciality	0.756
There is a lot of communication around this activity		0.755
This activity has marketing interests		0.731
When you are very good at this activity, you can earn a lot of money		0.711
This activity generates a lot of related merchandise		0.709
This activity brings a lot of people together		0.680
When you do this activity, the goal is to win	Winning	0.715
This activity is a cerebral gymnastics	Cerebral	0.708
It is an intellectual activity		0.705
This activity requires a specific Equipment	Equipment	0.813
In this activity, there is a dedicated Equipment		0.788
This activity cannot be practiced without adequate Equipment		0.717
This activity can be practiced in competition	Competition	0.685
There are champions in this activity		0.671
There may be doping around this activity	Doping	0.668
There are technologies to get better at this activity	Technology	0.690

*Table 28: Structure of the scale after the first EFA*

A second iteration of the exploratory factor analysis was repeated with the remaining items, again using factor analysis with a Varimax rotation. This factor analysis resulted in our first scale, comprising 26 items divided into 4 dimensions based on the Eigenvalue criterion. The

following figure represents the scree plot of our Eigenvalues, and the following table represents the structure of the scale after the EFA.

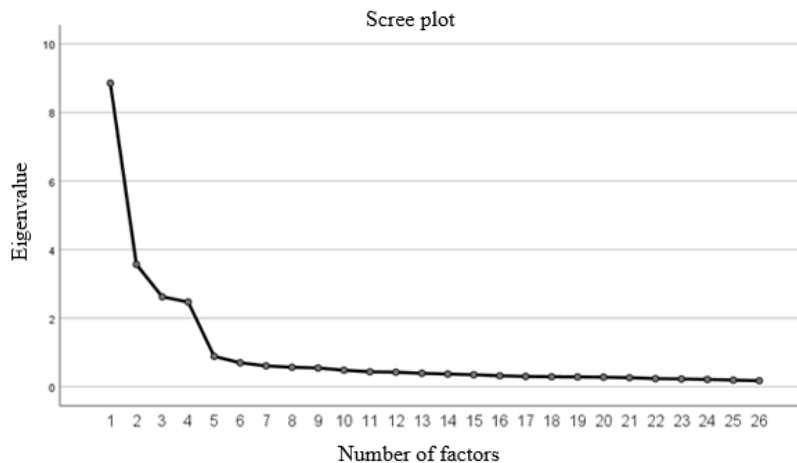


Figure 32: Eigenvalues scree plot - EFA

Items	Factor			
	Physicality	Commerciality	Well-being	Equipment
This activity requires a certain physical condition	0.826			
This activity requires a lot of energy	0.820			
This activity requires a good physical preparation	0.802			
This activity requires endurance	0.789			
This activity demands a good physical shape	0.781			
In this activity, we need some physical capabilities	0.768			
Practicing this activity requires a lot of movement	0.766			
This activity implies a lot of movement	0.746			
You have to be athletic to do this activity	0.737			
This activity is physically exhausting	0.736			
This activity implies a lot of action	0.716			
You sweat a lot doing this activity	0.707			
Practicing this activity allows you to exercise while moving	0.688			
After doing this activity, you should be very tired	0.673			
This activity has marketing interests		0.786		
This activity is generally very sponsored		0.785		
When you are very good at this activity, you can earn a lot of money		0.737		
This activity generates a lot of related merchandise		0.712		
There is a lot of communication around this activity		0.712		
Doing this activity feels good			0.789	
This activity makes you feel good in your head			0.743	
This activity allows you to relax your mind			0.736	
Doing this activity is a pleasure			0.701	
This activity requires a specific Equipment				0.836
In this activity, there is a dedicated Equipment				0.824
This activity cannot be practiced without adequate Equipment				0.735

Table 29: Structure of the scale after the second iteration of the EFA

Regarding the percentage of variance explained by each factor, factor 1 explained 31.01% of the total variance, factor 2 accounted for 11.15%, and factors 3 and 4 accounted for 10.36% and 8.83% respectively. Taken together, our measurement instrument thus explained 61.43% of the total variance. The first dimension was named "Physicality", and contains items from the "Physical" class that were highlighted in the qualitative analysis. The second dimension was named "Commerciality", and was similar to the "Commercial and Financial" theme highlighted earlier. The third and fourth dimensions, respectively named "Well-being" and "Equipment", were similar to the sub-themes bearing the same names.

To establish an initial measure of the reliability of each of the dimensions, we decided to compute the Cronbach's alpha of each of them. This indicator, put forward by Cronbach (1951), is the most widely used in research when looking at reliability in social science constructs, with over 17,000 citations of the 1951 article on Google Scholar (Peterson and Kim, 2013). However, due to its popularity, Cronbach's alpha has also been studied and criticized numerous times (Cortina, 1993; Schmitt, 1996; Sijtsma, 2009). Meta-analyses works, such as Peterson (1994), and Rodriguez and Maeda (2006), have empirically explored factors that can influence the value of the alpha coefficient under various conditions. One of the most frequent conclusions of these meta-analyses is that alpha underestimates the true reliability of measurement instruments under certain conditions, notably those related to tau-equivalence (Osburn, 2000 p.344). Moreover, Cronbach (Cronbach and Shavelson, 2004) himself acknowledges the tendency of his indicator to underestimate reliability because of a "small mathematical detail that forces the indicator to run at a slightly lower value than desired".

Because the Cronbach alpha tended to underestimate the true reliability of a construct, many alternatives have been proposed, such as the stratified alpha (Cronbach, Schonemann and Mckie, 1965), the Raju coefficient, the Angoff-Feldt coefficient, the lambda 2 coefficient, or the Feldt-Ginner coefficient. Osbourn (2000) reviewed ten of these alternatives in his article and compared them to Cronbach's alpha, with the same conclusions: Cronbach's alpha underestimates the true reliability of the constructs, even more so when they have two factors. In conclusion, Cronbach's alpha is more restrictive than the other indicators. However, other indicators have been put forward via structural equation models (e.g. Heise and Bohrnstedt, 1970; Jöreskog, 1971; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Bacon, Sauer and Young, 1995; Raykov, 1997; Graham, 2006; Green and Yang, 2009; Yang and Green, 2011). When the reliability of a measure is estimated via a structural equation model, it is usually defined as studying the

composite reliability (abbreviated as CR). To compare this composite reliability to Cronbach's alpha, Peterson and Kim (2013) analyzed 2524 pairs of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability by analyzing 381 studies in 327 articles. The results, while confirming the overall trend that Cronbach's alpha is too restrictive in calculating true reliability, also highlighted some situations in which alpha was less restrictive than composite reliability, supporting the results of other previous works (Raykov, 2001; Bentler, 2008; Green and Yang, 2009). However, the reasons for these variations between alpha and composite reliability have not been clearly defined. Thus, since Cronbach's alpha is defined as the most restrictive, we decided to use it as an indicator of reliability for each dimension. Composite Reliability will be added to Cronbach in the next session when we will focus on the CFA and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Dimension	Physicality	Commerciality	Equipment	Well-being
$\alpha$	.950	.861	.844	.857

*Table 30: Reliability of the scale's dimensions - EFA*

Several remarks and questions regarding the measurement scale can then be put forward. Firstly, the dimension "Physicality" contains many items compared to the rest of the scale. CFA should therefore also be used to explore the possibility of reducing this dimension. Furthermore, while the dimensions "Physicality, Commerciality, and Equipment" are all dimensions that highlight elements that can be observed by the respondents, the dimension "Well-being" seems more abstract, and could be more of a consequence of Perceived Sportivity rather than one of its component.

At this stage of the scale construction, we decided to analyze the face validity of our construct by presenting the scale to a panel of 4 academic experts. Among the various remarks made by the experts on the construct's face validity, one important element emerged: While the dimensions "Physicality" and "Equipment" seem to be at the very origin of the definition of sport, the dimensions "Well-being" and "Commerciality" seem to be consequences of the Perceived Sportivity and not defining element. Indeed, it is because a practice is sporty that it becomes marketable, and not the other way around. Similarly, well-being might be the result of the practice/spectating of sport, not an inherent element of the practice.

Given what precedes, we decided to follow the experts' remarks and to exclude "Well-Being" and "Commerciality" from the scale. However, because the experts consider them as consequences of the Perceived Sportivity, they will be included in the nomological validity to test their relations to Perceived Sportivity.

We, therefore, decided to run a new EFA with the two final dimensions of the scale, namely Physicality and Equipment. The structure remained the same, with Physicality explaining 40,3% of the variance and Equipment explaining 12,8% of the variance

### **3.2 Confirmatory factor analysis**

#### Method for the CFA

In the context of our scale, the CFA was carried out using AMOS, a module of the SPSS software that allows structural equation models to be tested (Arbuckle, 2006). To test the structure with a CFA, we used the same method of data collection as in the exploratory analysis. Respondents were presented with the same 10 images of institutional sports with the most licensees in France and were subjected to the 17 items extracted from the EFA. As the study was much shorter than the first one, we did not judge it necessary to include an item measuring attention.

Brown (2015) highlights several objectives of CFA, as well as preconditions for its use. Firstly, the use of CFA is hypothesis-dependent, so it can only be used when the researcher has an overall view of the structure of his or her model. In our case, the exploratory study played this role by highlighting an initial factor structure. In addition, the CFA emphasizes the psychometric qualities of the model, measured by numerous indicators that are not available when conducting an exploratory factor analysis. Thus, the use of a CFA is an important step in the creation of a measurement scale, which should be carried out even before the structural equation model is constructed.

Among the many indicators and indexes that attest to the successful completion of a CFA, Bagozzi and Yi (1988, 2012) propose three distinct types of evaluation that group together all the analyses that must be carried out. The following table provides an overview of the steps to follow when conducting a CFA.

Preliminary adjustment of the model (achieved under the following conditions):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative variance errors</li> <li>- Errors of variance not significantly different from zero (except in certain exceptional cases)</li> <li>- Correlations greater than 1</li> <li>- Correlations too close to 1 (within two standard deviation units)</li> <li>- Factor weights too low (&lt;.5) or too high (&gt;.95)</li> <li>- Very large standard errors</li> </ul>
Measure of the fit of the overall model (achieved under the following conditions):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chi-square test not significant (<math>p &gt; .95</math>)</li> <li>- Adequate chi-square statistical power</li> <li>- Satisfactory incremental model fit indices</li> <li>- Satisfactory model fit index</li> <li>- Satisfactory model comparisons</li> <li>- Low root mean square error residuals (usually expressed with the RMSEA)</li> <li>- Linear Q plot of standardized residuals with a curve greater than one</li> <li>- Large coefficients of determination</li> <li>- Satisfactory critical N</li> <li>- Good ratio between sample size and number of parameters to be measured (a ratio of at least 5 participants for each parameter)</li> </ul>
Internal structure of the model (achieved under the following conditions):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High composite reliability (<math>CR &gt; .6</math>) and high item reliability (<math>p &lt; .05</math>)</li> <li>- Average variance extracted (AVE) greater than .5</li> <li>- Significant parameter estimates confirming the hypothesis</li> <li>- Standardized residuals less than 2</li> <li>- Modification indices less than 3.84</li> <li>- Adequate power of causality detection.</li> </ul>

*Table 31: Steps to follow for a successful CFA (from Bagozzi and Yi 1988; 2012)*

Some of these indicators have been subject to several criticisms. First, the chi-square test has been heavily criticized for being too sensitive to the sample size measured (Hu, Bentler and Kano, 1992; West, Finch, and Curran, 1995; West and Finch, 1996; Schlermelleh-Engel et al. 2003; Vandenberg 2006). Similarly, one of the most widely used model fit indices, the GFI, has also been subject to much criticism (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Sharma et al., 2005; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). Indeed, like the chi-square test, the GFI index is very sensitive to the size of the sample used. Thus, several authors have proposed 4 indices to analyze the fit of a measurement model (Hu and Bentler 1998, 1999; Netemeyer, 2003; Fan and Sivo, 2005; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012)

- The non-normed fit index (NNFI), also called the Tucker and Lewis index (TLI) (1973). Its threshold of acceptance is set at 0.9 or 0.95 in most restrictive research (Bentler and



Bonett, 1980; Hu and Bentler, 1998, 1999; Netemeyer, 2003, Awang, 2012, Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). Although a value of 0.9 is acceptable, a value above .95 is evidence of a good fit of the measurement model.

- The comparative fit index (CFI). Its acceptance threshold is set at .90, or .95 for most restrictive authors (Bentler, 1990; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Hair et al., 2014; Xia and Yang, 2019). As with the NNFI, although a value of 0.9 is acceptable, a value above .95 is evidence of a good fit of the measurement model

- The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Its maximum value is set at .06, .08, or even .10 depending on the authors (Steiger and Lind, 1980; Steiger, 1990; Browne and Cudeck, 1992; Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993; Hair et al., 2014; Xia and Yang, 2019). However, the standard maximum value of the index is mostly considered to be .08.

- The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is a standardized version of the Square Residual Index developed by Jöreskog and Sörbom (1982). Its threshold of acceptance is set at .1 or .08 in its most restrictive interpretation (Hu and Bentler, 1995, 1998; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2014).

To comply with the latest recommendations, we have therefore chosen to base our assessment of model fit on these four indicators. However, research has shown a slight sensitivity of these four indicators to the size of the sample used (Fan, Thompson and Wang, 1999; Cangur and Ercan, 2015; Shi, Lee and Maydeu-Olivares, 2017; Xia and Yang, 2019). Indeed, although their sensitivity is lower than that of the Chi-square or the GFI, the CFI and NNFI adjustment values tend to be underestimated as a function of the sample size; whereas the RMSEA and SRMR tend to be overestimated as the sample size increases.

For these reasons, we decided to use the most restrictive minimum value of .95 for the CFI and NNFI, the most restrictive value of .06 for the RMSEA, and .08 for the SRMR. We also decided to study the standardized residuals directly, in line with the recommendations of Bagozzi and Yi (1988, 2012) to assess our internal model fit.

### Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In total, 440 respondents took part in this study (52.7% women; Mage = 47.17; SD = 15.81). After analysis of the results, the structure of the scale structure was modeled using AMOS26.

Before the confirmatory analysis, the reliability of each of the dimensions was assessed via Cronbach's alphas. Results were satisfying, with both Physicality ( $\alpha=.962$ ) and Equipment ( $\alpha=.848$ ) having an alpha higher than .70.

After modeling the scale in Amos, the 14 highlighted Physicality items did relate to the Physicality dimension, and the 3 other items did relate to their respective dimension:

			<b>Factor Score</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>
Phys1	<---	Physicality	0,834			
Phys2	<---	Physicality	0,875	0,044	23,725	***
Phys3	<---	Physicality	0,848	0,047	22,49	***
Phys4	<---	Physicality	0,866	0,045	23,306	***
Phys5	<---	Physicality	0,808	0,045	20,842	***
Phys6	<---	Physicality	0,771	0,046	19,381	***
Phys7	<---	Physicality	0,830	0,049	21,72	***
Phys8	<---	Physicality	0,768	0,048	19,289	***
Phys9	<---	Physicality	0,714	0,058	17,338	***
Phys10	<---	Physicality	0,780	0,048	19,708	***
Phys11	<---	Physicality	0,832	0,044	21,831	***
Phys12	<---	Physicality	0,796	0,047	20,333	***
Phys13	<---	Physicality	0,769	0,048	19,325	***
Phys14	<---	Physicality	0,753	0,05	18,724	***
Equip1	<---	Equipment	0,818			
Equip2	<---	Equipment	0,851	0,059	17,483	***
Equip3	<---	Equipment	0,766	0,066	16,403	***

*Table 32: 17-item Construct-Item factor score table – CFA*

To respect the AMOS procedure, a constraint (a factorial weight) was imposed on one item for each dimension (here Phys1, and Equip1). As we can see from the table, each item does seem to have a sufficient weight on its construct to be kept in the structure. Hair et al. (2014) recommend a minimum factor weight of .70 for each item on their respective construct in a CFA. Furthermore, the table of inter-dimension correlation below confirms that Perceived Sportivity is indeed a second-order reflexive construct.

			<b>Covariance</b>	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>
Equipment	<-->	Physicality	0,369	.280	0,074	4,978	***

*Table 33: Inter-dimension covariance and correlation - CFA*

Indeed, all dimensions of Perceived Sportivity are significantly correlated ( $p < .01$ ).

Regarding the different criteria of model fit, they are available below:

<b>Index</b>	<b>TLI / NNFI</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>SRMR</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Critical value	>.95	>.95	<.08	<.06
Value in the model	.921	.931	.0468	.09

*Table 34: Model fit indicators - CFA*

Even though the TLI, the CFI and the SRMR respect the less restrictive critical value (CFI and TLI >.90 and SRMR <.10), the RMSEA does not fall below the critical value and indicate a possible error in our model. These errors appear to be more evident when studying the internal fit of the model. Indeed, the analysis of standardized residuals, a step put forward by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), reveals that some items are problematic within the Physicality dimension. We decided to delete the items with the highest standardized residual, following Bagozzi and Yi (1988; 2012). AMOS also proposes different modification indices to examine and procedures to follow to increase the fit of a model. The following table provides an overview of the standardized residuals in the model.

	Equip3	Equip2	Equip1	Phys1	Phys2	Phys3	Phys4	Phys5	Phys6	Phys7	Phys8	Phys9	Phys10	Phys11	Phys12	Phys13	Phys14
<b>Equip3</b>	0																
<b>Equip2</b>	0,033	0															
<b>Equip1</b>	-0,027	-0,008	0														
<b>Phys1</b>	0,285	0,625	0,809	0													
<b>Phys2</b>	-0,263	0,268	0,277	-0,078	0												
<b>Phys3</b>	0,715	1,037	0,431	1,29	-0,082	0											
<b>Phys4</b>	-0,695	-0,126	-0,059	0,353	-0,07	-0,006	0										
<b>Phys5</b>	0,625	0,617	0,45	1,625	-0,469	1,499	0,205	0									
<b>Phys6</b>	1,614	1,34	1,851	0,771	-0,053	0,237	0,263	0,254	0								
<b>Phys7</b>	-1,432	-1,166	0,508	-1,133	0,289	-0,721	-0,203	-0,937	-0,868	0							
<b>Phys8</b>	0,681	0,959	1,844	-1,116	0,264	-0,525	-0,546	-0,542	0,026	1,107	0						
<b>Phys9</b>	2,989	2,611	1,312	0,768	-0,556	1,511	0,489	1,177	1,236	-0,987	-1,082	0					
<b>Phys10</b>	-0,401	-2,128	-0,964	-0,273	-0,278	-0,554	0,034	-0,527	-0,145	0,332	-0,775	0,167	0				
<b>Phys11</b>	0,167	-1,089	0,607	-0,474	0,01	-0,591	-0,369	-0,567	-0,578	0,937	0,994	-0,82	0,85	0			
<b>Phys12</b>	-1,853	-2,487	-1,64	-1,055	-0,088	-0,623	-0,185	-0,913	-0,459	1,31	0,954	-1,021	0,594	0,725	0		
<b>Phys13</b>	-2,941	-2,509	-1,519	-0,929	0,697	-0,923	-0,13	-0,08	-0,646	1,416	0,901	-1,613	0,116	0,064	1,094	0	
<b>Phys14</b>	0,069	0,543	-0,279	-0,297	0,484	-0,511	0,492	-1,246	-0,025	-0,194	0,109	-0,195	1,03	0,2	0,226	-0,403	0

Table 35: Standardized residual covariance matrix - CFA

After following recommendations from the modification indices and deleting items with high standardized residuals, which are indicators of a bad incremental model fit (Hoelter, 1983; Bagozzi et al., 1988; Maydeu-Olivares and Shi, 2017; Maydeu-Olivares et al., 2018), we ran another iteration of the CFA containing 8 items, 5 for “Physicality” ( $\alpha = .933$ ), and 3 for “Equipment” ( $\alpha = .848$ ). The following table provides an overview of the factor scores of every item within its respective dimension.

			<b>Estimate</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Label</b>
Phys5	<---	Physicality	0,854	0,038	24,573	***	par_1
Phys4	<---	Physicality	0,847	0,041	24,149	***	par_2
Phys3	<---	Physicality	0,886	0,039	26,457	***	par_3
Phys2	<---	Physicality	0,833	0,04	23,383	***	par_4
Phys1	<---	Physicality	0,883				
Equip1	<---	Equipment	0,814				
Equip2	<---	Equipment	0,854	0,06	17,339	***	par_5
Equip3	<---	Equipment	0,766	0,067	16,325	***	par_6

*Table 36: 8-item structure factor score - CFA*

As with the first analysis, the use of AMOS requires adding a constraint on the factor weight of an item per dimension. Thus, the items Phys1 and Equip1 had this constraint imposed.

Before assessing the fit of the model, we first decided to test the correlation between the two dimensions of our construct. Then we also modeled Perceived Sportivity as a second-order construct regrouping the two dimensions of Physicality and Equipment. The following table provides an overview of the correlations between the dimension of the construct, as well as the factor weight of both dimensions on the second-order construct. It also comforts our view of Perceived Sportivity as a second-order construct.

			<b>Covariance</b>	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>
Equipment	<-->	Physicality	0,454	.301	0,085	5,33	***
<b>Factor Score</b>							
Physicality	<---	Perceived S		0,580			
Equipment	<---	Perceived S		0,520			

*Table 37: Second-order – Dimensions factor scores - CFA*

The final step in the CFA relates to the assessment of the model fit through indicators of incremental (CFI) fit and absolute fit (TLI, SRMR, RMSEA). The model fit was assessed for the model testing the correlation between the first-order constructs, but also for the model including the second-order construct of Perceived Sportivity. To test the validity of the second-order construct, we built an alternative model, linking directly all the items to the global Perceived Sportivity construct and compared it to the model including the first-order constructs (Physicality and Equipment) and the second-order construct. The following figure provides an overview of the two models, while the following table provides an overview of the model fit indicators for both models.

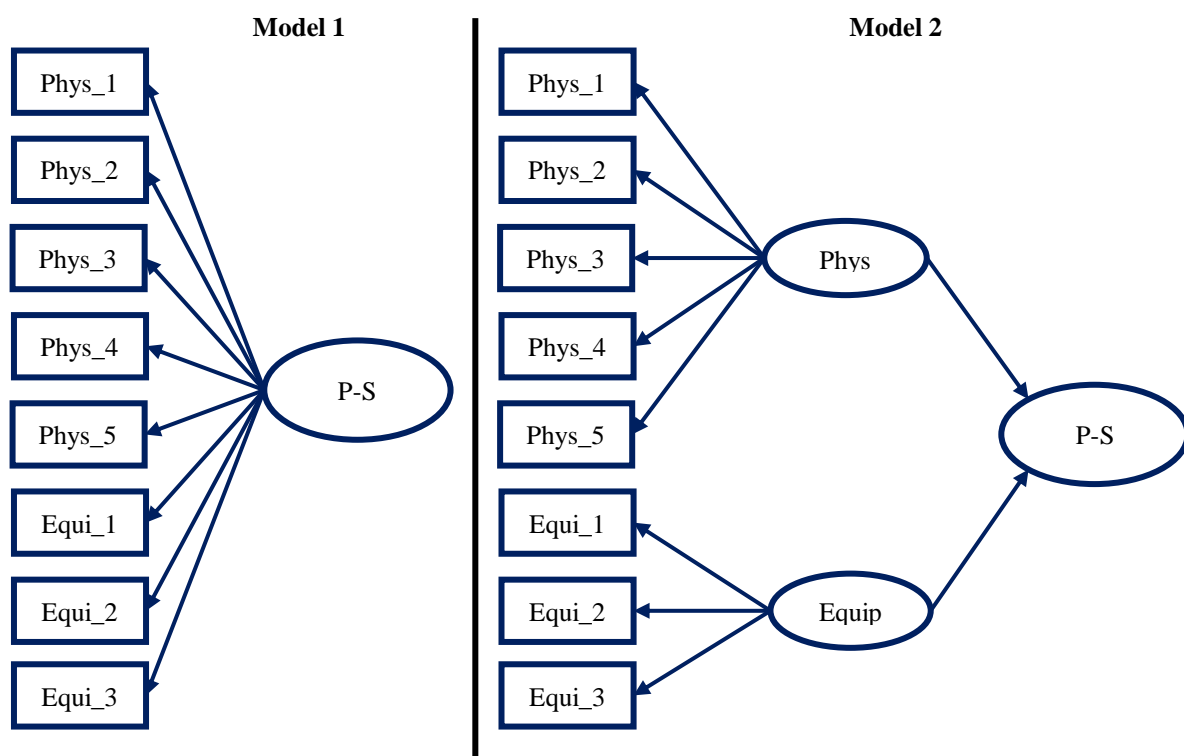


Figure 33: Representation of the model fit assessment in AMOS

Index	TLI / NNFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Critical value	>.95	>.95	<.08	<.06
Perceived Sportivity as first-order	.684	.774	.17	.248
Perceived Sportivity as second-order	.993	.995	.0151	.036

Table 38: Model fit assessment – 2<sup>nd</sup> CFA

As we can see in this table, modeling Perceived Sportivity as a first-order construct containing all the items leads to a non-satisfying model. Moreover, the model with the second-order

construct is much more satisfying in terms of model fit, thus comforting the idea of Perceived Sportivity as a second-order construct. Here is an overview of the final scale of Perceived Sportivity:

<b>Physicality:</b>
- This activity requires a certain physical condition
- This activity requires a lot of energy
- This activity requires a good physical preparation
- This activity requires endurance
- This activity demands a good physical shape
<b>Equipment:</b>
- This activity requires a specific Equipment
- In this activity, there is a dedicated Equipment
- This activity cannot be practiced without adequate Equipment

*Table 39: The final Perceived Sportivity Scale*

To remain true to our approach and Rossiter's (2002) comments on the problems associated with the lack of facial validity in scale development, we decided to call upon the same four experts to ask their opinion on the scale. After reviews from the experts, no major issues were mentioned with the scale, so we decided to move on to the first phases of scale validity, convergent and discriminant validity.

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- **Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale**

- Section 1: Perceived Sportivity scale development – Methodology and Qualitative Exploratory Phase
- Section 2: Qualitative interview guide – development and administration
- Section 3: Refining the Perceived Sportivity measurement scale

- **Section 4: Testing the Perceived Sportivity scale's validity**

- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion



## Section 4: Testing the Perceived Sportivity scale's validity

Once the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have been carried out, we can turn to the various validity tests. As face validity had already been discussed with experts throughout the entire scale development process, we were able to approach the convergent, the discriminant and, finally, the nomological validity tests.

### 4.1 Convergent and internal discriminant validity tests

The objective of convergent validity is to test the scale's capacity to provide results close to those of other measures of the same trait, whereas the objective of discriminant validity is to test the capacity of a construct to provide different results from measures of related constructs (Roehrich, 1993). Historically, the measurement of convergent validity was based on Campbell and Fiske's (1959) Multi-Trait, Multi-Method Matrix (MTMM), but a more recent and less constraining procedure has been preferred since the 1980s: Fornell and Larcker's procedure (1981).

Recently, Henseler et al. (2015) proposed a new procedure to test the discriminant validity of a construct. This procedure called the heterotrait, monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) is based on the MTMM matrix of Campbell and Fiske (1959). It is done by calculating a ratio between the average correlations between constructs, with the geometric mean of the correlations of the items within the same construct. This test was proposed to be easily understood and to be less restrictive than others. A value approaching or exceeding 1 in the HTMT procedure is proof of a lack of discriminant validity between constructs. As the technique is still young, the fixed ratio is not determined, but Henseler et al. (2015) suggest 0.85 and 0.90 as good indicators of validity. This approach has also been tested by Voorhees et al. (2015).

The results of the comparisons show that, although both techniques are effective in some aspects, the HTMT matrix performs better when it comes to highlighting discriminant validity issues related to several common factor weights between two dimensions. Conversely, when a single item has a factorial weight on two constructs, the procedure of Fornell and Larcker (1981) seems to work better. It is for these reasons that we chose to conduct both analyses, Fornell and Larcker's AVE-SV procedure first, then Henseler's HTMT procedure. Concerning convergent validity, it is historically determined by following the procedure of Fornell and Larcker (Laroche, Bergeron and Barbaro-Forleo, 2001; El Akremi et al., 2018). However, other authors

have determined the convergent validity of their constructs by following other procedures and indicators. For example, for Hildebrandt et al. (1987), convergent validity is established when each item has a factor score on its construct  $>.50$ . Hollebeek et al. (2014) used Cronbach's alphas to determine the convergent validity of their scale of consumer brand engagement via social networks. Other authors propose composite reliability indicators, such as Jöreskog's (1970) rho to attest to the internal reliability of a construct and its convergent validity. In the context of our scale, we decided to attest to the convergent validity with both Fornell and Larcker's procedure on the average extracted variance (AVE), but also by considering Cronbach's alphas and the composite reliability of each of our two dimensions.

To test the convergent and internal discriminant validity of our scale, we conducted a new study. Using the same method as when testing the structure of our scale, respondents were presented with one of the 10 pictures in a randomized fashion and were asked to respond to all items of our measurement scale. In total, 217 observations were retained for the discriminant validity tests after cleaning the dataset via an attention check (37.8% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 29.74$ ;  $SD = 9.507$ ).

To ensure the reproducibility of the data, we tested the test-retest reliability of our scale and performed a new CFA, the results are available in the tables below.

	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Factor score</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>
Physicality	.915				
Phys1 <-- Physicality		.872			
Phys2 <-- Physicality		.810	0,061	71,247	***
Phys3 <-- Physicality		.887	0,057	79,816	***
Phys4 <-- Physicality		.745	0,078	63,315	***
Phys5 <-- Physicality		.856	0,053	90,185	***
Equipment	.818				
Equip1 <-- Equipment		.912			
Equip2 <-- Equipment		.787	0,123	40,327	***
Equip3 <-- Equipment		.661	0,13	31,308	***
Model fit indicators	<b>CFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>SRMR</b>	
	.991	.986	.049	.0475	

*Table 40: Convergent Validity – CFA for test-retest reliability*

As we can see, the dimensions look reliable, and each item has a large and significant factor weight on its dimension. Moreover, all the indicators of model fit are satisfying, thus confirming once again the two-dimensional structure of the Perceived Sportivity scale. Once these analyses were completed, we were able to focus on the various tests of convergent and discriminant validity.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), convergent validity is established when the Average Extracted Variance (AVE) of each of the construct dimensions is greater than 0.5. Then, the scale is considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha of each dimension is greater than 0.70 and if the composite reliability of each dimension is greater than 0.80. To facilitate the reading of the results, the table below shows the average extracted variance (AVE), Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), as well as the composite reliability (CR) for each of the two dimensions of the scale.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Physicality</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
AVE (>.5)	0,758	0,743
$\alpha$ (>.7)	0,915	0,818
CR (>.8)	0,940	0,896

*Table 41: Convergent validity - results*

As the table shows, all indicators exceed the critical values, and the scale does not seem to suffer from a convergent validity issue. Therefore, we can turn to tests of discriminant validity.

The classic Fornell and Larcker procedure (1981) argues that discriminant validity of a construct is achieved when the square root of the AVE from each construct is greater than all the correlations between the constructs. This method must be used with standardized coefficients and is the most widely used method in marketing (Voorhees et al., 2015). While it was intended to complement the MTMT method of Campbell and Fiske (1959), which postulated that the discriminant validity of a construct was achieved when it was not highly correlated with other constructs, it has gradually replaced it. It is also for this reason that we decided to include the matrix of Henseler et al (2015) which is based on the MTMT matrix. This procedure consists in the calculation of a ratio between the mean of inter-construct correlations and the geometric mean of the items correlations of the same construct. It was proposed and quickly accepted for its easiness of use. The closer a value is to or exceeds 1, the lower the discriminant validity of the construct. Although Henseler et al. (2015) suggest a

maximum value of 0.85 or 0.90 for this ratio, Voorhees et al. (2015), after comparing this procedure with that of Fornell and Larcker (1981), proposes a maximum acceptable value of 0.85 for the HTMT ratio. Because of its novelty, the HTMT procedure will be detailed later. The Fornell and Larcker procedure, coupled with the HTMT ratio has already been used by Klink, Zhang and Athaide (2020) following recommendations from Voorhees et al. (2015).

Concerning the Fornell and Larcker procedure, the AVE for each of the dimensions was calculated when studying the convergent validity of the scale. The table below shows these AVEs and their square root (highlighted in bold), as well as the inter-dimension squared correlation of the two dimensions of the scale.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Physicality</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
Physicality	0,758 ( <b>0,871</b> )	
Equipment	.266	0,743 ( <b>0,862</b> )

*Table 42: Discriminant Validity – Fornell and Larcker*

As shown in the table above, the scale does not show any problems of discriminant validity following the procedure of Fornell and Larcker (1981). We can therefore look at the HTMT matrix. As mentioned before, the HTMT ratio of two constructs is calculated by taking the average of inter-constructs items correlations of two constructs, and by dividing them by the root of the multiplication between the two intra-constructs items correlations (Henseler et al., 2015).

To explain the functioning of the HTMT ratio most simply, we will detail the calculation of the HTMT ratio between the Physicality dimension and the Equipment dimension. To calculate this ratio, we need to know three elements: the geometric mean of the correlations of the Physicality dimension items with each other (more commonly called the monotrait-heteromethod ratio or MTHT ratio); the geometric mean of the correlations of the Equipment dimension items with each other (more commonly called the MTHT ratio2 ); and the geometric mean of the correlations of items of Physicality with the items of Equipment (more commonly called the heterotrait-heteromethod ratio or HTHT ratio). The calculation of the HTMT ratio is done with the following operation. Let  $x$  be the Physicality dimension and  $y$  the Equipment dimension:

$$HTMT_{xy} = HTHT_{xy} / \sqrt{MTHT_x \times MTHT_y}$$

In our example, the MTHT ratio of the Physicality dimension is equal to 0.696, the MTHT ratio of the Equipment dimension is equal to 0.612, and the HTHT ratio of the Physicality and Equipment dimensions is equal to 0.193.

The HTMT ratio between Physicality and Equipment is therefore equal to:

$$HTMT_{xy} = 0,193 / \sqrt{0,696 \times 0,612} = 0,296$$

The HTMT ratio between the Physicality dimension and the Equipment dimension is equal to  $0.296 < 0.85$  (Henseler et al., 2015), so we can say that there is no discriminant validity problem between these two dimensions.

As this procedure is rather novel, we decided to apply it manually to become familiar with it. Nevertheless, a plugin developed for the Amos software exists that allows the direct calculation of the HTMT ratios of a model<sup>1</sup>. To check our calculations, we also used the said plugin, which confirmed our results and revealed no discriminant validity issue within our scale.

For our two dimensions, the table below shows all the correlations of the scale. (Henseler et al. 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at : <http://statwiki.gaskination.com/index.php?title=Plugins>

	PHYS1	PHYS2	PHYS3	PHYS4	PHYS5	EQUIP1	EQUIP2	EQUIP3
PHYS1	--							
PHYS2	0,669	--						
PHYS3	0,778	0,725	--					
PHYS4	0,623	0,670	0,673	--				
PHYS5	0,785	0,689	0,745	0,603	--			
EQUIP1	0,172	0,246	0,207	0,197	0,160	--		
EQUIP2	0,120	0,186	0,138	0,136	0,110	0,721	--	
EQUIP3	0,261	0,264	0,207	0,246	0,251	0,599	0,516	--

*Table 43: Discriminant validity - item-correlation matrix*

Following most of the recent research developing measurement scales in the last 10 years (e.g. Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozzi, 2012; Böttger et al., 2017, Price et al., 2017; Warren et al., 2019 Drolet et al., 2020; Wilson and Bellezza, 2021; Nunes, Ordanini and Giambastiani, 2021), we decided to test the external discriminant validity of our scale within its nomological network. In line with previous research on discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015) we decided to apply two complementary procedures to test the discriminant validity, The Fornell and Larcker procedure, and the HTMT criterion. We also tested the reliability of all the scales used for validity with Cronbach alphas.

#### **4.2 External discriminant validity and nomological validity**

The primary objective of nomological validity is to test whether a measurement instrument behaves as it is supposed to with other constructs. Through this analysis, we check whether the hypothesized relationships between our scale and other constructs are empirically proven. To carry out this step in the best possible way, it is advisable to create a nomological network to represent the relationships between the different variables under study (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955). This is called a nomological network. To carry out this step in the best possible way, it is also advisable to use a different sample from the one used for the previous analyses (Nunally, 1978). Before carrying out the various tests of nomological validity, it is, therefore, necessary to associate all the items in our scale with antecedents or consequences. In our case, we focused on the consequences of our two dimensions, but also on our second-order construct of Perceived Sportivity.

To establish a reliable nomological network, it is necessary to go back to our literature to study each of the existing relationships between our constructs and already established constructs. Before detailing each measurement scale, we feel it is important to specify that all adaptations

of English-speaking scales were subjected to a translation and then validated by an English-speaking expert before being published. Indeed, To remain constant in our scale development process, every study was realized with French-speaking people.

Regarding the Physicality dimension, which is directly linked to the notion of effort that has already been studied in marketing (Kruger, 2004; Morales, 2005; Choe and Schwartz, 2008; Buell and Norton, 2011; Norton, Mochon, and Ariely, 2012; Passyn and Sujan, 2012; Buell, Kim, and Tsay, 2016; Leung, Kim, and Tse, 2020), we have chosen to use a measure of engagement intention. Indeed, Physicality represents effort, and this perception of effort by consumers leads to engagement intention and involvement (Passyn and Sujan 2012, Leung, Kim and Tse 2020). To measure engagement intention, we decided to follow recommendations from several authors (Sheppard et al. 1988; Warshaw and Davis 1985; Davis 1989, Kim, Rao and Lee 2009). According to them, the best way to measure consumers' behavioral intention is to use direct measurement items. We have therefore included three items to directly measure intention to engage in a given activity.

- *I would like to engage in this activity*
- *I would like to try this activity out*
- *I would like to buy products related to this activity*

To measure involvement, we adapted Strazzieri's (1994) French PIA (Relevance Interest Attraction) scale into 3 items:

- *It is an activity that really matters to me*
- *It is an activity that interests me*
- *I feel particularly attracted to this activity*

Regarding the possible consequences of the Equipment dimension, research in design and art shows the role of Equipment – and in particular of costumes – in the creation of emotion in the consumer's mind, but also its determining role in the search for escapism for spectators. (Pullman and Gross, 2004; Dean, 2012; Cabral and Figueiredo, 2014). Thus, we decided to include adaptations of one emotion measure and one escapism measure in our scale, all of which come from marketing and psychology. The first measure of emotion is a multi-item measure of emotion adapted from the work of Lawler, Thye and Yoon (2000). This scale is bipolar and

consists of 4 items that were presented preceded by the sentence "After watching this activity, how do you feel?" :

- *Displeased / Pleased*
- *Dissatisfied / Satisfied*
- *Unhappy / Happy*
- *Discontented / Contented*

Next, for the measure of escapism, we turned to an adaptation of the Russell, Norman and Heckler (2004) connectivity scale. One of the dimensions of this scale deals with escapism and has 3 items that we adapted. We decided to use this scale because its primary context of use, i.e. watching television programs, seemed close to our context:

- *Watching this activity allows me to escape*
- *Watching this activity allows me to forget my daily problems*
- *If I am in a bad mood, watching this activity makes me feel better*

Finally, to test the nomological validity of our second-order construct, we first decided to include the Well-being dimension that was previously removed from our scale based on the recommendation of the experts. Indeed, we saw this dimension as being a consequence of Perceived Sportivity during the different stages of face validity, so it seemed justified to include these scales To verify its role as a possible consequence of Perceived Sportivity.

Finally, as with Physicality, Perceived Sportivity is associated with effort and is therefore linked to the concept of value. Sport as an object of value has already been the subject of debate in the field of sport (Bocrath and Franke, 1995). We, therefore, decided to include a value scale to test the nomological validity of our scale. We decided to go for a global value scale, and more specifically for the Williams, Gazley and Ashill's (2020) scale which we adapted to our context:

- *Watching this activity makes me feel good*
- *I love watching this activity*
- *I like watching this activity*
- *This activity is well done*
- *This activity does what it is supposed to do*



*- Watching this activity meets my needs*

With all the possible consequences of Perceived Sportivity highlighted, we can now turn to the nomological validity testing.

*Tests and results of nomological validity*

To verify the relationships outlined above, we developed another study. Indeed, while the previous tests aimed to study the internal reliability of our scale, this experiment aims to test its external applicability. Therefore, it seemed important to use other stimuli, more diverse and varied than the previous ones, which all represented images of sports activities. As we were in a viewing setting, we also chose to abandon the photo format and use videos that allow for more immersion and engagement than pictures in online settings (Tiago, Moreira and Borges-Tiago, 2019).

To avoid sound and quality bias in the videos, the sound was removed, and all videos were formatted to be of similar quality. Also, all videos had a similar length of 45 seconds. The activities chosen consisted of a video of a choreographed dance group, a FIFA20 sports video game football match, a free-diving scuba diver performing a choreography, a Rocket League competitive video game match, skateboarding, snowboarding, surfing, teqball (a mix between football and table tennis), a theatre performance, ToughMudder (a 10-15km obstacle course based on common human fears such as fire, water, height and electricity), ultimate (Frisbee), mountain biking, and a yoga class.

Once the activities to be displayed were chosen, we were able to develop our questionnaire. To avoid common variance and questionnaire reading bias, several steps were taken. First, after being exposed to one of the 14 videos randomly, respondents were exposed to the first block of items incorporating all possible measures of the consequences of Perceived Sportivity and its dimensions. The order in which all these items were displayed was random for each respondent. Then, respondents were exposed to the items of our measurement scale, the order of which was also random. Finally, as in previous studies, we decided to include an attention check item in our scale. This item was worded as follows: "If you see this statement, please answer Strongly disagree".

In this study, 404 people were selected online via a panelist to complete the questionnaire. After cleaning the data by analyzing the responses, and in particular the item measuring attention, 367 usable responses were kept (44.1% female;  $M_{age} = 30.19$ ;  $SD = 10.695$ ). Before looking at the validity tests, we decided to repeat the EFA, the CFA and the convergent and discriminant validity tests of our scale To ensure the reproducibility of the data. The results are available in the tables below.

	Factor	
	1	2
This activity requires a certain physical condition	0,896	
This activity requires a lot of energy	0,762	
This activity requires a good physical preparation	0,895	
This activity requires endurance	0,846	
This activity demands a good physical shape	0,928	
This activity requires a specific Equipment		0,936
In this activity, there is a dedicated Equipment		0,875
This activity cannot be practiced without adequate Equipment		0,837

*Table 44: Nomological validity – Test-retest reliability - EFA*

The EFA showed good results, with Physicality explaining 58,6% of the variance and Equipment explaining 25,4% of the variance.

	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Factor score</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>P</b>
Physicality	.945				
Phys1 <-- Physicality		.934			
Phys2 <-- Physicality		.756	0,061	71,247	***
Phys3 <-- Physicality		.909	0,057	79,816	***
Phys4 <-- Physicality		.824	0,078	63,315	***
Phys5 <-- Physicality		.952	0,053	90,185	***
Equipment	.923				
Equip1 <-- Equipment		.955			
Equip2 <-- Equipment		.894	0,123	40,327	***
Equip3 <-- Equipment		.844	0,13	31,308	***
Model fit indicators	<b>CFI</b>	<b>TLI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>SRMR</b>	
	.995	.993	.044	.0227	

*Table 45: Nomological validity – Test-retest reliability - CFA*

The CFA also showed good results, with all items loading strongly on their respective dimension, and all model fit indicators being above their threshold value.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Physicality</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
AVE (>.5)	0,752	0,781
$\alpha$ (>.7)	0,945	0,923
CR (>.8)	0,938	0,914

*Table 46: Nomological validity – Test-retest reliability - Convergent validity*

Similarly, both dimensions proved to be reliable and valid in terms of convergent validity, with both Physicality (0.752) and Equipment (0.781) having an AVE greater than .50.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Physicality</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
Physicality	<b>0,867</b>	
Equipment	0,333	<b>0,884</b>

*Table 47: Nomological validity – Test-retest reliability – Discriminant Validity - Fornell and Larcker*

As we can see with the tables above, the different analyses showed no issue within our scale, thus confirming once again its replicability. We also followed Henseler et al. (2015) and

measured the HTMT ratio of our scale (HTMT =.358). Results were satisfying, and we could therefore turn to the tests of external discriminant validity and the test of nomological validity.

The following table provides an overview of the different tests of discriminant validity at the first-order level.

<b>Fornell and Larcker - First-order level</b>						
	Physicality	Equipment	Intention to engage	Involvement	Emotions	Escapism
$\alpha (>.7)$	0,945	0,924	0,860	0,904	0,899	0,894
AVE (>.5)	0,752	0,781	0,705	0,754	0,695	0,761
Physicality	<b>0,867</b>					
Equipment	0,333	<b>0,884</b>				
Intention to engage	0,093	0,069	<b>0,840</b>			
Involvement	0,130	0,066	<u>0,883</u>	<b>0,868</b>		
Emotions	0,317	0,222	0,565	0,614	<b>0,834</b>	
Escapism	0,178	0,147	0,604	0,689	0,618	<b>0,873</b>
<b>HTMT Matrix - First-order level</b>						
	Physicality	Equipment	Intention to engage	Emotion	Escapism	Involvement
<b>Physicality</b>	--					
<b>Equipment</b>	0,358	--				
<b>Intention to engage</b>	0,106	0,074	--			
<b>Emotion</b>	0,339	0,245	0,623	--		
<b>Escapism</b>	0,193	0,162	0,69	0,675	--	
<b>Involvement</b>	0,141	0,07	<u>1</u>	0,667	0,763	--

*Table 48: First-order external discriminant validity – Nomological network*

As we can see with the above tables, both the Fornell and Larcker procedure and the HTMT analyses show a problem of discriminant validity between involvement and intention to engage, but no problem between our two dimensions and the other first-order constructs. We can therefore turn to the assessment of the external discriminant validity of the second-order construct.

We assessed the discriminant validity of our second-order construct by testing the discriminant validity of our two dimensions with constructs related to Perceived Sportivity, following actual procedures and previous recommendations from authors (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Lastovicka et al., 1999; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Wilson and Bellezza, 2021; Luchs, Mick and Haws, 2021; Cheng, Baumgartner and Meloy, 2021). Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Netemeyer et al. (2003) also recommend the correlation analysis between the second-order construct and its related constructs to attest to second-order discriminant validity. According to them, discriminant validity is achieved if we can determine whether the confidence interval ( $\pm 2$  standard errors) around the correlation estimate between the two factors includes 1.0. We also followed this procedure and analyzed the correlations between Perceived Sportivity and the three related constructs. As with the first-order external discriminant validity, we first tested the reliability of the scale with Cronbach, and then examined second-order discriminant validity with the Fornell and Larcker procedure, the HTMT matrix, and the correlation matrix. Results are available in the table below.

Fornell and Larcker (1981)				
	Physicality	Equipment	Global Value	Well-Being
$\alpha (>.7)$	0,945	0,924	0,873	0,89
AVE	0,752	0,781	0,553	0,674
Physicality	<b>0,867</b>			
Equipment	0,333	<b>0,884</b>		
Global Value	0,277	0,156	<b>0,744</b>	
Well-Being	0,353	0,262	0,608	<b>0,821</b>
HTMT Matrix (Henseler et al., 2015)				
	Physicality	Equipment	Global Value	Well-Being
Physicality	-			
Equipment	0,358	-		
Global Value	0,306	0,176	-	
Well-Being	0,389	0,330	0,69	-
Correlations and Confidence Intervals (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988)				
	Perceived Sportivity		Global Value	Well-Being
Perceived Sportivity	-		[0,355 ; 0,519]	[0,476 ; 0,618]
Global Value	0,441		-	[0,579 ; 0,699]
Well-Being	0,551		0,643	-

*Table 49: External discriminant validity - Nomological validity tests - Second-order level*

As we can see with the table above, the three procedures showed no discriminant validity issue, both with the two first-order constructs of Physicality and Equipment and with the second-order construct of Perceived Sportivity. Moreover, the table also shows how Perceived Sportivity correlates, even moderately, with the three constructs of global value, commerciality, and well-being, thus confirming the nomological validity of our scale, as predicted.

Sarstedt et al. (2019) propose another method to assess the external discriminant validity of a second-order construct using the HTMT criterion. Indeed, while the first-order validity assessment uses the correlations between the items, the second-order construct validity can be done by using the correlation between items and composite first-order constructs.

We will illustrate the method by explaining step by step the assessment of the discriminant validity between Perceived Sportivity and Global Value. To do so, we first need to compute our first-order constructs of Physicality and Equipment. Then, we need to compute the correlation table between the items of global value and the first-order constructs of Equipment and Physicality. The following table presents this correlation table.

	Physicality	Equipment	Global Value 1	Global Value 2	Global Value 3	Global Value 4	Global Value 5	Global Value 6
Physicality	--							
Equipment	0,333	--						
Global Value 1	0,223	0,156	--					
Global Value 2	0,288	0,175	0,741	--				
Global Value 3	0,290	0,165	0,761	0,821	--			
Global Value 4	0,246	0,089	0,438	0,441	0,495	--		
Global Value 5	0,112	0,138	0,357	0,320	0,351	0,415	--	
Global Value 6	0,119	0,001	0,631	0,665	0,633	0,349	0,379	--

*Table 50: Item-Factor correlation matrix – External Discriminant Validity*

With that correlation matrix, we can calculate both our MHTT ratios for Perceived Sportivity (0,333) and the MHTT ratio for Global Value (0,520) and our HTHT ratio (0.167), the mean of the correlation between the global value item and the two factors of Perceived Sportivity.

Therefore, our HTMT ratio for Perceived Sportivity (x) and Global Value (y) is:

$$HTMT_{xy} = HTHT_{xy} / \sqrt{MHTTx \times MHTTy}$$

$$HTMT_{xy} = 0,167 / \sqrt{0,333 \times 0,520} = 0,401$$

The following table provides an overview of the second-order discriminant validity results in our nomological network:

	PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY	Engagement Intention	involvement	Emotions	Escapism	Value	Well- Being
PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY	--	0,149	0,174	0,487	0,294	0,401	0,566

*Table 51: Second-order External Discriminant validity test*

Therefore, we can provide our final definition of Perceived Sportivity, which, in an experiential, context refers to a two-dimension construct that relates to consumers' perception of leisure activities. Perceived Sportivity contains two dimensions: Physicality and Equipment. Physicality refers to the observable physical condition needed for consumers to categorize an activity as sporty, while Equipment refers to the tools needed in the practice of the activity to be categorized as a sport by spectators. In that context, perceived sportivity refers to the identification of the different elements that influence consumers' categorization of an activity as being sporty.

The scale being fully developed and validated, we can now turn to its use in a field study. The next two chapters will focus on the field study we developed to test our scale in a nomological network. Chapter 5 will introduce in detail the context of our study: League of Legends esports, present a field study conducted in that context, and then present an experiment conducted on Perceived Sportivity.

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esports as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

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## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

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## CHAPTER 5: APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY SCALE: THE FRENCH LEAGUE OF LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

### Section1: League of Legends as an object of study

*League of Legends (LoL)* is a video game created by *Riot Games* and released in 2009. This game is classified as a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) in which two teams of five players fight against each other. It combines elements of role-playing, real-time strategy, and tower defense games genres (Donaldson, 2017). Each of the 10 players gets to choose between one of the 156 playable characters called “Champions” before entering the map, called the “Summoner’s Rift”. The map is the same for every game. There are two sides on this map, the blue side, and the red side. Each team has to attack the other side to destroy their base, called the nexus. Once the opponent’s nexus is destroyed, the game is over. To do so, the two Nexuses are connected through three lanes that the players take to cross the map. The rest of the map is called the “Jungle” and looks like a maze. The following figure provides an overview of the map.



*Figure 34: Overview of the map in LoL*

All the competitions take place on this map. In addition to the players, there are also Non-Playable Characters (NPCs) all around the map and mainly in the jungle that players can hunt to gain time-limited advantages over the opponents (e.g., enhanced attack damage).

The competitive history of *League of Legends* started in 2010 with the Los Angeles World Cyber Games tournament won by the American team *Counter Logic Gaming*. The following year, the European team Fnatic won the second major tournament, the DreamHack, in Sweden, with a cash prize of 50 000\$ and a total audience of 1.6 million people, and a peak audience of 210 000 people during the semi-finals of the tournament. The success of the first DreamHack encouraged Riot Games, the editor, to propose a huge cash prize of \$5,000,000 for the next edition. The Taiwanese team Taipei Assassins won the 2012 edition, in front of 8000 spectators at the Los Angeles Galen Center and more than 8 million spectators online. Consequently, Riot Games decided to launch, in 2013, official regional leagues in both North America and Europe, marking the first professionalization of the game. The leagues work as a closed championship, without relegations, and players received a fixed salary that can go up to more than 1 million \$ for the bests. At the same time, in July 2013, the *United States Department of State* recognizes the best esport players as professional sportsmen To facilitate their visas.

Since then, the *League of Legends* ecosystem has kept on growing in terms of players, viewers, cash prizes and sponsors. There are nowadays 12 major regional leagues all around the world that are closed; and a multitude of minor leagues all around the world. In all league of legends competitions, there are two segments throughout the year, the Spring Split, and the Summer Split. At the end of each split, the best teams of every region gather into two worldwide tournaments, the Mid-Season Invitational (MSI) at the end of the Spring Split, and the World Championship, after the Summer Split. While the MSI is a competition between only the 12 winners of the Major Leagues Spring Split, the Worlds are the biggest yearly event in League of Legends, regrouping 24 of the best teams in the world. We will detail some of the main numbers regarding these events in the next section.

To provide an example of a national *League of Legends* ecosystem, we will focus on France. In France, the *League of Legend European Championship* is the major league, a closed league in which one French esport team, *Vitality*, compete since 2015 with other European teams. There are also three different minor leagues, the *Ligue Française de LoL* (LFL), the *LFL Division 2* (Div 2) and the *Open Tour France*.

The *Open tour France* is an open competition created in 2018 for professional and semi-professional teams. It contains different tournaments throughout the year. Since 2020, the best two teams of the *Open Tour France* face the two lowest seeds of the *LFL Division 2* for a spot in the next season of the Div 2.

The *LFL Division 2* works, as its name implies, as the second professional French division. It works in two splits, similarly to the major leagues, and contains 10 teams. At the end of the season (i.e. after the two Splits), the best two teams of the Div 2 confront the lowest two seeds of the LFL for a spot in the French elite division.

The *Ligue Française de Lol* (LFL) is the best French minor league, created in 2019. 10 teams take part in the two splits. In the end, while the bottom two teams have to compete with the best two teams from the Div 2 to keep their spot, the best three teams qualify for the EU Masters, a regional minor event regrouping the best team from twelve minor European Leagues. However, there is no way to access any Major League, such as the LEC, which are closed leagues, through sheer performance.

To summarize, there are two different types of competition in the *League of Legends* ecosystems. First, there is the major league ecosystem, comprising 12 closed leagues worldwide. Secondly, there is the minor league ecosystem, containing promotions and relegations, with many leagues all around the world and a minor regional event at the end of the season.

Now that the League of Legends ecosystem has been explained, we can explore a few numbers that will explain why we chose this esports title, and especially why we chose to analyze the Spring Splint 2021 of the *Ligue Française de Lol*.

League of Legends in numbers:

We chose to study *League of Legends* because of its popularity as an esports. Besides being one of the most played games in the world, with more than 8 000 000 people playing the game daily

according to Riot Games (2019), it is also the most-watched esports game on Twitch, with an average daily viewership of more than 170 000 on Twitch in 2021. During the World Cup 2020, the average number of daily viewers was above 1 000 000. Moreover, *League of Legends* is also the second biggest game in terms of weekly hours of viewership with 40 million hours of watching (Statista, 2021), and the biggest esports game in terms of peak viewership with 45.95 million concurrent viewers watching the world cup finals in 2020. As these numbers illustrate, *League of Legends* represents a huge marketing opportunity thanks to its worldwide audience. However, researchers have also shown a growing interest regarding the game, with more papers focusing on it since its release in 2009. In 2020, there were more than 1900 research papers including the term “League of Legends” on Google Scholar. The following figure provides an overview of the evolution of research exploring League of Legends.

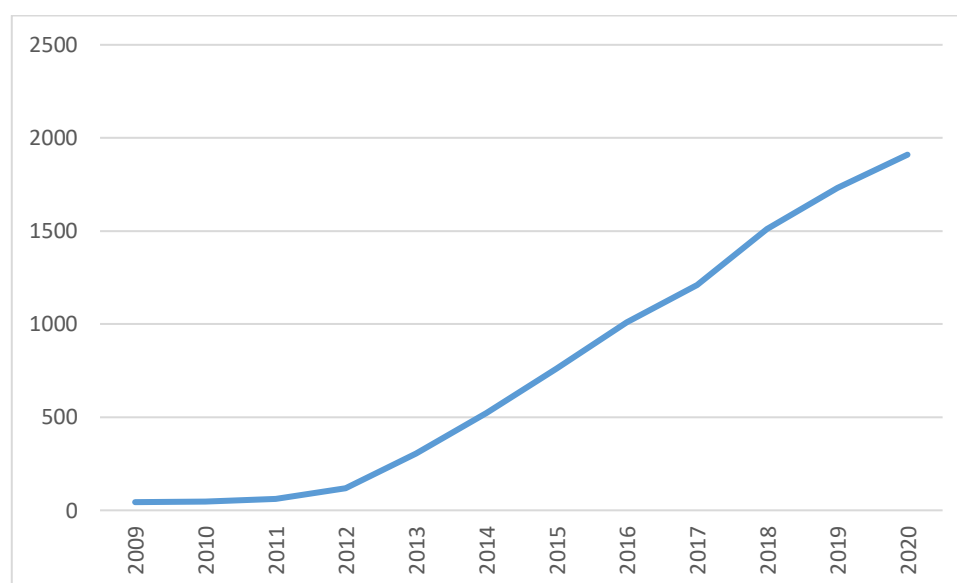


Figure 35: References to the term ‘League of Legends’ in the literature since 2009 (source: Google Scholar)

As the above figure shows, the study of League of Legends is also growing and offers opportunities to researchers. In our study, we decided to focus on the *Ligue Française de Lol*, for reasons that we will detail here. First, the Perceived Sportivity scale being developed with French consumers, it seemed obvious to test it with French-speaking respondents. Secondly, being part of the French esports community, it was easier for us to reach out to French respondents. Finally, the growing popularity of the LFL was also a determinant factor in our choice. According to Escharts (2021), a website specialized in statistics related to esports, the

LFL average viewership grew from 10534 viewers in 2020 to 47521 in 2021, with a peak audience of 194 979 in February 2021. As a comparison, the peak audience of 2020 was “only” 22 128 viewers. Therefore, the growing popularity of the LFL and the growing interest of researchers in *League of Legends* seemed to justify our choice. In the next section, we will explain why esports represents a perfect opportunity to study the influence of Perceived Sportivity, both from a managerial and a research point of view.

The Ligue Francaise de LoL (LFL) is one of the biggest growing minor esports leagues in terms of popularity, if not the biggest. Its audience increased by more than 350% in our year, from an average number of viewers of 10 354 during the Spring split 2020 to an average viewership of 47 521 during the Spring Split 2021. Accordingly, the peak audience of the event also increased by more than 780%, with a peak viewership of 22 128 in 2020 and a peak viewership of 194 979 in 2021.

Moreover, the scale being developed with French consumers, it seemed logical to apply it in a French context. The relative youth of the esports and LoL audience was also a positive factor for its study, the respondents were easy to reach through social media and influencers. Finally, in a difficult Covid 19 context, many events were either canceled or delayed, and the opportunity to study live events was non-existent. Therefore, the LFL Spring Split 2020, a fully online event that lasted around 3 months with more than 6 million hours of watching time and which was not affected by the pandemic, seemed like a perfect opportunity for our research.

Before focusing on our field study and our experiment, we will first explore our nomological network, based on our first chapter and previous research. Then, we will turn to our field study, the study of the Perceived Sportivity of the LFL. Finally, with an experiment, we will manipulate Perceived Sportivity

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## Section 2: The conceptual model

In this section, we will present our conceptual model. Specifically, we will introduce and justify our hypotheses. As we have seen in our first chapter on customer experience, we posit that, during any touchpoint in an experiential context, Perceived Sportivity will affect consumers' perception and judgment of the experience. More precisely, we posit that Perceived Sportivity will influence two levels: first consumers' brand perceptions, and then consumers' behavioral outcomes.

### **2.1 Consequences of perceived sportivity on consumers' brand perceptions:**

At the brand level, we expect perceived sportivity to have a direct influence on brand personality, and an indirect effect on brand identification and perceived brand legitimacy.

Brand personality:

Brand personality is defined as: "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347), and has been extensively studied over the last 20 years (e.g. Diamantopoulous, Smith and Grime, 2005; Donaya and Rosenberger, 2007; Freling, Crosno and Henard, 2011; Malär et al., 2011; Mathur, Jain and Maheswaran, 2012; Karjaluto, Munnukka and Salmi, 2016; Sundar and Noseworthy, 2016; Hohenberger and Grohs (2020). Brand personality is usually defined as a multidimensional construct comprising five dimensions: sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). Studying evolution in the dimensions of brand personality is important because they can influence both the evaluation and the consumption of products (Swaminathan, Page and Gurhan-Canli, 2007; Mathur, Jain and Maheswaran, 2012). Brand personality development is based on consumers' interactions with a brand and firms' marketing efforts (Johar et al., 2005; Fitzsimons, Chartrand and Fitzsimons, 2008; Mathur, Jain and Maheswaran, 2012).

Brand personality, in a sports context, has mostly been studied in sponsoring conditions (e.g. Donaya and Rosenberger, 2007; Karjaluto, Munnukka and Salmi, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Hohenberger and Grohs, 2020). For example, Donaya and Rosenberger (2007) explored how brand personality congruence between a sponsor and a brand had a positive effect on the effectiveness of image transfer in a Formula One context. Karjaluto, Munnukka and Salmi (2016) explored the outcomes of brand personality and found how it has a positive impact on



brand identification and brand loyalty. Finally, Kim et al. (2018) and Hohenberger and Grohs (2020) explored factors influencing consumers' perception of brand personality in a sports context. They found that congruence between event and the sponsor affects the sponsor's brand personality (Kim et al., 2018) and that using sponsorship, for a brand, modify the brand's personality and the brand's age in the consumer's mind (Hohenberger and Grohs, 2020)

Other authors have also explored how brand personality evolves and changes in the consumer's mind (e.g. Diamantopoulos, Smith and Grime, 2005; Ang and Lim, 2006; Möller and Herm, 2013; Ha, 2016; Hohenberger and Grohs; 2020). Brand personality can be influenced by elements such as brand extensions (Diamantopoulos, Smith and Grime, 2005) metaphors in advertising and product type (Ang and Lim, 2006); bodily customer experience (Möller and Herm, 2013) time (Ha, 2016) or even consumer's self-congruence (Malär et al., 2011).

In our research, we extend previous research, and particularly Möller and Herm (2013) and Hohenberger and Grohs (2020) to propose that, because of its experiential nature, perceived sportivity of a leisure activity affects the brand's personality of the organizing brand. More precisely, because of previous research linking sport as a form of excitement (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Goodger and Goodger, 1989; Jones et al., 2005) we expect the excitement dimension of brand Personality to be the most affected. Therefore, we propose:

*H1: Perceived sportivity of a leisure activity has a direct positive effect on the exciting dimension of brand personality.*

## Brand identification

Most definitions of customer brand identification seem to derive from social identity theory based on social psychology (Tuškej, Golob and Podnar, 2013, p.54). Building on that theory, customer brand identification can be defined as the degree to which the brand expresses and enhances consumers' identity (Kim et al., 2001, p.196). Extending that idea, Carlson et al., 2008, p.2008) posit that "consumer's personal identification with a brand refers to the degree of overlap between an individual's self-schema and the schema s/he holds for a brand".

In their Research, Tuškej, Golob and Podnar (2013) explore the role of consumer brand identification in building relationships, but also value congruity as an antecedent of consumer

brand identification. In their words (p.54), “using perceived brand values and consumer values to measure value congruity is similar to the brand personality congruity (BPC) concept where, instead of user-imagery, brand personality is used to assess brand image (Parker, 2009)“. Therefore, value congruity and brand personality should have a similar effect on consumer brand identification. Tuškej, Golob and Podnar (2013) found a positive significant effect of value congruity on brand identification, but also a mediating role of consumer brand identification in the relationship between value congruity and brand commitment.

In a sports context, Carlson, Donovan and Cumiskey (2009) found similar results, with brand personality affecting cognitive brand identification. We, therefore, expect similar results in our context, and propose:

*H2: The excitement dimension of brand personality has a direct positive effect on consumer brand identification.*

### Brand legitimacy

Legitimacy, as a social process, has been defined by Suchman (1995, p.574) as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions”. Most of the existing research on brand legitimacy uses that definition (e.g. Kates, 2004; Guo et al., 2015; Hu et al., 2018; Lee, Yoon and O’Donnel, 2018, Miotto and Youn; 2018). Therefore, brand legitimacy refers to the general assumption that the actions of a brand are desirable, proper, and appropriate for consumers.

Past research in marketing suggests that higher perceived legitimacy yields multiple benefits for firms or brands, such as higher shopping intentions (Handelman and Arnould, 1999; Chaney, Lunardo, & Bressolles, 2016) or firm performance (Park, Auh, Maher, & Singhapakdi, 2012).

In a psychology context, authors have explored the links between personality and legitimacy. For example, Porter et al. (2003) have shown how, in teams, personality and legitimacy are linked. In an entrepreneurial context, Gundolf et al. (2017) have shown how entrepreneurs’ personality affects their perceived legitimacy. In management, Brown (1997, p. 654) explicitly

proposes identification as an antecedent of legitimacy by stating that “legitimacy attributions are mediated by identification processes.

However, up to this date, no marketing research has empirically explored the relationship between brand personality and brand legitimacy. Only Fournier (1998) mentions this possible relation but does not empirically test it. Therefore, this research aims to test that relation, and we propose, in our context:

*H3: The excitement dimension of brand personality has a direct positive effect on perceived brand legitimacy.*

In an ethical marketing context, Miotto and Youn (2020) recently explored how altruistic attributions had an influence on corporate legitimacy and showed, following Deephouse et al. (in Greenwood et al., 2017) how isomorphism between brand’s and consumer’s values provides corporate legitimacy. In their paper, they found how brand identification was a factor leading to perceived brand legitimacy. Moreover, brand identification has also been found to be a driver of consumption and a huge asset in building relations between brands and consumers (Lam et al., 2013; Elbedweihy et al., 2016). Therefore, following previous findings, we expect a mediating effect of consumer brand identification on the relationship between brand personality and perceived brand legitimacy and we propose:

*H4a: Consumer brand identification has a direct positive effect on perceived brand legitimacy.*

*H4.b: Brand identification positively mediates the relationship between the excitement dimension of brand personality and perceived brand legitimacy.*

The following table represents an overview of the first part of our theoretical model including the relation between perceived sportivity and brand perception.

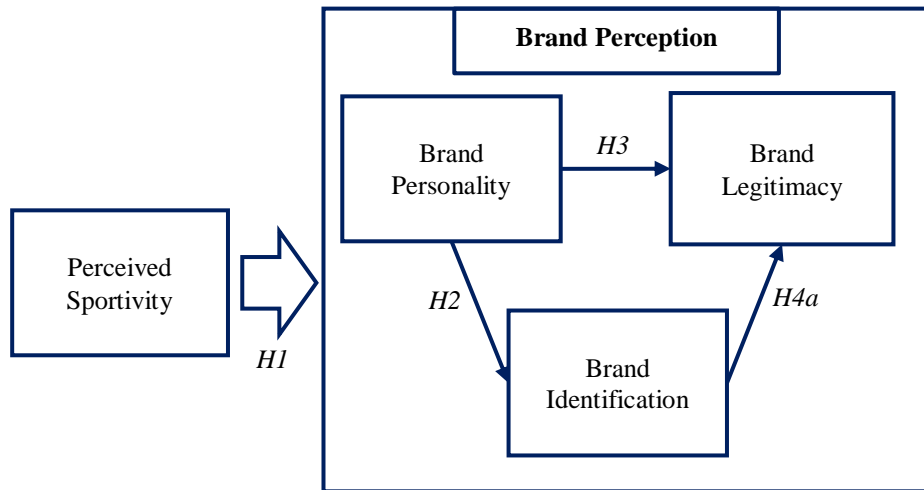


Figure 36: Theoretical model - Perceived Sportivity and Consumer Brand Perception

## 2.2 Consequences of consumers' brand perceptions on consumer's behavioral outcomes:

Then, we also expect consumers' brand perceptions to affect consumer behavioral outcomes. More precisely, we expect perceived sportivity to have an indirect effect, through brand perceptions on consumer engagement, perceived value, and purchase intention.

Consumer engagement has been defined as: "A customer's voluntary resource (network assets, persuasion capital, knowledge stores, and creativity) contribution to a firm's marketing function, going beyond financial patronage" (Harmeling et al., 2017, p.312). Engagement goes beyond the mere act of purchase. Consumer engagement has gained attention in the marketing literature over the last 15 to 20 years, and researchers have conceptualized it based on research in other fields, including sociology, psychology, and organizational behavior (Brodie et al., 2011). Consumer engagement recognizes the central role that customers play in a wide variety of marketing functions (e.g., customer acquisition and retention, product innovation, marketing communication, merchandising) (Malthouse et al. 2013; Harmeling et al., 2017).

Existing research has highlighted how perceived legitimacy influences consumer engagement. Recently, in a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) context, Martin-de Castro (2021) showed how the perceived legitimacy of firms' CSR actions influenced stakeholders' willingness to engage with them. In the same logic, Blanco-González, Del-Castillo-Feito and Miotto (2021) also found how perceived legitimacy in higher education had a positive effect on faculty engagement in an ethical and educational context.

In a marketing context, Vanhamme and Grobben (2009) build on Handelman and Arnould (1999) to posit that companies must achieve social legitimacy to gain support from consumers in the long run. We expect this relationship to extend in our context, with higher levels of brand legitimacy leading to higher levels of brand engagement. Therefore, we propose:

*H5: Perceived brand legitimacy has a direct positive effect on consumer brand engagement.*

Prior research has also explored the consequences of consumer brand engagement. Since the emergence of the stream of research on consumer engagement, perceived value has been proposed as a possible outcome of engagement (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011).

In a brand context, Hollebeek (2011) proposed co-created value, a form of perceived value, as a consequence of consumer brand engagement. She also proposed customer value, based on Zeithaml's (1988) definition of value as a potential outcome of consumer engagement with a potential positive relationship between the two constructs. According to Zeithaml (1988, p.14), perceived value is defined as "The consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given". Research has started to empirically explore the relationship between consumer brand engagement and perceived value (e.g. Brodie et al., 2013; Dovalienne et al., 2015). For example, Brodie et al., 2013 found how consumer brand engagement had a positive effect on value in use and value in exchange. Similarly, Dovalienne et al. (2015) found how the affective and the behavioral dimensions of consumer brand engagement had a positive effect on overall perceived value. In our research, we empirically test this relationship between consumer engagement and perceived value and propose:

*H6: Consumer brand engagement has a direct positive effect on the perceived value of the activity.*

Moreover, Hollebeek (2011) also proposes behavioral loyalty (i.e. repeated purchase) as a potential outcome of consumer brand engagement, not only highlighting the potential relation between engagement and perceived value but also between engagement and purchase intention. More recently, researchers have tested these hypothetical relations in an online context (Marbach, Lages and Nunan, 2015; Yusuf, Hussin and Busalim, 2018; Prentice, Wang and

Loureiro, 2019). Marbach Lages and Nunan (2015), in their research on online consumer engagement, confirmed the role of perceived value as an outcome of consumer engagement.

Similarly, Yusuf, Hussin and Busalim (2018) explored the influence of Word of Mouth (WoM), a form of consumer engagement on purchase intention (Trusov, Bucklin and Pauwels, 2009). Findings revealed a significant positive influence of online WoM on purchase intention, revealing the potential role of brand engagement as an antecedent of purchase intention. Finally, drawing on social identification theory, Prentice, Wang and Loureiro (2019) showed how consumer identification within online communities led to engagement, and subsequently how engagement led to purchase intention, thus reinforcing our argument that brand engagement has a positive influence on purchase intention. Therefore, we propose:

*H7: Consumer brand engagement has a direct positive effect on purchase intention.*

We also expect perceived value to have a positive influence on purchase intention. The influence of perceived value on purchase intention has already been found in a commerce context (Gan and Wang, 2017), with value being the most salient factor influencing purchase intention, followed by hedonic value and social value. Moreover, in a sports context, Kwon, Trail and James (2007) also found how that perceived value had a positive influence on purchase intention. More generally, the role of perceived value on purchase intention has been explored in many contexts (Sanchez et al., 2006; Sànchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Kuo, Wu and Deng, 2009; Ashton et al., 2010; Hsu and Lin, 2016). Therefore, we included this relation in our model and expect the perceived value of the activity to have a positive influence on purchase intention. Therefore, we propose:

*H8a: Perceived value of the activity has a direct positive effect on purchase intention.*

*H8b: Perceived value positively mediates the relationship between consumer brand engagement and purchase intention.*

### **2.3 Moderators of consumers' brand perceptions**

Finally, we will also explore the role of narcissism as a moderator in the relations between the three components of brand perception in our model: brand personality, brand identification and

brand legitimacy. Narcissism is defined as “an agentic, egocentric, self-aggrandizing, dominant and manipulative orientation (Sedikides et al., 2007, p. 254). Because narcissists are addicted to self-esteem (Baumeister and Vohs, 2001) and strive toward self-enhancement (Sedikides et al., 2002), research has shown that they manifest exhibitionism, vanity, and a relentless need to validate their overly favorable self-beliefs in the presence of others (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002; Cizek et al., 2014). Narcissists are also status-oriented (Bradlee and Emmons, 1992), power-driven (Horton and Sedikides, 2009), and engage in grandiose-self-displays (Buss and Chiodo, 1991; Campbell, 1999).

In psychology, narcissistic people “understand their wishes as needs and then demand their gratification and fulfillment as inherently legitimated” (Holzhey-Kunz, 1988). Moreover, Brown (1997) argues that the concept of narcissism can serve as a psychoanalytic concept to explain the behavior of individuals in organizations (p648). He then links narcissism, identification and legitimacy by stating that “the degree of identification between an individual and a social category will depend crucially on the collective regulation of individual’s self-esteem through narcissistic ego-defenses processes” (p.665). In this research, we empirically test this relation and propose:

*H9: Narcissism moderates the relationship between consumer brand identification and perceived brand legitimacy, such that when brand identification increases, higher levels of narcissism lead to higher levels of perceived brand legitimacy.*

All these relations will be tested in our field study. Then, an experiment will also be conducted to replicate the results of the field study. The following figure provides an overview of our theoretical model, including all our hypotheses.

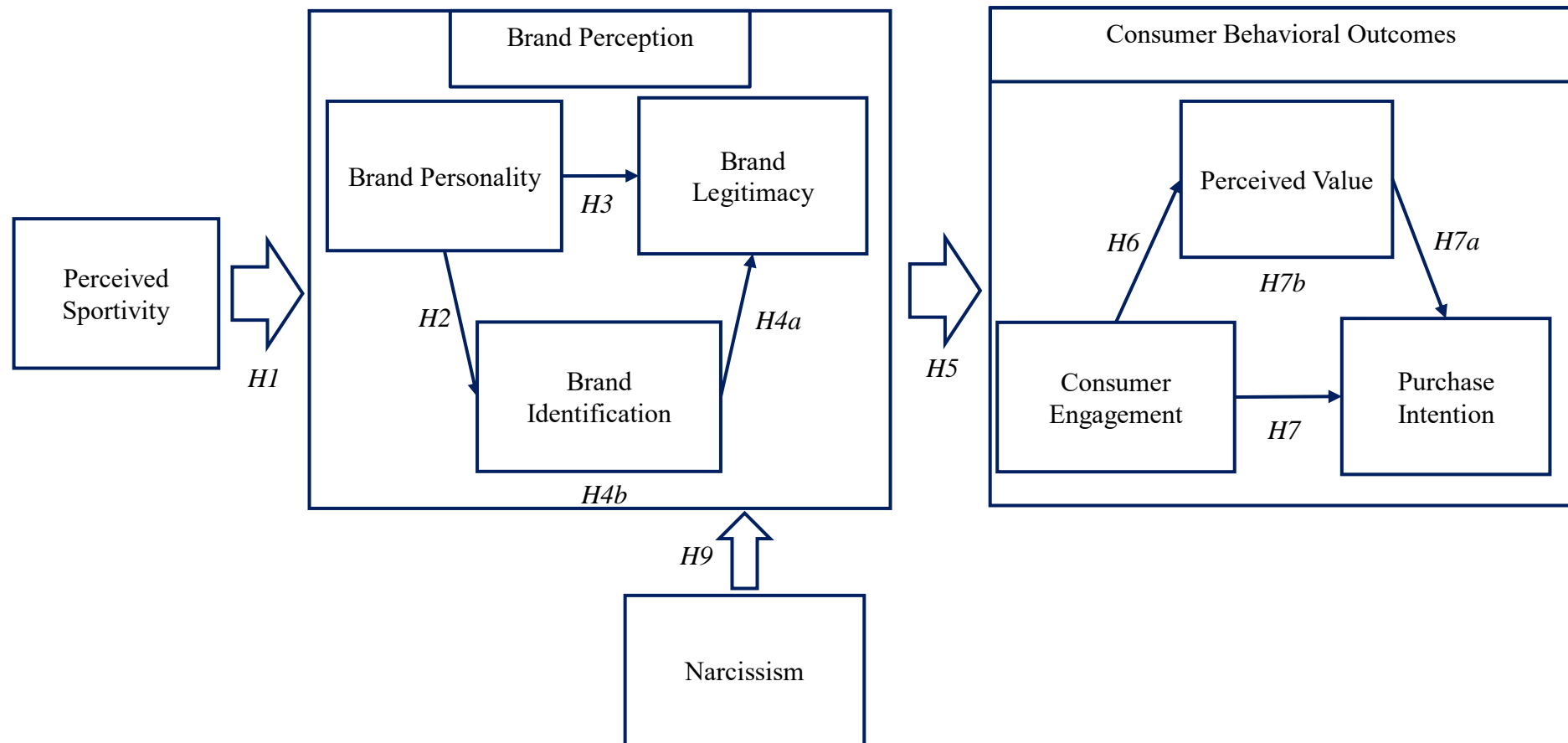


Figure 37: Overview of the theoretical model



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## Section 3: Field Study

### 3.1 Method:

To provide empirical evidence for our conceptual model and the predicted effects of Perceived Sportivity – and therefore for the external validity of our research – a field study was performed. In this section, we will detail the rationales for our choices about questionnaire design and our method of administration.

As a reminder, the study focused on League of Legends French consumers. More precisely, we only reached out to viewers of the main French Competition of League of Legends: The Ligue Française de LoL. Participants were recruited online, through social media. Indeed, most of the French esports community uses Twitter to share information and news. French League of Legends influencers and casters were contacted, and some of them relayed the questionnaire through their social media account. To gather more respondents, a giveaway was implemented with the questionnaire. At the end of the study, ten of the respondents were randomly offered a 20\$ gift card on the gaming platform of their choice. The field study was done with French respondents, every item was translated, reviewed, and validated by experts through an iterative process before admission. The questionnaire was built with Qualtrics.

Thanks to the influencers and the giveaway, 450 respondents completed the questionnaire. To ensure the quality of the responses, screening out questions regarding the number of games watched and an attention check were included in the questionnaire. The admission of the questionnaire started on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2021, during the last week of the Spring Split of the LFL, and lasted 17 days. The questionnaire was closed after the end of the Spring Split 2021. Participants had to respond to every item previously mentioned, which were randomized, and the number of games and hours watched during the Spring Split were also used as covariates. People who were under 18 at the time of completion of the questionnaire were also removed to conform to internet protection regulations (N=32). After an analysis of the attention check, 385 participants were kept ( $M_{age} = 23,5$ ;  $SD = 4.37$ ; 94% men). Regarding the low representation of women in our field study, gender distribution in esports viewership has never been empirically studied. However, according to a 2019 Nielsen survey, 22% of global esports fans are women. In France, that number rises to 23%. However, this number concerns the global esports audience and does not consider the type of esports watched. Regarding specific esports titles, gender

representation has only been partially studied in terms of players and tournaments. According to Escharts, an esports data specialized website (2021), there is no League of Legends tournaments in the most popular esports tournaments among women. Moreover, the most popular female esports disciplines appear to be Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, Valorant, and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive. Riot Games, League of Legends' editor has only recently started their plans for a women esports scene.

The questionnaire contained our Perceived Sportivity scale, as well as 7 other scales adapted from previous research that measured brand personality, brand identification, perceived brand legitimacy, consumer brand engagement, perceived value, purchase intention and narcissism.

First, regarding brand personality, we could not use the 42-item brand personality scale from Aaker (1997) because of its length. However, we decided to follow Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) in their adaptation of Aaker. Aaker's original scale contained 5 dimensions, 15 sub-dimensions and 42 items. Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009) decided to measure the 15 sub-dimensions as items reflecting the five dimensions, with success. We, therefore, decided to use their 5-dimensions, 15-item scale in our field study. For brand identification, we followed Tuškej, Golob and Podnar (2013), and used their 3-item scale adaptation of the organizational identification instrument from Podnar (2004). Concerning perceived legitimacy, we adapted the 7-item scale from Handelman and Arnold (1999), used recently by Chaney, Lunardo and Bressolles (2016).

Regarding Consumer behavioral outcomes, for consumer brand engagement, we decided to use and adapt the multidimensional 10-item generalized customer engagement scale from Vivek et al. (2014). This scale was chosen due to its theoretical general applicability to many contexts. Concerning Perceived value, we followed recommendations from Leroi-Werelds and Bradley (2014). In their paper, the authors propose a review of the most commonly used methods and scales for assessing perceived value. They also propose a guideline for choosing customer value assessment depending on the nature of the product, the role of value in the model, and the main purpose of the research. Our product being a "feel product", not a "think product", and perceived value being only one of the many factors of our model and not the central construct, we, therefore, decided to follow an adapted version of the scale from Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991). More precisely, we follow Chaney, Lunardo and Bressolles (2016) and adapt their 3-item perceived value scale, itself adapted from Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) in

Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999). To measure purchase intention, we adapted the 2-item scale used by Yoo and Donthu (2001) in their brand equity development scale.

Finally, we decided to use the 4-item measure of narcissism from Jonason and Webster (2010) to measure narcissism in our field study. We chose this measure and not the classic 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin and Terry, 1988) used in psychology for two reasons. First, its length is problematic and may cause fatigue for some participants (Jonason and Webster, 2010). Second, the NPI test is subject to high rates of impression management (Auerbach, 1984).

The following table provides an overview of the scale and all the items used during the field study.

Concept	Dimension	Items
Perceived Sportivity	Physicality	This activity requires a certain physical condition
		This activity requires a lot of energy
		This activity requires a good physical preparation
		This activity requires endurance
	Equipment	This activity demands a good physical shape
		This activity requires a specific equipment
		In this activity, there is a dedicated equipment
		This activity cannot be practiced without adequate equipment
Brand Personality	Excitement	This brand is daring
		This brand is spirited
		This brand is imaginative
		This brand is up-to-date
Brand identification		I feel that my personality and the personality of this brand are very similar
		I have a lot in common with other people using this brand
		I feel that my values and the values of this brand are very similar
Perceived Legitimacy		This brand sets an example for how other retailers should conduct their activities.
		This brand carries products that satisfy my needs.
		This brand is committed to meeting the standards that people expect of retailers
		This brand is the kind of place where I can get my money's worth.
		This brand carries the latest trends in products and services that meet my needs.
		This brand genuinely listens to the demands that people put on it.
		This brand sets an example for how other retailers should behave
Consumer brand engagement	Conscious Attention	Anything related to this brand grabs my attention.
		I like to learn more about this brand
		I pay a lot of attention to anything about this brand
		I spend a lot of my discretionary time into this brand
	Enthusied Participation	I am heavily into this brand
		I am passionate about this brand
		My days would not be the same without this brand
	Social Connection	I love talking about this brand with my friends.
		I enjoy talking about this brand more when I am with others.
		Talking about this brand is more fun when other people around me do it too
Perceived Value		The quality of the activity was excellent.
		I found the activity of great value.
		With regard to the efforts and sacrifices I've made to participate, it was worth participating.
Purchase intention		I would like to buy products related to this activity
		I intend to purchase products related to this activity
Narcissism		I tend to want others to admire me.
		I tend to want others to pay attention to me.
		I tend to expect special favors from others.
		I tend to seek prestige or status

Table 52: Overview of the items used in the field study

### 3.2 Test-Retest reliability

First, to test our dataset for Common Method Variance (CMV), we followed recommendations from Tehseen, Ramayah and Sajilan (2017) and conducted Harman's single factor test, the most common procedure used to test for common method bias. With this method, the presence of CMV is indicated by the emergence of either a single factor or a general factor accounting for the majority of covariance among measures. In our context, the single indicator only explained 21.5% of our variance, therefore indicating no common method bias within our dataset.

The reliability of each scale was assessed with Cronbach Alphas and Composite Reliability. Moreover, the multidimensional scales were also subject to a principal component analysis (PCA) To ensure their structure. Results of the PCA for the engagement scale revealed issues within the scale, later confirmed by discriminant validity issues. The scale's dimensions appear to be too highly correlated to be used as different dimensions. Moreover, the scale appears to show better validity and reliability when used as a unidimensional 10-item scale containing all the previous items. The PCA revealed a one-factor 10-item structure, accounting for 54.411 % of the total variance. Therefore, we decided to measure the scale as a whole unidimensional scale containing the former three dimensions. The following table provides an overview of the principal component analysis of the generalized measure of engagement.

<b>Items</b> <b>(AVE = 54.411%)</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>
ENCA_1	0,708
ENCA_2	0,722
ENCA_3	0,809
ENEP_1	0,675
ENEP_2	0,852
ENEP_3	0,829
ENEP_4	0,598
ENSC_1	0,770
ENSC_2	0,698
ENSC_3	0,676

*Table 53: PCA for the generalized multidimensional scale of consumer engagement*

Once the issues within the consumer engagement scale were solved, we could turn to the analysis of the reliability of our other scales. The following table provides an overview of the Cronbach alphas and composite reliability indicators of all our scales.

Scale	Cronbach	CR
Perceived Sportivity (Physicality)	.915	.936
Perceived Sportivity (Equipment)	.819	.894
Brand Identification	.751	.862
Brand Personality (Excitement)	.770	.855
Perceived Brand Legitimacy	.819	.868
Consumer Engagement	.903	.922
Perceived Value	.781	.875
Purchase Intention	.925	.963
Narcissism	.754	.844

*Table 54: Field Study – Scales' reliability assessment*

Results showed no issue regarding the reliability of the scales. To assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the measures, we followed the same procedure as during the scale development and used both Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Henseler et al. (2015). The convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while the discriminant validity of the model was assessed with the Fornell and Larcker procedure and the HTMT matrix. The following table provides an overview of the Fornell and Larcker procedure for assessing convergent and discriminant validity in our model.

FORNELL AND LARCKER									
	Phy	Equi	BP Exci	Iden	Leg	CBE	Value	Purcha	Narc
AVE	.746	.737	.596	.678	<u>.485</u>	.544	.670	.859	.577
Physicality	<b>0,864</b>								
Equipment	0,515	<b>0,858</b>							
Brand Personality	0,171	0,135	<b>0,772</b>						
Excitement									
Brand identification	0,178	0,111	0,467	<b>0,823</b>					
Brand Legitimacy	0,101	0,093	0,552	0,624	<b>0,696</b>				
Consumer Engagement	0,080	0,122	0,423	0,669	0,531	<b>0,738</b>			
Perceived Value	0,038	0,085	0,263	0,334	0,256	0,310	<b>0,819</b>		
Purchase Intention	0,133	0,028	0,132	0,353	0,250	0,324	0,311	<b>0,927</b>	
Narcissism	0,077	0,075	0,061	0,223	0,100	0,194	-0,059	0,144	<b>0,760</b>

*Table 55: Field Study – Fornell and Larcker Procedure*

As we can see from the following table, there is a minor issue with the convergent validity of the perceived legitimacy scale ( $AVE < .5$ ). However, the scale reliability being good and its use in research recognized, we decided to keep it.

To further explore the discriminant validity in our field study, we also decided to conduct the HTMT analysis. The following table provides an overview of the HTMT Matrix for the assessment of discriminant validity.

HTMT	PERC SPOR	Phy	Equi	BP Exci	Iden	Leg	CBE	Value	Purcha	Narcis
PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY										
Physicality	--									
Equipment	--	0,601								
Brand Personality	0,243	0,202	0,177							
Excitement										
Brand identification	0,235	0,217	0,146	0,621						
Brand Legitimacy	0,147	0,115	0,113	0,704	0,792					
Consumer Engagement	0,148	0,091	0,141	0,518	0,808	0,612				
Perceived Value	0,092	0,041	0,103	0,346	0,428	0,319	0,364			
Purchase Intention	0,117	0,145	0,031	0,157	0,422	0,281	0,352	0,358		
Narcissism	0,120	0,092	0,095	0,066	0,288	0,118	0,228	-0,083	0,174	

*Table 56: HTMT Matrix for discriminant validity assessment in the field study*

As we can see from the above table, the HTMT matrix showed no discriminant validity issue within our field study. Finally, one last step before focusing on the results of the model is to test its fit using both incremental and absolute model fit indicators. Following the recommendations highlighted during the scale development process (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988, 2012). We decided to ignore the GFI once again and to focus on the CFI, TLI, RMSEA and SRMR to test our model fit. The following table provides an overview of the different indicators, their cut-off value, and their value in our model.



Indicator	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Cut-off Value	>.95	>.95	<.06	<.08
Value	.959	.954	.034	.0497

*Table 57: Field Study – Test-retest reliability - Model Fit*

As we can see with the four indicators, our model fit is excellent, and respects the most restrictive cut-off values highlighted in the literature. Consequently, we can turn to the results of our field study.

### 3.3 Results

Our field study analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling (AMOS 26). First, a model testing the direct effects in our model was designed To test hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4a, 5, 6, 7 and 8a. The following table provides an overview of the direct effects in our model.

Model Fit			CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
			.990	.980	0.040	0.031
	Relation		Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Brand Personality Excitement	<---	Perceived Sportivity	0,212	0,1	3,324	***
Brand Identification	<---	Brand Personality Excitement	0,469	0,044	10,566	***
Brand Legitimacy	<---	Brand Identification	0,468	0,042	11,226	***
Brand Legitimacy	<---	Brand Personality Excitement	0,333	0,042	7,998	***
Consumer Brand Engagement	<---	Brand Legitimacy	0,784	0,08	9,776	***
Perceived Value	<---	Consumer Brand Engagement	0,508	0,072	7,065	***
Purchase Intention	<---	Consumer Brand Engagement	0,197	0,052	3,801	***
Purchase Intention	<---	Perceived Value	0,226	0,049	4,631	***
Equipment Dimension	<---	Perceived Sportivity	0,637			
Physicality Dimension	<---	Perceived Sportivity	0,809	0,432	2,94	0,003

*Table 58: Field Study - Testing the direct effects in the model*

All the direct effects in our model being statistically significant, we can validate our first eight hypotheses. The following table provides an overview of the validated hypotheses.

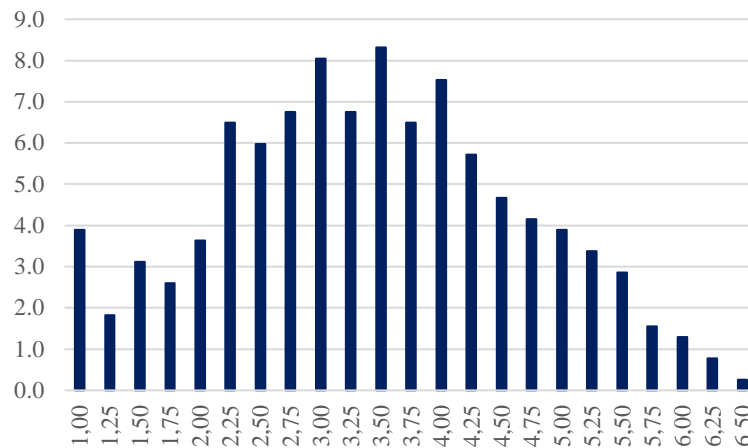
Hypothesis	Status
H1 Perceived sportivity of a leisure activity has a direct positive effect on the exciting dimension of Brand Personality	Supported
H2 The Excitement dimension of Brand Personality has a direct positive effect on Consumer Brand identification	Supported
H3 The Excitement dimension of Brand Personality has a direct positive effect on Perceived Brand Legitimacy	Supported
H4a Consumer Brand identification has a direct positive effect on Perceived Brand Legitimacy	Supported
H5 Perceived Brand Legitimacy has a direct positive effect on Consumer Brand Engagement	Supported
H6 Consumer Brand Engagement has a direct positive effect on the Perceived Value of the activity	Supported
H7 Consumer Brand Engagement has a direct positive effect on Purchase Intention	Supported
H8a Perceived Value of the activity has a direct positive effect on Purchase Intention	Supported

*Table 59: Direct Effects - Overview of the validated hypotheses*

To explore the mediating effect of brand identification on the relationship between the excitement dimension of brand personality and brand legitimacy, we followed recommendations from Hair et al., (2019) and Collier (2020) and first standardized our data. Results showed a positive mediating effect of brand identification on the relationship between brand personality and brand legitimacy ( $\beta = 0.22$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), but also a positive mediating effect of perceived value on the relationship between consumer brand engagement and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.12$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ); therefore validating both *H4b* and *H8b*.

To test the moderating effect of narcissism on the relation between brand identification and perceived brand legitimacy, we here again followed recommendations from Hair et al. (2019). They propose two solutions to test a moderating effect using SEM. First, when using a categorical variable, a multigroup analysis can be conducted with the two (or more) groups in the dataset. They define multigroup analyses as a “form of SEM analysis comparing the same model across multiple samples of respondents” (p.726).

When the moderator is a continuous variable, multigroup analyses can also be applied if the continuous variable shows bimodality in its distribution, that is, if the variable shows two clear peaks instead of one. To test the possibility of a multigroup analysis, we examined the repartition of our narcissism scores. The following figures represent this distribution.



*Figure 38: Repartition of the narcissism scores in the field study (in %)*

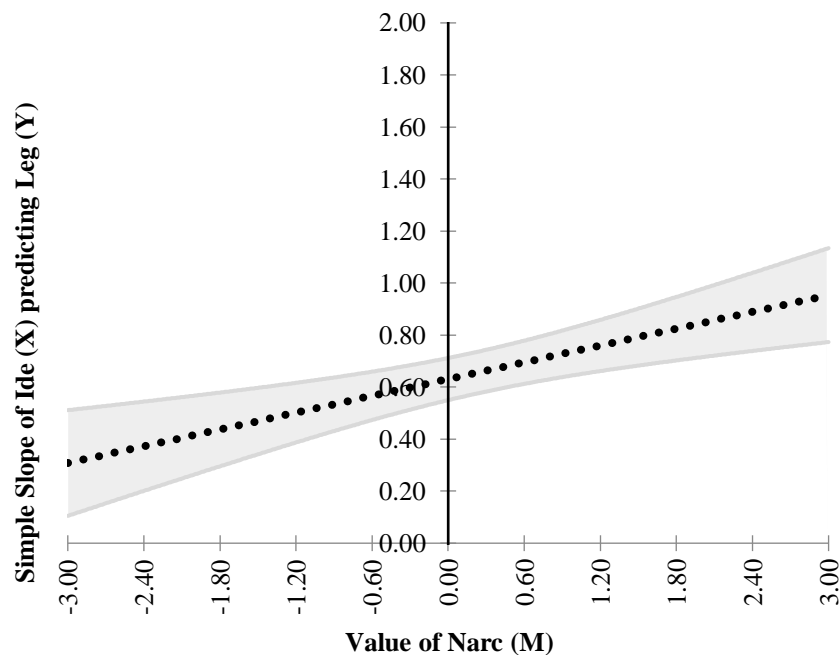
Results showed that narcissism did not exhibit bipolarity. We also tested cluster analysis to form groups within our responses to conduct multigroup analysis, without satisfying results. Therefore, we decided to reject multigroup analysis. Hair et al. (2019) also propose another solution for moderation; that is modeling a metric by creating interaction terms similar to those required with a regression approach. This approach is done by multiplying the indicator and the moderator together and computing the results through a new variable. The continuous nature of our scale of narcissism led us to choose this method to measure the role of narcissism as a moderator in the relation between brand identification and brand legitimacy. Moderation is assumed if the interaction effect of narcissism and brand identification on legitimacy is significant.

To test the interaction effect of narcissism and brand identification on brand legitimacy, narcissism was therefore included in our analysis, and the model fit was once again assessed. Results were all satisfying (CFI = .999; TLI = .982; RMSEA = .033; SRMR = .037) and we could therefore turn to the analysis of the interaction effect.

Results showed a significant effect of the interaction between narcissism and brand identification on perceived legitimacy ( $\beta = 0.092$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) such that the relation between brand identification and brand legitimacy is higher for people highly narcissistic.

To obtain our index of moderated mediation and to graph this interaction, we built a model for the macro PROCESS using the SPSS syntax. Because our model did not fit into the pre-existing models in the macro PROCESS, we built our model using the SPSS Syntax. Results replicated

the moderating effect of narcissism ( $\beta = 0.078$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and revealed an index of moderated mediation of .0366 (.0095; .0648). The following graph, computed with the macro CAHOST (Carden, Holtzman and Strube, 2017), represents the interaction between brand identification, brand legitimacy and narcissism.



*Figure 39: Interaction effect of narcissism in the relation between brand identification and brand legitimacy*

As the above figure shows, the higher the score in narcissism, the higher the predicting power of brand identification on brand legitimacy. We can therefore validate *H9*. The following table provides an overview of the field study, containing all our hypotheses.

	Hypothesis	Status
	<i>Direct effect</i>	
H1	Perceived sportivity of a leisure activity has a direct positive effect on the exciting dimension of Brand Personality	Supported
H2	The Excitement dimension of Brand Personality has a direct positive effect on Consumer Brand identification	Supported
H3	The Excitement dimension of Brand Personality has a direct positive effect on Perceived Brand Legitimacy	Supported
H4a	Consumer Brand identification has a direct positive effect on Perceived Brand Legitimacy	Supported
H5	Perceived Brand Legitimacy has a direct positive effect on Consumer Brand Engagement	Supported
H6	Consumer Brand Engagement has a direct positive effect on the Perceived Value of the activity	Supported
H7	Consumer Brand Engagement has a direct positive effect on Purchase Intention	Supported
H8a	Perceived Value of the activity has a direct positive effect on Purchase Intention	Supported
	<i>Indirect effect - Mediation</i>	
H4b	Brand identification positively mediates the relationship between the Excitement dimension of Brand Personality and Perceived Brand Legitimacy	Supported
H8b	Perceived value positively mediates the relationship between Consumer Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention	Supported
	<i>Interaction effect - Moderation</i>	
H9	Narcissism moderates the relationship between Consumer Brand identification and Perceived Brand Legitimacy, such that higher levels of Narcissism lead to higher levels of Perceived Brand Legitimacy.	Supported

*Table 60: Field Study - Overview of the results*

All our hypotheses being validated, we will now turn to an experiment to strengthen and extend our results.

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale
- **Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends**
  - Section1: League of Legends as an object of study
  - Section 2: The conceptual model
  - Section 3: Field Study
  - **Section 4: An experiment on Kendama**
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion

## Section 4: The Kendama experiment

### 4.1 Method

To expand the results of our field study, this experiment will aim at replicating the results in another leisure context. For the purpose of the study, we choose to study Kendama, a Japanese game similar to cup-and-ball (bilboquet). Kendama was chosen because it is likely non-familiar to most respondents, thus limiting potential biases regarding its categorization by consumers as sporty or not. To explore the scale's validity in another context, we also decided to conduct the experiment with English-speaking respondents.



*Figure 40: A Kendama*

Manipulation in the experiment is done using images and text. In the non-sporty condition, we described Kendama as non-physical nor needing any equipment. Kendama was thus presented as a construction game in which participants have to use small wooden planks to build the most complex constructions possible (similar to KAPLA bricks). In this situation, we also mentioned that dedicated equipment was not necessary and that any type of wooden piece could replace a Kendama brick.



*Figure 41: Pictures used in the non-sporty condition*

The text in the non-sporty condition was: “Kendama is a Japanese activity in which participants assemble blocks called Kendama (the blocks in the photo below) to build the most complex constructions possible. This activity is accessible to all and does not require any particular physical effort to be played. There is no equipment needed to play the Kendama other than the Kendama. Any wooded piece can also replace a Kendama. Kendama is commercialized by the brand KRON, base in Japan”.

In the sport condition, Kendama was presented as a cup-and-ball (bilboquet) game in which participants have to use an object called Kendama To execute complex tricks. In this situation, we highlighted the physicality of the activity and the need for dedicated equipment.



*Figure 42: Pictures used in the sporty condition*

The text in the sporty condition was: “Kendama is a Japanese activity in which participants perform complex tricks with an object called a Kendama (the hammer in the photo below) to win as many points as possible. This activity is accessible to all but requires a great deal of physical effort to perform complex tricks. In addition, special equipment, such as wrist protection and loose clothing to allow total freedom of movement, is absolutely necessary to practice Kendama. Kendama is commercialized by the brand KRON, based in Japan.

A Pretest was conducted with 99 participants recruited online (44.4% women;  $M_{age} = 35.88$ ;  $S.D = 12.87$ ). In this between-subjects pretest, participants were randomly exposed to one condition and had to complete both dimensions of our perceived sportivity scale, as well as an item asking them to rate the extent to which they considered the activity to be a sport. The item was phrased: “Please rate, on a scale from 1 (Not a sport at all) to 7 (Totally a sport), how much you consider this activity as sporty”. Fifty respondents were exposed to the non-sporty condition. Forty-nine people were exposed to the sporty condition.



Assessment of the manipulation was done with an ANOVA testing the between-group difference in our manipulation check item. The manipulation of the framing of the activity was effective, the perception of Kendama as a sport being significantly higher in the sporty condition ( $M_{Sport}=3,92$ ) than in the non-sporty condition ( $M_{NoSport}=2,50$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Similarly, perceptions of physicality ( $M_{NoSport} = 2,13$ ;  $M_{Sport} = 4,80$ ;  $p<.001$ ) and equipment ( $M_{NoSport} = 4,34$ ;  $M_{Sport} = 6,03$ ;  $p<.001$ ) were also significantly higher in the sport condition than in the non-sporty condition.

Finally, we also conducted a CFA to verify the structure of the perceived sportivity scale. Results are available in the table below.

Model Fit			CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	
			.996	.984	0.040	0.031	
Standardized Estimate			S.E.	C.R.	P		
Phys5	<---	Physicality	0,908				
Phys4	<---	Physicality	0,815	0,07	13,858	***	
Phys3	<---	Physicality	0,894	0,064	17,037	***	
Phys2	<---	Physicality	0,906	0,061	17,611	***	
Phys1	<---	Physicality	0,843	0,069	14,858	***	
Equip1	<---	Equipment	0,926				
Equip2	<---	Equipment	0,708	0,076	9,284	***	
Equip3	<---	Equipment	0,774	0,082	10,221	***	
Covariance			Correlation	S.E.	C.R.	P	
Equipment	<-->	Physicality	1,361	0,509	0,269	5,057	***
Factor Score							
Physicality	<---	Perceived S	0,76				
Equipment	<---	Perceived S	0,67				

*Table 61: Test-Retest reliability - CFA - Pretest Experiment*

Results showed a good model fit, with all indicators being above the most restrictive threshold values. Reliability was also assessed using Cronbach Alpha. Alphas being above .70 for both physicality ( $\alpha = .941$ ) and equipment ( $\alpha = .847$ ), and both scales showing convergent and discriminant validity ( $AVE_{phys} = .829$ ;  $AVE_{equip} = .802$ ;  $HTMT = .538$ ), we could therefore turn to the experiment.

## 4.2 Data Collection

A sample of 300 participants was recruited online for the experiment (49.7% women;  $M_{\text{age}} = 36.02$ ;  $S.D = 13.13$ ). To measure the excitement dimension of brand personality, consumer brand identification, perceived brand legitimacy, perceived value, purchase intention and narcissism, we decided to use the same measurement scales used in the field study.

We also decided to include an attention check due to the length of the questionnaire, as well as the same manipulation check that was included in the pretest.

However, because the multidimensional structure of the customer brand engagement scale from Vivek et al. (2014) did not hold in our field study, we decided to use another scale and adapted the 13-item multidimensional consumer brand engagement scale from Fernandes and Moreira (2019). The following table provides an overview of the scale used in the experiment.

Concept	Dimension	Items
Perceived Sportivity	Physicality	This activity requires a certain physical condition
		This activity requires a lot of energy
		This activity requires a good physical preparation
	Equipment	This activity requires endurance
		This activity demands a good physical shape
		This activity requires a specific Equipment
		In this activity, there is a dedicated Equipment
Brand Personality	Excitement	This activity cannot be practiced without adequate Equipment
		This brand is daring
		This brand is spirited
		This brand is imaginative
Brand identification		This brand is up-to-date
		I feel that my personality and the personality of this brand are very similar
		I have a lot in common with other people using this brand
Perceived Legitimacy		I feel that my values and the values of this brand are very similar
		This brand sets an example for how other retailers should conduct their activities.
		This brand carries products that satisfy my needs.
		This brand is committed to meeting the standards that people expect of retailers
		This brand is the kind of place that I can get my money's worth.
		This brand carries the latest trends in products and services that meet my needs.
		This brand genuinely listens to the demands that people put on it.
Consumer Brand Engagement	Cognitive dimension	This brand sets an example for how other retailers should behave
		I would think a lot about the brand KRON
		the brand KRON would stimulate my interest
		When I would use the brand KRON I would forget everything
	Affective dimension	Time would fly when I interact with the brand KRON
		The brand KRON would inspire me
		I would be proud of using the brand KRON
		I would use the brand KRON with total dedication
	Behavioral Dimension	Using the brand KRON would make me happy
		I would feel enthusiastic about the brand KRON
		I would spend a lot of time using the brand KRON
		The brand KRON would be the one I often go for in Kendama brands
Perceived Value		Within Kendama brands I would always use the brand KRON
		I would feel like using the brand KRON
		The quality of the activity is excellent.
		I find the activity of great value
Purchase intention		With regard to the efforts and sacrifices needed to participate in this activity, it is worth participating
		I would like to buy products related to this activity
Narcissism		I intend to purchase products related to this activity
		I tend to want others to admire me.
		I tend to want others to pay attention to me.
		I tend to expect special favors from others.
		I tend to seek prestige or status

Table 62: Overview of the scales used in the experiment

### 4.3 Results

After analysis of the attention check item, 18 answers were deleted, and we conducted the analyses with the 282 remaining items (48.4% women;  $M_{age} = 36.18$ ;  $S.D = 13.35$ )

Assessment of the manipulation was done with an ANOVA testing the between-group difference in our manipulation check item. The manipulation of the framing of the activity was effective, the perception of Kendama as a sport being significantly higher in the sporty condition ( $M_{Sport}=3,99$ ) than in the non-sporty condition ( $M_{NoSport}=2,06$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Similarly, perceptions of physicality ( $M_{NoSport} = 2,37$ ;  $M_{Sport} = 4,94$ ;  $p<.001$ ) and equipment ( $M_{NoSport} = 4,08$ ;  $M_{Sport} = 5,84$ ;  $p<.001$ ) were also significantly higher in the sport condition than in the non-sporty condition.

We first conducted an EFA with the Consumer Brand Engagement Scale from Fernandes and Moreira (2019). Results were similar to the field study, with consumer brand engagement being a unidimensional construct explaining 69.62% of the variance, and not a 3-dimension construct.

We then assessed reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity within the scale. The following table provides an overview of the results.

RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT - CONVERGENT VALIDITY										
AVE	0,832	0,812	0,652	0,799	0,673	0,696	0,731	0,909	0,708	
Cronbach	0,949	0,882	0,818	0,873	0,915	0,963	0,812	0,896	0,862	
FORNELL AND LARCKER										
	Physi	Equip	Excit	Ident	Legit	Engag	Value	Purch	Narc	
Physi	<b>0,912</b>									
Equip	0,596	<b>0,901</b>								
Excit	0,310	0,107	<b>0,807</b>							
Ident	-0,060	-0,097	0,457	<b>0,894</b>						
Legit	0,112	0,006	0,654	0,794	<b>0,820</b>					
Engag	0,064	-0,054	0,570	0,732	0,788	<b>0,834</b>				
Value	-0,240	-0,231	0,351	0,514	0,559	0,615	<b>0,855</b>			
Purch	-0,114	-0,186	0,290	0,579	0,561	0,643	0,709	<b>0,953</b>		
Narc	0,142	0,087	0,075	0,183	0,120	0,169	0,054	0,086	<b>0,841</b>	
HTMT										
	Perc Sp	Physi	Equip	Excit	Ident	Legit	Engag	Value	Purch	Narc
Perc Sp										
Physi	--									
Equip	--	0,649								
Excit	0,304	0,357	0,130							
Ident	-0,107	-0,064	-0,111	0,540						
Legit	0,091	0,131	0,013	0,763	<u>0,877</u>					
Engag	0,007	0,067	-0,056	0,642	0,797	0,830				
Value	-0,337	-0,270	-0,268	0,434	0,610	0,640	0,694			
Purch	-0,203	-0,120	-0,204	0,339	0,652	0,602	0,691	0,824		
Narc	0,159	0,159	0,097	0,087	0,214	0,129	0,189	0,061	0,103	

Table 63: Validity assessment – Experiment

We identified one minor discriminant validity issue between brand identification and brand legitimacy. However, because the HTMT criterion between Brand Legitimacy and Consumer Brand Engagement only exceeded the most restrictive threshold value for discriminant validity (.85) and not the least restrictive value (.90) we decided to carry on with the analysis.

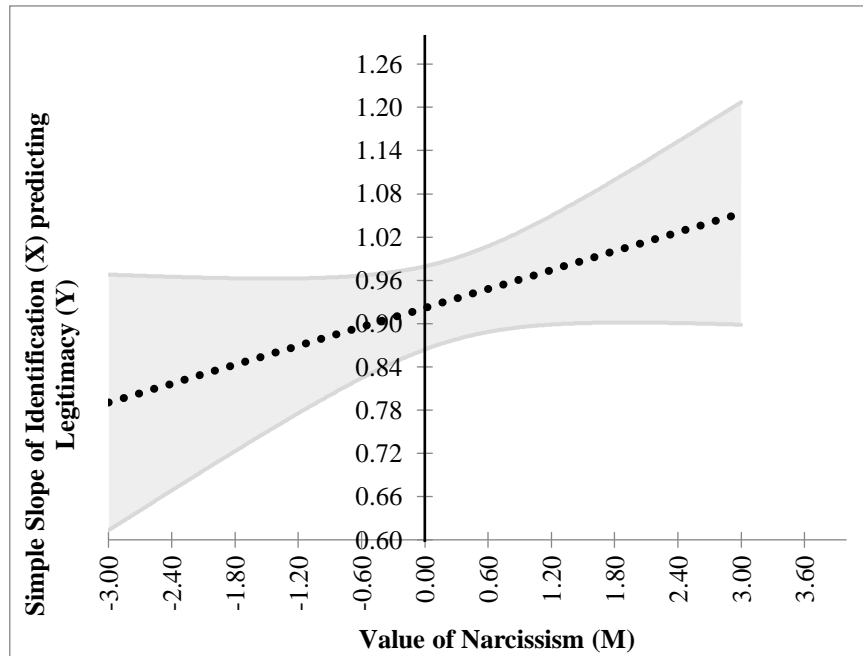
We also conducted a CFA within our model. Results showed a good model fit (TLI = .954; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .042; SRMR = .052), and we therefore turned to the analysis of our theoretical model.

The theoretical model was designed with AMOS, following recommendations from Hair et al. (2019) and Collier (2020) regarding the assessment of indirect effects and interaction effects. Results were similar to the field study for the direct effects. However, the interaction effect of narcissism and the mediating effect of perceived value was not significant. The following table provides an overview of the results of the experiment.

Model Fit Indicators						
			CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Without interaction effect			0,997	0,982	0,082	0,0344
With Interaction effect			0,995	0,985	0,067	0,0503
Analysis of the effects						
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Direct Effects						
Excitement	<---	DO_Sportivity	0,134	0,093	2,274	0,023
Identification	<---	Excitement	0,625	0,069	13,528	***
Legitimacy	<---	Excitement	0,416	0,016	28,342	***
Legitimacy	<---	Identification	0,67	0,011	44,876	***
Consumer Brand Engagement	<---	Legitimacy	0,878	0,048	26,981	***
Purchase Intention	<---	Consumer Brand Engagement	0,594	0,083	7,182	***
Perceived Value	<---	Consumer Brand Engagement	0,794	0,033	17,863	***
Interaction Effect						
Legitimacy	<---	Narcissism x Identification	0,011	0,008	0,985	0,325
Indirect effect:						
			Estimate	Lower	Upper	p
Mediation Brand identification			0,468	0,384	0,55	0,001

*Table 64: Results overview – Experiment*

To explore further the moderating role of narcissism in the relationship between brand identification and brand legitimacy, we also decided to conduct another analysis using the macro PROCESS in SPSS. Results showed a significant moderating effect of narcissism ( $\beta = 0.044$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), such that higher levels of narcissism lead to higher levels of brand legitimacy; thus corroborating with the results in the field study. The following figure represents a graph of the interaction effect of narcissism.



*Figure 43: Interaction effect of narcissism in the relation between brand identification and brand legitimacy in the experiment*

## **PART 1: SPORT, ESPORT AND PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY, AN INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIZATION BASED APPROACH**

- Chapter 1: Sport as an object of study: The cultural, economic and social importance of sport
- Chapter 2: Individual's perception of legitimacy and categorization theory – Studying esports as a sport
- Chapter 3: Predictive models of consumer behavioral intentions and brand-related outcomes – Sport as an experience

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale to esports: the French League of Legends
- Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion



## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends
- **Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion**
  - **Section 1: Discussion**
  - Section 2: Limits and future research

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, LIMITS AND CONCLUSION

### Section 1: Discussion

This research provides several implications, both for research and management. The following section will provide an overview of these implications, divided into three categories; theoretical implications, managerial implications, and methodological implications. While theoretical and managerial implications will mostly focus on the field study, the methodological implications will be more related to the scale development process. Finally, this chapter will also explore future indications for research, the limitations of our current work and finally a conclusion concerning this entire research.

#### **1.1 Theoretical implications**

First, many theoretical implications derive from the perceived sportivity scale development. Experiential market research has been a fruitful topic for marketing since Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) pioneering work. Similarly, sport has been an important object of study, with entire journals dedicated to sports research in various fields such as philosophy, sociology, management, law and obviously marketing. However, to our knowledge, sport has always been defined from an institutional standpoint, and no research has explored consumers' perceptions of sport. The first main theoretical implication of this thesis is therefore the comprehension of consumers' perception of sport. Following an adapted version of Churchill's (1979) paradigm for scale development, we highlighted the two main elements influencing consumers' perception of the sportivity of leisure activities, namely physicality and equipment.

Next, looking at the debated unique nature of sports consumers (Funk, Alexandris and McDonald, 2016; Fujak et al., 2018) we expected perceived sportivity to have a positive influence on consumer brand perceptions and also on their behavioral intentions. More precisely, we positioned perceived sportivity as a categorization process in the consumer's mind that influences their perceptions and behaviors. Both in the field study and in the experiment we found positive results, with brand organizing sporty activities being seen as more exciting, providing more brand identification, and perceived as more legitimate in the consumer's mind.

First, we showed how the categorization of activity as sporty had positive outcomes for brands. Both the field study and the experiment showed that a sporty perception led to the perception

of the brand as being more exciting, which then led to more legitimacy through the mediating effect of brand identification. Therefore, using sporty activities could be useful for a brand in developing an exciting image in the consumer's mind.

Then both the field study and the experiment showed promising effects of perceived sportivity on consumer behavioral outcomes. More precisely, we showed how perceived sportivity, through its effect on brand perception, had a positive impact on consumer brand engagement, and how consumer brand engagement had a positive effect on both perceived value and purchase intention. In the field study, perceived value had a mediating role in the relationship between consumer brand engagement and purchase intention. However, the experiment did not replicate this relation. Therefore, offering sporty activities could offer many opportunities for firms, and could lead to high levels of both consumer engagement and purchase intention.

We also provided empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of narcissism in the relationship between consumers and brands. More precisely, in the field study, we showed how narcissism moderated the relationship between brand identification and brand legitimacy, with higher levels of brand identification leading to higher levels of brand legitimacy for people highly narcissistic. The experiment replicated these results through regression analysis using the macro PROCESS. These results offer many opportunities for companies to position their offering and call for more research regarding the moderating role of narcissism in consumer behavior.

More generally, we argue that our research provides insight into the role of perceived sportivity on consumer cognitive and behavioral responses. We also extend previous findings into a new context and a new field of study: esports. Our research also highlights the potential offered by this new form of entertainment called esport. Even though esport is continuously growing in terms of business and research, we argue that our study of the phenomenon under the prism of perceived sportivity might offer opportunities for future research on esport.

Finally, we also argue that perceived sportivity offers a wide range of opportunities for researchers. We argue that any form of leisure or entertainment can be studied under the prism of perceived sportivity. We strongly believe that perceived sportivity of any activity, leisure, or entertainment will generate interesting consumer outcomes, both for researchers and managers. Sport being one of the most common forms of entertainment, leisure research could gain from

sport research to understand how consumer perception of leisure can affect consumer cognitive, behavioral, or even affective outcomes. For example, work on extraordinary experiences could gain from taking the sporty aspect of experiences into account. Maybe the memorable character of extraordinary experiences (Arnould and Price, 1993, Celsi, Rose and Leigh, 1993) comes from the sporty categorization of such experiences by consumers. Similarly, in esport, maybe the categorization of disciplines and events as sporty could lead to significant differences in terms of consumers outcomes but also motivations.

Therefore, our research offers several implications for researchers, both from our scale development process and our field of study. Moreover, we also argue that our work provides several managerial opportunities for practitioners looking to gain competitive advantages over their competition or just looking to understand their consumers' needs. The following section provides an overview of the managerial implications we found during our research.

## **1.2 Managerial implications**

As we have highlighted before, we argue that our research offers several managerial implications for practitioners. More precisely, event organizers, sponsors, and any practitioner interested in esport could gain from our research. We also think that any company or organization wishing to change their perception in the consumer's eye could gain from our work.

First, any company promoting activities, leisure, or events could use our scale to have a better understanding of their positioning in the consumer's mind. Depending on the level of perceived sportivity of their offering, companies could adapt their targeting, their advertising, or even their positioning to correspond to consumers. Our scale is short, easy to use for practitioners. We argue that managers could use our scale to understand or even modify their position in the consumer's mind. Moreover, using our work on perceived sportivity, we argue that managers could shape their offer to be perceived as more sporty and therefore to generate positive consumers outcome. In that sense, perceived sportivity might offer a competitive advantage for practitioners over their competitors. Due to the popularity of sporting events, perceived sportivity could also be used to attract new consumers. Moreover, companies looking to generate perceived value for their offering could position it as sporty thanks to our scale. As we have seen in our field study, perceived sportivity represents a tool in creating perceived value

for consumers. We even argue that perceived sportivity can be used as a tool in building an entertainment/leisure offering. Companies looking to have a relationship based on sport with their consumers could use the perceived sportivity scale to adapt their offering to their target.

As we have seen before, perceived sportivity represents a useful tool for companies looking to identify with their consumers. It also represents a good way for companies to shape their brand personality to be seen as exciting. Therefore, companies could use perceived sportivity to affect the way consumers see them and therefore encourage potential behavioral outcomes, such as brand engagement and purchase intention. Purchase intention is logically one of the most researched outcomes for companies as it creates financial value for them. However, the growing popularity of consumer engagement and consumer brand engagement as a strategy used by companies to create bonds with their consumers also highlights many managerial opportunities that arise with perceived sportivity. In that sense, perceived sportivity goes beyond its simple influence, and can be used as a tool to gather people around a community and to foster engagement on their part. Companies looking to build communities and engagement could therefore use perceived sportivity To do so. This research has also, in line with previous work, highlighted the importance of building legitimacy in their respective field for companies. Perceived sportivity represents a tool to build such legitimacy, consequently leading once again to consumer engagement.

Then, the opportunities offered by the growing esport market are also highlighted in this research. Esport has been put at the center of attention recently due to its growing popularity worldwide. Millions of people are watching esport every day, and understanding this market might represent a huge opportunity for practitioners to reach a new market. Moreover, that market is mostly composed of a new audience, who is mainly reluctant to classic forms of advertising and difficult to reach. Some companies have understood the possibilities offered by esport, even companies that do not seem related to the field. For example, in France, Team Vitality is sponsored by companies like Aldi, Orang and Afflelou (Vitality, 2021), Team Solary is sponsored by Aldi, Justin Bridou and ObjectifCode, and Team Karmin Corp is sponsored by Chupa Chups and Michelin. This highlights the fact that big companies that have at a first sight nothing to do with esport, video games, or even electronics have seen the potential offered by esports and decided to invest in it. French Companies like Credit Agricole or Air France have also used their name to create esport competitions, highlighting once more the growing opportunities offered by that market. Companies could use esport for many reasons. First, it

would help them identify with new consumers, leading them to be seen as more legitimate in their field. Second, it would also help them to build a certain type of brand personality. And finally, it would lead to increase consumer engagement with the brand, and ultimately to purchase intention. Therefore, this research provides a non-exhaustive overview of the opportunities offered by the new esports market.

Behind perceived sportivity and esports, this research also highlights the importance of brand personality in building brand legitimacy for companies. Companies, by using means of sponsoring or by creating events, could increase their perceived legitimacy in the consumer's mind. The role of perceived legitimacy in building consumer behavioral responses has also been highlighted in our research, with brand legitimacy being a decisive factor in generating consumer engagement, and ultimately purchase intention. Therefore, companies should also focus on building legitimacy in their respective field. To generate consumer engagement, value and purchase intention.

### **1.3 Methodological implications**

Besides management and research, the scale development process also led us to develop some methodological implications regarding scale development. These implications will be detailed here.

While we agree with some of Rossiter's (2002) critics regarding Churchill's (1979) paradigm for scale development, we also still considered psychometric indicators important. Instead of choosing only one way to develop scales, we argue for a combination of both. During the scale development procedure, we initially followed Churchill's paradigm, using an exploratory study to generate items and then using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to reduce them, but we also included experts at every step as a means of confirmation. Calling experts helped us better identify our scale's structure, and ultimately led us to build a more robust scale; both from an applicability standpoint and a psychometric standpoint. We recommend the inclusion of both elements from Rossiter (2002) and Churchill (1979) in a scale development process. We argue for the inclusion of face validity and content validity at the same level as convergent and discriminant validity.

Regarding the confirmatory factor analysis in the development process, we also argue for the use of proper psychometric characteristics to delete items. Following Bagozzi and Yi (1988; 2012) we found the use of standardized residuals useful in reducing items and enhancing model fit. However, we found few research papers explaining how to use such standardized residuals (see Maydeu-Olivares and Shi, 2017, for an exception). We also found some methods used to reduce the numbers of items quite arbitrary, and argue for the use of a proper methodology when deleting items.

Model fit indicators also need to be used properly in research. Indicators such as the Goodness of Fit index are still largely used in research, despite their strong sensitivity to sample size (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Sharma et al., 2005; Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). The chi-square test, also still heavily used in some research has been heavily criticized for its sensitivity to the sample size (Hu, Bentler and Kano, 1992; Curran, West, Finch, and Curran, 1995; West and Finch, 1996; Schlermelleh-Engel et al. 2003; Vandenberg 2006). We argue for the use of other indicators in assessing model fit in a CFA. More specifically, we argue for the use of the CFI, the TLI, the RMSEA and the SRMR. These four indicators offer a general view of a model fit, with the TLI being a relative model fit index, and the CFI, the RMSEA and the SRMR being absolute fit indexes that focus on different parameters (Xia and Yang, 2019).

Then, in the scale development process, when exploring previous works, we also found a lack of homogeneity in the steps followed by researchers, even in the top journals (see table 9). As an example, we found many articles ignoring convergent validity in their scale development process. We argue for the integration of all the steps highlighted in research during a classic scale development process, namely content validity, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, convergent validity, discriminant validity, nomological validity and face validity. Content validity and face validity are done with the help of experts. Regarding discriminant validity, while some authors tested it in the nomological network or with theoretically related construct, some others used it internally. We argue for the use of internal discriminant validity when developing multidimensional constructs. As an example, we found no proof of internal discriminant validity in Vivek et al. (2014). When we used this scale in our field study, we found issues between the dimensions of the scales. Items were too highly correlated and we had to treat consumer engagement as a ten-item unidimensional construct instead of a ten-item three-dimension construct. Therefore, we strongly argue for the use of internal discriminant validity when developing multidimensional scales.

Regarding discriminant validity, we also argue for the implementation of Henseler et al. (2015) procedure when testing discriminant validity, in addition, and not in replacement, of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Recent research has started to use the HTMT matrix in marketing (e.g. Voorhees et al., 2015; Porcu, Del Barrio-Garcia and Kitchen, 2016; Guo et al., 2017; Koo and Lee, 2018; Ahmed and Ting, 2019; Allison and Flaherty, 2020). Therefore, we argue for the use of both and also call for more research regarding the assessment of discriminant validity with the HTMT matrix and Fornell and Larcker procedure.

To summarize, we also provide the following table, offering a global review of the managerial, theoretical and methodological implications of our work.



Managerial Implications	Theoretical Implications	Methodological Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practitioners could use perceived sportivity to have a better understanding of consumers' needs</li> <li>- Practitioners could use perceived sportivity to alter their positioning and shape their offering as sporty</li> <li>- Sportivity is a tool that can be used to attract new consumers</li> <li>- Perceived sportivity can be used when building offerings</li> <li>- Companies could have an influence on their brand personality with perceived sportivity</li> <li>- Perceived sportivity can be used with an objective of engagement to gather people and create a community around the brand</li> <li>- Companies could use perceived sportivity to gain legitimacy in their respective field</li> <li>- Esport is a growing market offering many opportunities for companies, either through sponsoring or creation of events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The comprehension of consumers' perception of sport</li> <li>- The double level influence of perceived sportivity (activity and brand)</li> <li>- The influence of perceived sportivity on brand identification and brand personality exists and consequently on brand legitimacy</li> <li>- Brand legitimacy has a positive influence on brand engagement</li> <li>- Previous findings regarding the relation between engagement, perceived value and purchase intention is confirmed</li> <li>- Esport is a field of study worth exploring</li> <li>- Any leisure activity / entertainment could be studied under the prism of perceived sportivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rossiter (2002) and Churchill (1979) do not have to be opposed and can be complementary</li> <li>- Using strong justifications when deleting items is of the utmost importance. Methods exist to do so</li> <li>- There are other model fit indicators than the Chi square and the GFI. We recommend the use of the TLI, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR to assess model fit</li> <li>- Homogeneity in the scale development process is needed, every step has its importance</li> <li>- Internal discriminant validity is needed for multidimensional constructs</li> <li>- The HTMT Matrix (Henseler et al., 2015) should work with the Fornell and Larcker procedure (1981) and should not be used to completely replace it</li> </ul>

*Table 65: Research implications*

## **PART 2: MEASUREMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE PERCEIVED SPORTIVITY MEASUREMENT SCALE**

- Chapter 4: Development of the Perceived Sportivity scale
- Chapter 5: Application of the Perceived Sportivity scale: the French League of League of Legends
- **Chapter 6: Discussion, limits and conclusion**
  - Section 1: Discussion
  - **Section 2: Limitations and future research**

## Section 2: Limitations and future research

Our research thus offers several implications at different levels, and both researchers and practitioners could benefit from it. However, as with every research, a few limitations have also been highlighted during our work. Our research also offers several opportunities for future research. In this section, we will first explore our limitations, and then offer a non-exhaustive list of future research opportunities.

### 2.1 Limitations of the research

During the three years that were needed to conduct this research, our work was featured in several national and international conferences, namely the AFM doctoral colloquium 2020, the AMS 2021 conference, the EMAC 2021 conference, and more recently the ACR 2021 conference. We had the chance to have many experts highlighting the opportunities of our research, but also its eventual limitations. This section aims at exploring both our limitations and future opportunities for research.

The first limitation of our research concerns its possible generational and geographical character. As history has shown, sport itself has been an ever-evolving construct, subject to changes over the years. One example of such evolution could be the recent introduction of new sports activities such as skateboarding, climbing and surfing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. As we have highlighted in our historical and sociological literature review of sports, activities that were originally not considered as sports have gained the status of a sport over the year, and some activities that will gain that same status and affect the perception of sport are bound to emerge. We can also see opposite examples, with activities such as chess that, despite being recognized as a sport by the IOC, are not considered as being a sport by most of the consumers. Therefore, our scale might be subject to change over time.

Some experts have also highlighted the possible regional or even national differences in sport as a possible limitation for our research. Taking the example of the United State and how they adapted sport to their own culture, perceived sportivity could also be localized. Originally, we aimed at using the scale in an international context; however, due to the pandemic, most international events were postponed, and we had to focus on a national event in France. However, we hope to be able to use this scale with international respondents as soon as possible.

And we recognize that more investigations are needed to fully explore the possible geographical and generational limitations of our scale.

Similarly, experts have also highlighted the absence of sports elements in the scale that appear central in literature, namely institutions and competitions. As we have seen with the examples of skateboard or surf, sport can also be born from the sole desire of practitioners, and institutions, which used to appear central in the development of sport sometimes seem to appear as a consequence of practitioners' desire. Moreover, our research aimed at identifying elements, in all form of leisure that influences consumers' perception. Therefore, we are not surprised not to see institutions as a constitutive element of perceived sportivity. Regarding competition, which is at the essence of sport according to authors such as Caillois (1958), we expected it to be considered as a central element of perceived sportivity. However, despite being tested with many possible items, results showed no influence of competition of perceived sportivity. However, the equipment dimension could also be seen as a dimension reflecting the idea of competition and performance. Indeed, new equipment in sport also serve to enhance performance.

A few remarks can explain this absence. First, as we have already said, our research did not aim at classifying activities as being institutional sports or not. Secondly, as it has been highlighted, the term sport has been used at many levels, so much that it has been a polysemous, even pansemic term (Parlebas, 2003). Therefore, it has gained a multitude of meanings in consumers' minds. Third, the idea of competition in sport is also quite vague. Does it only concern competition with others? Does it also concern competition with oneself? When we see a 100M runner elite athlete trying to beat his own record, can we say that he is not doing sport because he is not competing against other people? Similarly, when after a game, we see footballers running for post-match recovery, do we see that a being sporty? Therefore, we are not entirely surprised by the absence of competition in the perceived sportivity scale, and it does not alter its validity since it is only concerned with consumers' perception, and not with the actual nature of sport. However, we do recognize that more investigation is needed to clarify this absence.

The final limitation of our research lies in the complex context in which it had to be conducted. The research started in 2018. Our original plan was to conduct an offline field study to apply previous online findings in a physical experiential context. We recognize that the online nature of experience might be a reason for the replication of the previous findings in online contexts.

However, due to the pandemic that arrived in 2020, just before the end of our scale development process, all major events were either postponed or canceled, leaving us with the only option to conduct our field study online. However, we found ourselves lucky to be able to study the LFL League, because it was not an offline event adapted to the online context because of the pandemic, but an event that was built entirely to be watched and lived online. However, we recognise that our research would benefit from an offline study, which is our next objective as soon as the world situation allows it. Besides these few limitations, our work also offers several opportunities for research, which will be highlighted in the next section.

## **2.2 Recommendations for future research**

Our research offers several opportunities for future research. First, as we have seen with our preliminary study exploring the interest of studying perceived sportivity, some moderators influence consumers' willingness to engage in activities they consider sporty, narcissism being one of them. Therefore, we can expect perceived sportivity and its outcomes to be affected by several moderators as well. We plan to explore the influence of narcissism on our conceptual model, but we could also expect other moderators, such as competitive mindset or involvement in sport to affect also the relations between perceived sportivity and brand perception. Future research could therefore explain the possible influence of moderators in our model.

Other elements could also be included in our model, such as brand loyalty (Tucker, 1964; Yi and Jeon, 2003; Lai, Griffin and Babin, 2009; Nam, Ekinci and Whyatt, 2011). Research has already highlighted the importance of building brand loyalty for companies, and the role of identification and legitimacy in building such loyalty (Yi and Jeon, 2003; Nam, Ekinci and Whyatt, 2011). Therefore, our model could be extended to include such variables. Existing research has also explored motivation for sport consumption (Wann, 1995; Trail and James, 2001; Allen, 2003; Kim, 2003; Mallet et al., 2007; Seo and Green, 2008), and we propose that perceived sportivity could influence, or even moderate motivations for sport consumption.

Similarly, in our first chapter, we also discussed the possible transformative nature of experience. Besides behavioral outcomes, customer experience can also influence consumers' self-identity and foster well-being. During our scale development process, we even highlighted how well-being was a consequence of perceived sportivity. However, such outcomes were not explored in our final model, and we argue that perceived sportivity could have that type of

influence. We even argue that perceived sportivity could be used to encourage consumer participation in health-related activities, and that it could be used from an ethics perspective.

Building on the findings from the field study and the experiment, we also argue that future research should extend our findings regarding the moderating role of narcissism in the relationship between consumers and brands. Moreover, future research should also further explore the relationship between consumer brand engagement, perceived value, and purchase intention.

Finally, we also argue that the global concept of perceived sportivity could be extended to tangible products as well as intangibles. For example, we argue that the perceived sportivity of a car could be a decisive element explaining consumers' choices. Therefore, we argue for an extension of the perceived sportivity concept to other fields. The following table provides an overview of our main limitations and our recommendations for future research opportunities.

Main limitations of the research	Future research opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The perceived sportivity scale could be limited geographically</li> <li>- The perceived sportivity scale could be affected and modified through time</li> <li>- The absence of competition and institutions despite their omnipresence in institutional sports research might raise some questions that have been partially answered</li> <li>- The pandemic prohibited us from using our scale in an offline international context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extend research on the relation between narcissism and consumer-brand relations</li> <li>- The mediating role of Perceived Value in the relationship between consumer engagement and purchase intention should be further explored</li> <li>- Brand loyalty, a much-researched outcome for companies could be included in our model</li> <li>- Perceived sportivity being in an experiential context, we could also explore transformational outcomes for consumers, such as well-being.</li> <li>- There are possibilities to link perceived sportivity with existing research on motivation for sports consumption.</li> <li>- There are possibilities of using perceived sportivity in an ethical context</li> <li>- The influence of perceived sportivity could be extended to tangibles</li> </ul>

*Table 66: Main limitations and future opportunities - Overview*

## 2.3 Conclusion

Throughout our entire work, we showed how perceived sportivity could be of use, both for researchers and practitioners. From the start of our work with our experiment on consumer willingness to engage in a sports activity to our final field study, we believe to have shown the potential of studying leisure, entertainment, and even tangibles products under the prism of perceived sportivity.

We followed an adapted version of Churchill's (1979) paradigm in our scale development process, taking into account and integrating recommendations from Rossiter (2002). Perceived sportivity, in an experiential context, is a two dimensions construct that relates to consumers' perception of leisure activities. In that context, perceived sportivity identifies the different visual elements that will influence consumers' perception of an activity as being sporty. It focuses only on spectators, and not on activity practitioners. Perceived sportivity contains two dimensions: physicality and equipment. Physicality refers to the observable physical condition needed for consumers to see an activity as sporty, while equipment refers to the tools needed in the practice of the activity to be seen as a sport by spectators.

Perceived sportivity offers a range of opportunities for both practitioners and researchers, at the brand level but also the activity level. For example, we have shown how perceived sportivity could shape how consumers perceive and legitimate brands, which influences perceived value, consumer engagement, and purchase intention, three highly researched outcomes in marketing. We strongly believe in the opportunities offered by our context, and strongly believe that it can be applied to a large variety of contexts. We even argue that perceived sportivity could be used with tangibles, and that it could have opportunities for research on ethics and well-being.

Finally, we are also aware of the limitations of our work and have advocated for future research on the subject. There are still many questions to address and answer regarding perceived sportivity and its use in marketing.

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## APPENDIX 1



## APPENDIX 2

English Version	French Version
<b>PRELIMINARY EXPERIMENT</b>	
<b>EFA / CFA</b>	
This activity requires physical strength	Pour faire cette activité Il faut une certaine force physique
In this activity, we need some physical capabilities	Pour cette activité, il y a besoin de certaines capacités physiques
This activity requires muscles	Pour faire cette activité il faut des muscles
This activity is physically exhausting	Cette activité est physiquement éprouvante
This activity requires a certain physical condition	Cette activité demande une certaine condition physique
Practising this activity requires a lot of movement	Pratiquer cette activité demande de beaucoup bouger
Practising this activity allows you to exercise while moving	Pratiquer cette activité permet de se dépenser en bougeant
This activity implies a lot of movement	Cette activité implique beaucoup de mouvement
This activity implies a lot of action	Cette activité implique beaucoup d'action
In this activity, there is action	Dans cette activité li y a de l'action
For this activity, certain movements need to be mastered	Il faut maîtriser certains mouvements pour faire cette activité
This activity requires a good coordination	Cette activité demande une bonne coordination
This activity requires a good synchronization	Cette activité demande une bonne synchronisation
This activity requires to be technical	Dans cette activité il faut être assez technique
This activity asks for more than simple gestures	Cette activité demande plus que de faire de simples gestes
This activity requires a certain precision	Cette activité exige une certaine précision
This activity requires dexterity	Cette activité demande de la dextérité
For this activity, you need to know the good gestures	Pour cette activité, Il faut savoir faire les bons gestes
This activity requires skill	Cette activité demande de l'adresse
This activity requires a good balance	Pour faire cette activité, il faut avoir un bon équilibre
To succeed in this activity, tactics are mandatory	Pour réussir dans cette activité, il faut mettre en place des tactiques
To be performant in this activity, strategy is needed.	Pour être performant dans cette activité il faut être stratégique
This activity requires a great focus	Cette activité demande d'être très concentré
This activity requires a good attention span	Cette activité nécessite une certaine capacité d'attention
A sharp mind is needed for this activity	Il faut avoir l'esprit vif pour faire cette activité
It takes discipline to do this activity	Il faut de la rigueur pour pratiquer cette activité
This activity requires you to use your brain	Cette activité demande de faire marcher son cerveau
This activity is a cerebral gymnastics	C'est activité c'est une gymnastique cérébrale
It is an activity where you need to think	C'est une activité où l'on a besoin de réfléchir
It is an intellectual activity	C'est une activité intellectuelle
To be good at this activity, you need to be intelligent	Pour être bon à cette activité, il faut être intelligent
This activity requires a good spirit	Cette activité fait appel au mental
This activity requires a lot of energy	Cette activité demande beaucoup d'énergie



This activity is mentally demanding	Cette activité est mentalement éprouvante
This activity requires personal investment	Cette activité nécessite de l'investissement personnel
This activity requires a certain amount of personal will	Cette activité demande une certaine volonté personnelle
It takes courage to do this activity	Il faut faire preuve de courage pour pratiquer cette activité
It takes motivation to do this activity	Il faut de la motivation pour faire cette activité
When doing this activity, self-sacrifice is sometimes required	Quand on pratique cette activité, il faut parfois faire preuve d'abnégation
Success in this activity is directly related to merit	Dans cette activité, la réussite est directement liée au mérite
There are many financial aspects to this activity	Il y a beaucoup d'aspects financiers dans cette activité
When you are very good at this activity, you can earn a lot of money	Quand on est très bon dans cette activité, on peut gagner beaucoup d'argent
This activity is generally very sponsored	En général, cette activité est très sponsorisée
This activity has marketing interests	Cette activité a des intérêts marketing
This activity generates a lot of related merchandise	Cette activité génère beaucoup de produits dérivés
There is too much focus on this activity	Il y a trop de focalisation autour de cette activité
This activity could be shown on TV	Cette activité pourrait passer à la télé
There is a lot of communication around this activity	Il y a beaucoup de communication qui est faite autour de cette activité
This activity is organised by an institution	Cette activité est organisée par une institution
There is a federation that manages this activity	Il y a une fédération qui gère cette activité
To practice this activity you must know the rules	Pour pratiquer cette activité il faut connaître les règles
There are rules to respect when practicing this activity	Il y a des règles à respecter lorsque l'on pratique cette activité
This activity leaves very little to chance	Cette activité ne laisse que très peu de place au hasard
Practicing this activity requires training	La pratique de cette activité demande de l'entraînement
To do this activity you need to train	Pour faire cette activité il faut s'entraîner
To reach a good level in this activity, you need to train several hours a week	Pour arriver à un bon niveau dans cette activité, il faut s'entraîner plusieurs heures par semaine
This activity requires a good mental preparation	Il faut une bonne préparation mentale pour faire cette activité
This activity requires a good physical preparation	Cette activité nécessite une bonne préparation physique
In this activity there is always a winner and a loser	Dans cette activité il y a toujours un gagnant et un perdant
This activity is mostly about winning	Cette activité, on la fait surtout pour gagner
When you do this activity, the goal is to win	Quand on fait cette activité, le but c'est surtout de gagner
The aim of this activity is to make a good result	Le but de cette activité c'est de faire un bon résultat
The aim of this activity is to beat your opponent	Le but de cette activité c'est de battre son adversaire
This activity is mainly practiced to achieve the best possible performance	Cette activité, on la pratique surtout pour atteindre la meilleure performance possible
The aim of this activity is above all to achieve a certain performance	Le but de cette activité, c'est surtout d'atteindre une certaine performance



This activity allows you to surpass yourself	Cette activité permet de se dépasser
When you do this activity, you can try to beat a record	Quand on fait cette activité, on peut chercher à battre un record
There are champions in this activity	Dans cette activité, il y a des champions
This activity can be practiced in competition	Cette activité peut être pratiquée en compétition
You need to have a competitive spirit to do this activity	Il faut avoir l'esprit de compétition pour faire cette activité
This activity is quite competitive	Cette activité est assez compétitive
This activity can be organized as a tournament	Cette activité peut être organisée sous la forme d'un tournoi
There is no competition in this activity	Dans cette activité, il n'y a pas de compétition
Those who do this activity compete against each other	Ceux qui pratiquent cette activité s'opposent les uns aux autres
When you do this activity there is some confrontation	Quand on fait cette activité il y a une certaine confrontation
For this activity, there is a championship	Pour cette activité, il existe un championnat
In this activity, the best wins	Dans cette activité, c'est le meilleur qui gagne
Doing this activity is a pleasure	Pratiquer cette activité est un plaisir
This activity allows you to relax your mind	Cette activité permet de se détendre l'esprit
Doing this activity feels good	Pratiquer cette activité, ça fait du bien
Doing this activity clears the head	Pratiquer cette activité ça vide bien la tête
This activity is just fun	Cette activité, c'est juste du plaisir
This activity allows you to relax	Cette activité permet de se détendre
This activity allows you to blossom	Cette activité permet de s'épanouir
This activity makes you feel good in your head	Cette activité permet de se sentir bien dans sa tête
This activity makes you feel good about your body	Cette activité permet de se sentir bien dans son corps
You get pleasure from doing this activity	On retire du plaisir quand on fait cette activité
This activity is a stress reliever	Cette activité permet d'évacuer le stress
This activity has a therapeutic aspect	Cette activité a un aspect thérapeutique
This activity makes you feel better about yourself	Cette activité permet d'être mieux dans sa peau
This activity demands a good physical shape	Cette activité demande d'être en forme physique
You must not be tired to do this activity	Il faut ne pas être fatigué pour faire cette activité
After doing this activity, you should be very tired	Après avoir pratiqué cette activité, on doit être bien fatigué
You sweat a lot doing this activity	On transpire beaucoup en faisant cette activité
You have to be athletic to do this activity	Il faut être athlétique pour faire cette activité
This activity allows you to let off steam	Cette activité permet de se défouler
This activity is good for your health	Cette activité est bonne pour la santé
This activity requires endurance	Cette activité demande de l'endurance
This activity can be painful to do	On peut souffrir à pratiquer cette activité
This activity requires a specific equipment	Cette activité demande un équipement particulier
In this activity there is a dedicated equipment	Dans cette activité, il y a un équipement dédié
This activity cannot be practised without adequate equipment	Sans équipement adéquat, cette activité ne peut pas être pratiquée
For the practice of this activity a material preparation is necessary	Pour la pratique de cette activité il y a une préparation matérielle qui est nécessaire
To be good at this activity, we use science	Pour être bon dans cette activité, on utilise la science

To improve in this activity, there are specific techniques	Pour s'améliorer dans cette activité, il existe des techniques précises
There are technologies to get better at this activity	Il existe des technologies pour s'améliorer dans cette activité
There may be doping around this activity	Il peut y avoir du dopage autour de cette activité
Certain substances may be used to make you better at this activity	On peut avoir recours à certaines substances pour être meilleur dans cette activité
This activity is associated with the notion of respect for others	Cette activité, je l'associe à la notion de respect des autres
This activity brings people together	Cette activité rapproche les gens
This activity brings people together in a community	Cette activité réunit des personnes autour d'une communauté
This activity brings many people together around the same passion	Cette activité rassemble beaucoup de monde autour d'une même passion
This activity brings a lot of people together	Cette activité rassemble beaucoup de monde
This activity is very popular	Cette activité est très populaire
This activity is accessible to everyone	Cette activité est accessible à tout le monde
This activity is unifying	Cette activité est fédératrice
This activity is more fun in a team	Cette activité est plus sympa en équipe
This activity is mainly a game	Cette activité c'est surtout un jeu
This activity is mainly a leisure activity	Cette activité c'est surtout un loisir
This activity is mostly for fun	Cette activité, on la pratique surtout pour s'amuser
It is a recreational activity	C'est une activité récréative
This activity is mainly a ludic activity	C'est une activité surtout ludique
Those who participate in this activity are like gladiators in an arena	Ceux qui participent à cette activité sont comme des gladiateurs dans une arène
This activity is practiced in a dedicated place	Cette activité se pratique dans un lieu dédié
To do this activity you have to be in a particular place	Pour faire cette activité il faut être dans un endroit particulier
This activity can be organized as an event	Cette activité peut s'organiser sous la forme d'un événement
This activity can be organized as a match	Cette activité on peut l'organiser sous forme de match
Attending this activity is a real spectacle	Assister à cette activité, c'est un vrai spectacle
There is a good atmosphere around this activity	Il y a une bonne ambiance autour de cette activité
This activity is a real entertainment	Cette activité est un vrai divertissement

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**EXTERNAL DISCRIMINANT / NOMOLOGICAL VALIDITY**

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Engagement Intention

I would like to engage in this activity	J'aimerais m'engager dans cette activité
I would like to try this activity out	J'aimerais essayer cette activité
I would like to buy products related to this activity	J'aimerais acheter des produits liés à cette activité

Involvement

It is an activity that really matters to me	C'est une activité qui compte vraiment pour moi
It is an activity that interests me	C'est une activité qui m'intéresse
I feel particularly attracted to this activity	Je me sens particulièrement attiré par cette activité

Emotions

Displeased / Pleased	Cela ne m'a pas plus / Cela m'a plus
Dissatisfied / Satisfied	Insatisfait / Satisfait
Unhappy / Happy	Malheureux / Heureux
Discontented / Contented	Pas content / Content

Escapism

Watching this activity allows me to escape	Regarder cette activité me permet de m'échapper
Watching this activity allows me to forget my daily problems	Regarder cette activité me permet d'oublier mes problèmes quotidiens
If I am in a bad mood, watching this activity makes me feel better	Si je suis de mauvaise humeur, regarder cette activité me fait me sentir mieux

Global Value

Watching this activity makes me feel good	Regarder cette activité me fait me sentir bien
I love watching this activity	J'adore regarder cette activité
I like watching this activity	J'aime regarder cette activité
This activity is well done	Cette activité est bien faite
This activity does what it is supposed to do	Cette activité fait ce qu'elle est sensée faire
Watching this activity meets my needs	Regarder cette activité répond à mes besoins

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## FIELD STUDY

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### Perceived Value

The quality of the activity was excellent.	Cette activité est d'excellente qualité
I found the activity of great value.	J'ai trouvé que cette activité avait une grande valeur
With regard to the efforts and sacrifices I've made to participate, it was worth participating.	En prenant en compte les efforts et les sacrifices que j'ai effectué pour assister à cette activité, cela valait la peine d'y assister

### Perceived Legitimacy

This brand sets an example for how other retailers should conduct their activities.	Cette marque montre l'exemple sur la façon dont les autres marques devraient conduire leurs activités
This brand carries products that satisfy my needs.	Cette marque propose des produits qui satisfont mes besoins
This brand is committed to meeting the standards that people expect of brands	Cette marque est soucieuse de respecter les normes que les gens attendent des marques en général
This brand is the kind of place that I can get my money's worth.	Cette marque est le genre de marque avec laquelle j'en ai pour mon argent
This brand carries the latest trends in products and services that meet my needs.	Cette marque est à l'origine des dernières modes en matière de produits et de services qui correspondent à mes besoins.
This brand genuinely listens to the demands that people put on it.	Cette marque écoute sincèrement les demandes que lui font les gens
This brand sets an example for how other retailers should behave	Cette marque montre l'exemple sur la façon dont les autres marques devraient se comporter

### Brand Personality

This brand is down-to-earth	Cette marque est réaliste
This brand is honest	Cette marque est honnête
This brand is wholesome	Cette marque est saine
This brand is cheerful	Cette marque est gaie
This brand is daring	Cette marque est audacieuse
This brand is spirited	Cette marque est pleine d'entrain
This brand is imaginative	Cette marque est pleine d'imagination
This brand is up-to-date	Cette marque est moderne
This brand is reliable	Cette marque est digne de confiance
This brand is intelligent	Cette marque est intelligente
This brand is successful	Cette marque a du succès
This brand is upper-class	Cette marque est aristocratique
This brand is charming	Cette marque est charmante
This brand is outdoorsy	Cette marque est virile
This brand is tough	Cette marque est solide

### Brand Identification

I feel that my personality and the personality of this brand are very similar	Je sens que ma personnalité et celle de cette marque sont très similaires
I have a lot in common with other people using this brand	J'ai beaucoup de choses en commun avec les gens qui utilisent cette marque
I feel that my values and the values of this brand are very similar	Je sens que mes valeurs et les valeurs de cette marque sont très similaires

### Consumer Brand Engagement

Anything related to this brand grabs my attention.	Tout ce qui est lié à cette marque attire mon attention
I like to learn more about this brand	J'aime en apprendre plus sur cette marque

I pay a lot of attention to anything about this brand	J'accorde beaucoup d'attention à tout ce qui touche à cette marque
I spend a lot of my discretionary time into this brand	J'accorde beaucoup de mon temps personnel à cette marque
I am heavily into this brand	Je suis très intéressé.e par cette marque
I am passionate about this brand	Je suis un.e passionné.e de cette marque
My days would not be the same without this brand	Mon quotidien ne serait pas pareil sans cette marque
I love talking about this brand with my friends.	J'aime parler de cette marque avec des amis
I enjoy talking about this brand more when I am with others.	J'aime encore plus parler de cette marque quand je suis avec du monde
Talking about this brand is more fun when other people around me do it too	Parler de cette marque c'est plus amusant quand d'autres personnes autour de moi le font aussi
<u>Purchase Intention</u>	
I would like to buy products related to this activity	J'aimerais acheter des produits liés à cette activité
I intend to purchase products related to this activity'	J'ai l'intention d'acheter des produits liés à cette activité

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## EXPERIMENT

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### Consumer Brand Engagement

I would think a lot about the brand KRON  
the brand KRON would stimulate my interest  
When I would use the brand KRON I would  
forget everything  
Time would fly when I interact with the brand  
KRON  
The brand KRON would inspire me  
I would proud of using the brand KRON  
I would use the brand KRON with total  
dedication  
Using the brand KRON would make me happy  
I would feel enthusiastic about the brand  
KRON  
I would spend a lot of time using the brand  
KRON  
The brand KRON would be the one I often go  
for in Kendama brands  
Within Kendama brands I would always use the  
brand KRON  
I would feel like using the brand KRON