

Abstract

ESport and gaming communities have formed during the years into enormous industry. From playing video-games in the basements and internet cafes, into players earning millions, new creative ways of entertainments connected with games are created, gaming can be considered a lifestyle and eSport might be soon part of an Olympics games and fully considered a sport. The thesis discovers how a fashion can collaborate with this emerging industry. The business side of eSport is ever growing and there are secondary factors which can be utilized for creating profit for fashion industry. The investigation takes place on collecting sufficient data from the community in order to see if there actually a demand is and what is the overall opinion on fashion products and industry. It is crucial to know these data, since this could determine if the cooperation of these two cultures is a clever business strategy the company should consider taking. The paper also suggests and prepares a full business plans for three different operations. Even if there might be more possible entries for this new market, the suggested ones consider the most common and directly connected aspects which are closely related to the concept of nowadays eSport and gaming community. With the acquired data and information about the new community, the paper also provides a clearer understanding of the trends and sufficient ways on how to operate on this market. Investigated were the main actors the fashion company should consider as a ambassadors, and the best performers which could help these two communities be connected properly, so both of them would profit out if this collaboration. However, it is important to understand the social factor of eSport community also, the fashion companies should not only see the community as a goldmine because of the growth and success it is showing lately. The community is very close-fitting and are very sceptical towards the “outsiders” which are trying to enter their world. Since this community is active online it is also important to be prepared for a harsh and possibility negative outcomes and feedbacks, since the internet provides an anonymous voice for a lot of members of the community. Therefore, the fashion company needs to listen and follow the certain rules and suggestion from members of the community which might have more relevant and useful knowledge.

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Introduction

Gaming and eSport in general are currently hugely popular (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019) and a lot has changed in terms of how the public is viewing these cultures. It took some time for general public (Prihodko, 2018) to see gaming (Duggan, 2015) as something else than just people playing video games (Cardiel, 2012) and being considered “nerds” and introvert individuals. ESport helped (Youtube.com/theScore esports, 2017) this in a huge way (Knuckey, 2016), with enormous (Game Designing.org, 2019) money being invested (Morris, 2013) in it. Possibility of being a full-time employed (Smith, 2018) as a professional player attracts a lot of people to either pursue their dream of reaching this rank one day, or just making eSport and gaming look more legitimate and for some; the most sought type of entertainment and relaxation.

Rick Fox, a famous TV actor and retired NBA player, is vocally helping to change the image of eSport and is publicly calling players “athletes”. (Tsuji, 2017) He is also a cofounder of eSport team and similarly, other popular celebrities are slowly starting to invest in eSport too. (Huddleston, 2018)

Since the gaming and eSport community is constantly growing (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019), professional players are considered role-models (Dotaesports, 2016) and idols (Samal, 2017) for their audience. These players are always promoted, usually by clothing and tech companies (Meola, 2018), by which their teams are sponsored.

Therefore, gaming and fashion become close connected. There is a pressure on players to look well and represent either their favorite brand or a brand they are sponsored by.

Professional eSport events are always broadcasted (Takahashi, 2019) online on specialized websites such as hltv.org, twitch.tv or youtube.com. The peaks of viewers watching these matches can raise up to hundreds of thousands, if not even millions all together. Not mentioning the real-life events where these matches can fully book stadiums for thousands of people, League of Legends tournament sold out whole Staples Centre in LA in 1 hour. (Tassi, 2013) These actions changed mind of a lot of people and showed how serious eSport is. Even though there were a lot of issues from media side. The infamous Jimmy Kimmel statement (Tassi, 2015) of his opinion on eSport was his most disliked video in his entire career. Another example was Colin Cowherd's statement (Schwartz, 2015), saying eSport is for “booger eaters”. (Youtube.com/theScore esports 5:30, 2017)

During his show NBA pro player Gordon Hayward (Youtube.com/The Herd with Colin Cowherd, 2015) stepped in and supported eSport claiming it is legitimate form of entertainment with clear description of how much effort is being put into the preparations, production of the events, time and effort from the players, etc. People enjoy these events (escharts, 2019) in real-life where they can meet their favourite players, new people with same interests but mostly where they can enjoy the atmosphere during the matches (escharts, 2018), with a huge rollercoaster of emotions. People are very supportive of their teams (Warr, 2014) and therefore they go through various emotions when the team wins or loses (LolSportsstaff, 2019). The age groups (Bathurst, 2017) are very different and often there are younger audiences but eSport (Grestyone, 2018) attracts adults or even elders as well. (Statista, 2017)

With a huge success of eSport, TV programs which also broadcast these events on a regular TV programs raised. Fx. Danish TV3 frequently airs these matches to their audience. (eodds.dk, 2017) Also ESL launched an official, world-wide TV programme eSportsTV. (McConnell, 2016) Also, some of the biggest matches are also viewed in Cinemas all over the world. Since in Denmark gaming is very popular, people can come watch these matches

in local cinemas (kino.dk, 2019) throughout whole Denmark. (kino.dk, 2019)

The money invested (Chapman, 2019) into gaming is also reaching enormous amounts. (Dreamteam.gg, 2018) Not considering sponsorships or the salary of the individual players. The increases in wages and prize-pool had a huge impact in structuring the eSport as it is today. As eSport infrastructure improved, professional players very quickly changed from being able to earn living through eSport, into having a luxurious world opened to them. This can be seen in some of the pro's social media (Instagram/olofkjabber, 2019) accounts (Instagram/devveking, 2019), where they display the "wealth" (Instagram/xyp9x, 2019) of their earnings. The prize pools of some tournaments raise up from 300,000 USD up to 25 million in Dota Internationals. Major tournaments do not have prize-pools under 1 million. Gaming is huge business and not only from a technology perspective.

As already mentioned, the players can be role models for some of the gaming enthusiasts. Therefore, companies know exactly how to select their promotions with the eSport athletes. Major international brands such as Nike, Adidas, Jack and Jones, etc are sponsoring some of the best and most successful teams in eSport. Players are often seen in a big brand clothes either by their own decision or just as a marketing promotion. Often these brands also sponsor teams in making their own jerseys which they also sell to the public. This fact leads us to the main topic of the whole paper, which is if fashion and eSport/gaming can be connected and if yes, then how exactly. This could be beneficial to know for clothing companies which are looking for a potential new group segment since gaming enthusiasts are usually in young (Kemp, 2019) age segment (Globalwebindex, 2018) and they could be interested in fashionable way of dressing. It can be also interesting to find out how much of influence do these eSport professionals have on their audience and if they could be considered a potential brand ambassador in future. Also, it would be essential to see how these two different cultures perceive each other. This opinion would be also beneficial for the clothing and fashion market.

In previous years high-end fashion companies tried to somehow enter the gaming market with different actions. For example, the premium fashion company Luis Vuitton used a video game character "Lightning" from a big title in video game history "Final Fantasy". (Lidbury, 2016) The company used virtual character as a model that was presenting the new collection of the fashion goods. On a similar note a high-end fashion company Moschino also interpreted their new collection into a video game "The Sims". (Newbold, 2019) There are more attempts at cooperation between these two worlds which would be investigated further in the research. However, this shows that these two communities are beginning to investigate what possibilities there are for them to emerge together. However, nowadays fashion is not only about the designer brands and most common people are interested (AFP Relaxnews, 2018) in the other organisations which produce clothing products. (Wightman-Stone, 2018) Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate what options there are for fashion companies which would like to begin their expansion on this growing market.

This leads us to the main focus of the thesis. These two worlds are growing, new trends are always coming up, more and more people are interested in these two communities. Fashion can be seen in different mainstream sources such as movies, music industry (Strähle, 2018) and so on. (O'NEILL, 2019) eSport is also getting more and more mainstream spotlight mainly due to its success and influence with younger people. Therefore, it would be only a matter of time until these two worlds would fully cooperate and create maybe new aspects for both of them. For now, the scope would be investigating entry actions and possibilities which a fashion company could use.

Thus, the problem formulation was reached:

“How can a fashion company expand their business operations to eSport and gaming market.”

Delimitation

The thesis would not focus on a direct, exact fashion company, style or trend. There are several reasons why this decision was made.

- Fashion has ever-changing, active community. If we look on how trends developed during the many years, we can see an enormous number of different shifts, innovations and developments that happened in this sphere. What is considered trendy, normal or common in this time, could've been viewed differently in the past. The market and customers might have not been interested in these trends, they could've been shocked or even insulted by some of them. Simply said, it might not fit the generation. And vice versa, what was popular in the past, can be considered “old-fashioned”, not attractive or simply just out of touch by many. This community and market is always moving, new designers and companies are coming up with innovative, interesting means on how to be exclusive, how to satisfy the needs of the customers
 - It is known saying that “Clothes define the person or his personality” (Farlex, 2015). This can be true up and a lot of people are falling under this category. But this does not mean that every person has to define him/herself in just one particular style. On the contrary, it is very usual to find that most of us have more than one fashion and styling preference. We tend to categorize these into; smart, leisure, sport or high fashion, with subcategories such as; streetwear, business casual, black tie or bohemian. However, since fashion is often seen as a form of representation, people tend to use it as a tool to identify closer with the genre of their interest. It is seen very often in the music industry, where artists dress in a certain fashion in correspondence to what is currently popular in their community. Leather being very present for decades in rock and metal, oversized clothing popular amongst hip hop artists and their fans, hipster styling often used in alternative, indie or folk subculture. (Pihl, 2014)
 - After a short visual research via video recording made at places frequented by eSport enthusiasts (E3 conference, Comic con, Twitch.tv) it was found out that an eSport fan and a gamer might be interested in streetwear, smart and minimalistic fashion trends.
 - As previously mentioned, fashion does have multiple different styles and people as a general sense can decide on what they like and prefer and what is less appealing for them. Therefore, limiting the only one fashion style to eSport might not be the right choice.
 - In eSport and gaming scene the different styles can be easily seen.
- a) General eSport teams/players/companies merchandises are usually produced in different styles. Varying from Polo shirts (ESL, 2019), to basic t-shirts (Sport24, 2019), jerseys (ESL, 2019), hoodies (ESL, 2019), caps (ESL, 2019), and different accessories (ESL, 2019). It can be understood that more fashion styles are being considered by the business part of this community. By this way the companies have a higher chance to

attract wider audience, providing the market with more options to choose from and to find the right one for them.

- b) The actors and main figures in these communities are often showing also different styles, therefore in a way “influencing” the audience by doing so. For example, the eSport teams are often showing their fashion sense in different ways. Taking a simple example of team’s tournament clothes; players usually dress in the team’s or organization’s merchandises which they are signed by legal contact. However, even these simple products can show off different fashion trends. From a simple big logo displayed on the front (Cloud9.gg, 2019) following by a special, unique designs (ESL, 2019)
- There are several occasions and examples of different fashion styles and companies cooperating in eSport and gaming market. Example of the two that seem very different are Nike (hypebest.com, 2019), known for their streetwear and sport fashion and Moschino (Ritschel, 2019) which is a high-fashion designer brand focused on uniquely extravagant fashioned products.

Overall, when talking about fashion and eSport the focus is not set upon only the biggest companies. Some of the market leaders in fashion business are doing a great example of showing the possible potential between these two communities. However, this does not mean only big companies with enormous resources and with the same fashion style should consider expanding to eSport and gaming market. There are several smaller fashion companies which are active on this market such as Sixteen-o, DRKN, NYXL, J!nx.

Literature review

In case of relevant and supportive literature which would be beneficial for this exact problem formulation to the best of our knowledge, the connection between fashion and eSport in general has not been so far measured in literature material which would be discussing or investigating this situation. This could be because it is very specific question and people are mainly still focusing on the overall growth of this competitive scene, therefore they might not be selecting each smaller segments of the industry. For a lot of people eSport could still be something new and they might not understand the basic elements of it. This can be seen, for example, by lack of proper information shared by mainstream media, with individuals and organizations which underestimate the value and popularity of this community.

A helpful insight into the eSport industry from a perspective of value creation and appropriation was research in a master thesis by Shanin Adl Zarrabi and Henrik Nel Jerkrot from Chalmers university of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden. (ZARRABI, 2016) The study was following a question investigating and describing different value sources, which are generated in eSport market and industry. They investigated main factors in value creation and assorted them in different groups. Mentioning the publisher and producer of the video games, the teams which compete in eSport, the organizers of the events for the teams to compete in, and distribution platforms which provide the public the option to spectate these teams battle against each other. This thesis showed the core value creations in this industry. However, there are certainly more possibilities which could be considered “secondary” and under which the topic of fashion can be placed. These secondary factors could only help the industry and community to grow and help teams and fans to participate in making the community stronger. However, they cannot affect the core basics of the eSport as the previously mentioned factors do.

The topic of value creation and more in-depth view for the mentioned secondary factors was lightly analyzed and mentioned in two literatures. Yuri Seo from Victoria University of

Wellington researched the eSport consumption (Seo, 2013). The research followed different stakeholders, similar as the article mentioned before. However, in this case there was a focus also on the secondary factors. And lastly, on topic of stakeholders, a book by Tobias M. Scholz provides a full observation of whole business aspect of eSport. The book follows the beginnings of eSport and how it emerged into this multi billionaire industry. Different primary and secondary stakeholders are discussed in the book. The whole book is concluded with future predictions on eSport community. Mr. Scholz, however, focuses his research on the available ones. (Scholz, eSports is Business, 2018) His book also in a way supports the idea of this research of fashion and eSport in a part where he discuss the sponsors as a secondary stakeholders. It is, of course, not fully focused on the fashion part, but the fashion company in a sense could take a role of a sponsor if they would collaborate with the eSport team, player, influencer or content creators.

History of eSport

In order for a fashion company to understand whole phenomena behind eSport and gaming, it would be essential to be familiar with what eSport community went through during their time span and how did it evolve into a huge community as it is now. This data of historical eSport path could be beneficial in understanding the market and the fans. Being able to see the development could unravel a lot of useful information and prevent maybe possible mistakes that could eventually happen. (Scholz, eSports is Business, 2018)

Many people might be in a believe that eSport (preceden, 2019) is a young (Lopes, 2019) community and was born not that long time ago. However, eSport is dated up to 1950s when the substructure of video games was settled down and with it a competitive aspect of playing games. And by the constant hardware development and improvements with network led to the creation of eSport as a major sport and gaming community as it is known nowadays.

The first proper multiplayer “competitive” game was created in 1958 by William Higginbotham, a nuclear physicist at Brookhaven Lab’s Instrumentation Division. (Brookhaven, 2019) The concept was very simple, two players could play against each other in game of tennis and was played by an early forms of joysticks, where players could set the trajectory of the ball. This game is by many considered to be a birth of eSport. (Larch, 2019) However, as owning a computer was very expensive in these times, there was a very small to even none sign of video game market, simply because of lack of potential users. Around 1972 companies such as Atari, Magnavox and Vectorbeam presented to the world their first products and this changed rapidly the costs of computers and led to rise of arcade games and gaming consoles.

The first dated eSport tournament that ever happened was held on October of 1972 at Stanford University. During the tournament, students competed against each other in the game of Spacewar. The winner would take home a yearly subscription to a Rolling Stones magazine. (Consolazio, 2018)

In 1980 Atari held a tournament in the game Space Invaders and the event attracted a significant amount of 10000 participants and received a widespread of media coverage and helped to show public the concept of video games.

In 1981 an organisation under name of Twin Galaxies was created. The purpose of the company was to record high scores and the help promote video games and publicise the records through Guinness World Records books. (eSportforgamers, 2019)

1990 was the year when Nintendo held an event called “Nintendo World Championship” in USA. the winner took home a golden Nintendo gaming module. During 1990 also one of the monumental leagues were founded, for example Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL), Professional Gamers League or Quakecon. Games such as Quake, Counter Strike and Warcraft were the ones in which gamers competed mostly during these tournaments. With the PC and internet improvements, this innovation launched the possibilities for user to compete against each other world-wide. During these times the first LAN events were held, since more families could afford having a personal computer and people were interested in bringing these computers to local events, during which first clans were created. These clans were competing against each other for being the best in their game. In 1997 an event in Quake, Red Annihilation, was considered to be the actual, first eSport competition. Because of the accessibility of internet around year 2000, people faced each other online in one on one matches. The last and best 16 players were invited to the finals at the Electronic Entertainment Expo at the World Congress Center. The winner took a Ferrari 328 GTS, a car of a Quake programmer John D. Carmack. (Consolazio, 2018)

2000s were the years of a real growth in eSport. First major tournaments such as World Cyber Games were held in Seoul, Electronic Sport World Cup was in Poitiers and CPL World Tour was the first tournament with a one million dollars prize pool. Some of the biggest teams of present times were founded in these years. Team such as Fnatic, Dignitas, SK Gaming or TSM were the teams out of many more which were getting more and more attention in the community, which also attracted sponsor for the teams. With these sponsorships the teams were able to travel, accommodate and even pay the players in monthly salaries. (British eSports Association, 2019) With more sponsors also, the prize pools of the tournaments arose, and this attracted more teams, more viewers.

This brings us to the biggest improvement and probably the best thing (Scholz, eSports is Business, 2018) that could happen to eSport and gaming scene; livestreaming, that became a huge part of these scenes nowadays. The main website for this kind of video content became [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv), which was bought by amazon for 970 million dollars (Video Game Stats, 2019). The website is used to live stream all the biggest eSport tournaments from all the games. However, the website is also used by individuals to live stream their gameplays and lives. Overall the concept of livestreaming became a huge part of gaming and gained a lot of popularity during the years. Nowadays the website hosts more than 4 million different live streamers (Twitch Tracker, n.d.) which are earning financial resources livestreaming them playing games.

eSport collaborations

This particular part of the thesis is going to introduce and shortly brief the reader about the current occurrences of the eSport and gaming community cooperating with fashion world. This part should give a clearer idea of how these two businesses can and already are achieving together to bring products to the market, to evaluate profit and in the end, to help to promote each other to a potential new market and customers from their communities. By showing the exact examples of the cooperation, this could eliminate a lot of “negative” or uncertain opinions. For example, it could lower the hesitation of the companies. Secondly it could show the overall business side of eSport, considering that reader might not have the knowledge about functioning of this community and by providing examples, it could be clearer to understand the complex business behind it.

In the current ages, fashion can be present in many factors and still has inclining reach potential. With fashion being hugely popular and visualised in music industry, movie industry and sports it can be assumed that a lot of people are in some way affected by fashion and most likely also influenced. Since the huge industries and communities mentioned before are full of fashion actions of some sort, a potential enormous market which is constantly growing can be also utilised for a profit of fashion companies. ESports and gaming is nowadays one of the most popular sorts of entertainment. From the whole history of eSport up to present popularity and growth, eSport is considered a billion-dollar industry. A lot (bbc, 2018) of sources (Cullen, 2018) are expecting eSport (bbc, 2018) to be a part of upcoming Olympic (Morgan, 2019) games which would be even a bigger boost for the community and might attract even more fans. However, even though the facts and statistics predict the eSport and gaming community and market to grow, how can this data be valuable for a fashion company if they would consider entering this new market? It could be beneficial for the company to have some sort of proof that there actually is a connection between these two communities, which in first sight might not be the perfect duo. However, during the time many companies and decisions have proven that there is a significant symmetry and with a proper innovation and preparation could be transformed into unique and profitable cooperation. Therefore, in this section a brief list of such contradictions would be listed in order to show how the cooperation between fashion and eSport functioned so far

Nike x LoL

It is nothing new that major fashion brands are starting to be invested and directly involved in sponsoring eSport teams and tournaments. Although there are few of those labels at the moment, their brand image says a lot of this new movements. Recently in February 2019 Nike announced that they will be the official and exclusive sponsor for Chinas Tencent League of Legends Pro League. (Li, 2019) The partnership of 4 years will consist of Nike designing and producing special new clothing and footwear product until 2022. Another way of Nike getting involved is by preparing a physical training programs for the 16 teams that are participating in the tournaments. The focus is to explore new possibilities for eSport athletes to be able to keep their physical and mental health in the best shape possible. This could lead into a lot of improvements also for general eSport public.

Champion eSport team jerseys

A well-known streetwear label Champion has recently announced that the brand is planning a first-ever collaboration with eSport professional teams. (Higgins, 2019) The idea behind the new partnership will consist of producing a special custom-made baseball jersey with a emblazoned logos of the eSport teams. The teams collaborating with Champion are teams that have multiple rosters for all major games including Overwatch, League of Legends, Fortnite, etc. Each team will receive their own designed products with a different elements on each one of them. (Silbert, 2019)

Adidas x North

North (North, 2019) is a professional eSport team focusing on game Counter Strike: Global Offensive. The team was founded by most successful football club F.C Kobenhavn and media company Nordisk Film. The team is based in Copenhagen and was established in January 2017. In April 2018 a sportswear and fashion giant adidas signed a contract with the team. (Cooke, 2018) The main elements of the partnership are connected with the players

from the team to be promoting the fashion brand. This was supposed to be done during the time when the players were traveling, playing official matches and live stream on streaming platforms. (Collins, 2018) This way a significant part of public could see the players being interested in the brand, thus they could influence the viewer to purchase some products from adidas, since their favourite players were wearing them. This concept easily falls under the influencer marketing strategy. Also, an adidas logo was embodied on official North jerseys also available for public to purchase. The Communication manager from adidas additionally had a very uplifting and positive statement for this cooperation:

“ESport in general has a fantastic community which supports and gathers people across borders. At the same time, the youth culture has a strong voice in Copenhagen. We believe, as a sports company, that you are able to succeed with passion, practice, motivation and support.

“We want to show the new generation, that we see and support what they care about, because we know how important communities are for young people. Furthermore, North is one of the most professional eSport brands in the world.” Sandra Essesjö

Astralis x Jack and Jones

Currently and for a long-time number 1 CS: GO team in the World ranking (HLTV, 2019), Danish team Astralis has also found a fashion sponsor. Now the team went with a home-turf and signed a partnership correspondingly with Danish brand Jack and Jones. (Astralis, 2017) Astralis was co-founded in January 2016 and was first ever professional organisation which was co-owned by the players playing in the team. Astralis quickly showed that Denmark is living with eSport and already in 2016 was ranked number 1 in the World. Over the next years Astralis was always dominating the scene and was and still is one of the most feared teams to play against. Jack and Jones therefore became an official sponsor for the team and were in charge of creating official team's jerseys and also accessories and other clothing products. The two organisations will work together also on different online and offline events such as fan meetups, competitions, merchandise collection and unique design collaborations. (Bestseller, 2017) Henning Nielsen from Jack and Jones mentioned the company was very impressed with the team's achievements and results and also with lifestyle of the players. Therefore, they found a perfect match for them and were convinced that Astralis is the best option for them to partner up with. (Garren, 2017) He also mentioned the main decision why the company such as Jack and Jones decided on this strategy:

“The eSport industry is experiencing tremendous growth, not only in terms of active players and fan communities, but also as an entertainment product. Therefore, we see a great opportunity to become part of this development.

The stereotypes are changing

This section shows how eSport and gaming developed into this big phenomenon which it is today in a view more of relatable for fashion companies. The purpose is to boost or even change the idea of how some media and population still see eSport and by showing some big changes, examples of eSport celebrities and overall image of an eSport fan, it hopefully will be clearer to see the potential between cooperation of these two markets. Since fashion is hugely focused on appearance and main actors are models, providing an example of eSport players who are already being used for fashion campaigns can be a supporting proof of the potential.

Over the years a typical idea and opinion about individual interested in video games would be

usually the same. The person was considered to be living an unhealthy life, lack social activities and skills, lives with their parents in their adulthood and most likely is overweight and unattractive. However, during the course of the last years, a lot of different gaming and eSport elements have drastically changed the image of an eSport athlete (astralis.gg, 2019), fan or a viewer.



Some might think that video games are mainly for male audience and majority of people playing would be younger boys. However, Entertainment Software Association conducted a research investigating a great deal of different stereotypes about gamer enthusiast.

(Lavandier, 2016) Among a lot of different findings were also statements regarding the age and gender differences, etc. According to the study 52% of male and 48% of female are in fact interested in video games, showing that a female gamers are not as rare as many might think so. Regarding the age 29% were amid under 18 years old, 32% were ranging from 18-35 and 39% 36 or more years. (Entertainment Software Association, 2014)

In regards with eSport professional players it is on whole different level. Since they are a public figures and are spectated (East, 2017), judged (East, Faker is your Esports Player of the Year, 2017), loved (Corrigan, 2018) or hated by millions, for them it might be even more important to control how they behave and what image are they providing for the public. It is of course important for the company and team they are representing, since the companies want to have the best people in their ranks in order to gain positive reputation in eyes of the viewers. Therefore, the players often are physically looking as a opposite of what opinion (Youtube/Tramah, 2016) on gamers public has had for a long time. (Youtube.com/theScore esports, 2017) It is very common for big organisations to provide a housing (Hood, 2018) for the players. These so called “gaming-houses” (Shah, 2018) are used for practicing, preparing tactics, evaluating matches and comparing competition, and other activities regarding their profession. (Craven, 2019) The organisation cares for the health of their players, therefore usually there is either coach or a manager with the players which takes care of their diet, physical activities and relaxation activities. It is very common for the players to be under some gym work out plan in order to keep their bodies healthy. However, since this profession can be extremely stressful, it is also important for their mental health to be also in best shape and focused on important actions. As an example, Danish team Astralis hired their own personal psychologist for the players and eventually had her part in shaping the team into being the best in the world. (Kline, 2017)

In a way they can be also a role models for a lot of people, therefore it is not only important how they look on the outside, but also what personalities and hobbies they have and what their personal lives or life goals are. It is also beneficial for them being active and well-manner towards their fans and followers. There are several documents following different eSport players and showing the public their personal lives, their families, struggles they went through and overall how they have changed their passion towards video games to their dream full-time job. Every player has a different story and sharing these stories with public shows another side of the player that the audience might not have had any clue about. And by this, the relationship between fan and a player tightens and becomes it more personal.

Methodology

From an epistemological perspective the research looks at the problem in interpretivism viewpoint. Meaning that the study relies heavily on human subject (Bryman, 2016) as the tool for measuring certain phenomena and this is done via observation of qualitative data available online, thus using Netnography to collect relevant data. The individuals are often complex and different and therefore they can understand the same object of interest differently and have their own experience with it. It is also a important factor that in order to fully understand humans action, it is needed to see the world thought the eyes of the actors. (Thompson, 2015)

Constructionism is used from ontological perspective. Meaning that humans are constructing their knowledge and meanings of certain phenomena's from their own experiences. Related to the thesis it is important to research how the user experience the fashion and how they interpret in online. They are creators of their own knowledge and it is important to discover what they consider as knowledge reality.

From the previous part of the thesis, it can be seen that there are already a several similar concepts of cooperation between fashion and eSport community happening. However, it is important to find out if there are similar academic works already written about the exact this collaboration. Therefore, it is important to find these articles and analyze how far their research reached. Therefore, the Literature review part would focus on search for the exact, similar or somehow related researches. It can bring new ideas; perceptions and it can also help to answer the problem formulation.

Before suggesting how should the fashion company create the collaboration and start their potential expansion to this new market, it is important to find out if there is an actual demand for clothing and fashion products from the members of the eSport and gaming community. This is essential information which is very crucial and important to acquire before any major investments and research should be conducted. This could save a lot of resources, time and effort from the fashion company. On the other hand, it can boost the overall idea of the collaboration and show or convince possible sceptics who could undervalue the hidden potential of this expansion. This step will be done using a researching tool created by Kozinets, Netnography. The focus would be set on finding if there is a demand and interest, what is the opinion on fashion by eSport fans, what are their preferences and if they are involved or interested overall in fashion and apparel.

By combining the data gathered and analyzed, hopefully it would be easier to find appropriate solutions for the problem formulation. In order to answer it, there needs to be a solid background of strong and valuable data and sources which would be supporting those suggestions. The suggestions would be able to hopefully create and construct from the data mainly gathered in the Netnography, since by using the tool, it should be clearer about the opinion, demand and needs of these members of the eSport and gaming community.

After constructing and describing the possible outcomes from the data and research, an appropriate analysis will be constructed. When talking about expansion for a company or a new perspective, the selected analysis would be used. Ansoff Matrix for a discovering what options for expansion the company could have. Marketing Mix 4ps for preparation of promotional and business actions for future times. Next, Product Life Cycle (PLC) for

making sure that the whole life-span of a product would be analyzed and back-upped by a series of actions and advises which the company should consider using in the appropriate time.

Lastly Risk Assessment will be conducted in order to prepare the company for some of the most crucial issues they might encounter during this expansion. This can help the company be prepared and ready for any alternatives and outcomes of how the whole collaboration can evolve. It is always a good and smart decision to do a Risk Assessment since it can prevent small problems from escalating into major ones which could have create a significant damage to the company or business plan.

Theoretical framework

In this section the theories and analyses selected for researching this phenomenon would be selected and the decision process of selecting each one of them described. This section should show the reader the idea and concept of this paper more easily and in the end, it will be a lens by which the problem formulation would be evaluated.

Ansoff Matrix

Since the whole general idea behind this research is how could a fashion company enter (TheWritePassJournal, 2011) a new market, Ansoff matrix (Meldrum, 1995) tool fits perfectly into this. The tool (Hussain, 2013) is supposed to help as a strategic model for planning and preparing business for opportunities, which should lead in profit and growth and to evaluate which steps and opportunities have the highest chance of being the successful future business decision. (Hanlon, 2018) The main four sections of Ansoff Matrix (Al-Bostanji, 2015) consists of Market development, Product development, Market penetration and Diversification strategy. (Riley, 2018)

Market development

This strategy consists of company's desire to enter a brand-new market under which they did not yet perform their business. The company usually wants to enter the market with the products which they currently have in their product line, therefore no development of products is happening during this strategy. The company fully believes their products are the top quality and would be the best solution for the new market. The main question which company is asking at this point is "How can we extend our market?" (Professional Academy, 2019)

Product development

This growth strategy is used for company which want to introduce their new products to an already used and existing market. The main focus is set on developing modified products which should appeal to existing markets. This strategy is very useful for businesses where the product needs to be somehow different from the competitors in order to be most successful. Research and development, insight into customer needs are the main factors which company should emphasise on.

Market penetration

This approach focuses for companies which desire to sell more of the same product and also on the same market. The emphasis is set on increasing or maintaining the same market share of current product line. This can be mainly achieved by combination of different changes. For example, the company should consider changing the prices for acquiring competitive advantage, improving the current marketing strategies in order to be more attractive and to reach wider audience. (oxfordcollegeofmarketing, 2019) Another option is to create a loyalty schemes, sales and special, limited price adjustments.

Diversification

The last strategy is sufficient for companies which are planning to develop a new product on a new market. This is one of the riskiest strategies of all four of them, mainly because the company is concentrating their business on an unfamiliar market. However, on the other hand this strategy, if executed correctly, could be the one most profitable.

Even though Ansoff Matrix (Munro, 14) is categorized as an “older” method (Nylm, 2016), for the mains of this thesis it fulfils its purpose of illustrating and providing an outline of alternative methods of achieving the eventual goal which is growth. However, there are some specific disadvantages also to this method, which should be taken into consideration.

The overall theme of the method can be considered very positive and sometimes unrealistic. It is very difficult to predict accurate future of business actions and sometimes an unforeseen event can happen, even if the method is done properly. However, in this case, these suggestions are already happening in eSport merging with fashion community and are hugely successful. Of course, not every company and business will operate on the same level and will gain same results, but the overall purpose of the thesis is to find, demonstrate and create a possible plan on how to enter the market. If the company will be interested in these findings, more in-depth research and planning is required with different methods and tools.

The method does not mention and focus at all on any marketing and promotional activities. This is a fact and therefore it is always important to prepare these actions, since they are essentials in most of the business plans. In terms of this thesis, Marketing Mix is created in order to take a look into the promotional plans.

Product Life Cycle

Since the Ansoff Matrix also suggests for the companies to focus on developing new products, this strategy could be very beneficial for the fashion companies. Therefore, when developing and implementing a new product, steps of the life cycle (KLEPPER, 2012) of the product are very important to in a sense predict and prepare for them. There are four phases for a new product on a new market. This tool (Komninos, 2002) is also used by management and marketing departments in order to decide when is the sufficient time for increasing advertisement and marketing actions, reduce prices and expenses, expanding to new markets or changing the designs and packaging, etc. (Kopp, 2019)

Introduction stage

During this stage it is expected that the most investments would be done. This stage is launching the new product line; thus, the awareness and customer's demand might not be so high. Therefore, investments in marketing, customer and market segmentation and research and development would be the ones with the highest values. (Lumen, 2019) Hence the demand must be manually created via proper promotion and campaign awareness. The company needs to evoke a need in customers to try the product and create their own opinion about new goods.

Growth stage

During this stage the product sales and growth is increasing, and it has received acceptance from the market, the customers and also the wider public. This is a result of a successful marketing strategies which resulted in revenue increases. Increase in distribution should be expected since the overall demand for the product is rising, most likely a word-of-mouth marketing is happening naturally during this stage, which brings more and more new customers to the company. However, the company should still consider in investing in marketing just to keep the positive pace going as long as possible. During this stage the company maybe should consider innovating the product and introducing new features which would bring more attraction and maintain the growth. The overall feedback from the market needs to be investigated in order to find the best solutions for fulfilling the needs of the customers.

Maturity

This is the stage when the sales will reach their peak and the product also reached the overall market acceptance. The company wants to prolong this stage as much as possible in order to avoid decline stage. This would lead into innovation investments and new features of the product in order to continue being competitive with other companies and their versions of the product. This stage can be the most competitive, therefore the companies need to consider where to invest the resources and which improvements should be done in order to still have the competitive advantage.

Decline

During this stage the sales of the product are expected to decline and fall. There are multiple reasons why this is happening, either the demand for the product disappeared, the competition came up with a more attractive product version, new competitors came with new product, or simply the customer does not need to re-purchase the product. The companies could either switch up to a less costly production methods, if possible, (Product Life Cycle Stages, 2019) or to decline and take off the products from the market and investigate what could be improved for another attempt.

Marketing mix (4PS)

Essentially marketing mix (Muala, 2012) is a set of actions which are set and used when the company is presenting new product or service on a market. (The Economic Times, 2019) The model helps companies to define the marketing options in four terms. (Marketing Mix, 2019)

Price, product, promotion and place would be the ones that will be used for the purpose of the thesis. (Mind Tools, 2019) These are the main processes which company will need to investigate and prepare for when entering new market. It is essential to prepare a plan for each one of them and be ready for execution of it. In order to fully understand Marketing mix (Khan, 2014), a small brief explanation of all the parts is needed for being able to reach the full potential of the tool. (Purashraf Yasanallah, 2012)

Product

Product which is decided to enter the new market needs to be summed up through a definition of the product's features and benefits. (Cleverism, 2014) The product can be either tangible or intangible services depending on the specific needs which the company tries to fulfil for their customers. It is important to fully understand and to know all the unique beneficial features of the product in order to move forward with the proper marketing strategy. Also selecting and investigating the end customers is important before launching the products in order to see if the potential customers would be interested in the product from the company. Overall in this part the summary of features, different additions from competition and other aspects of the product are mentioned.

Price

The price is the actual amount of how much the end customer is supposed to pay for the product. It is necessary to determine the amount by how much the product is going to sell, because this decision can directly determine the success of the product on the market. Therefore, it is important to understand how the customer sees the product that the company is selling. A proper pricing method can determine the position of the product among other competitors and also can help set an opinion on the product from the customers respective. Meaning if the product would be priced lower, it can be assumed that the quality is also in lower range and vice versa. (Pahwa, 2018) There are three major pricing strategies available for the decision.

Penetration pricing (lowering the price in order to gain market share)

Skimming pricing (starting the price in higher numbers and then eventually lowering it)

Competition pricing (price higher in order to create a perception of being higher quality, price the same in order to show more benefits for the same price range and lower the price in order to attract wider customer segment) (Cleverism, 2014)

Place

Every product needs to be placed in order for customer to be able to buy it, if the product is placed unsuccessfully and is out of reach and exploration of market, then the whole potential is wasted away. Therefore, it is essential for business to be able to prepare the best solution for customer to find out about their products and be able to acquire them easily and more comfortably than they would from the competition. In order to be able to place and distribute the product to be the most efficient, the understanding of how market thinks and decides on buying, is needed.

There are different distribution strategies available for the businesses.

Intensive distribution - Cover as much market as possible

Selective distribution - Premium products

Exclusive distribution - More exclusive products

Franchise distribution - Small companies distributing on their own behalf

Promotion

By using promotion, the companies attempt to attract the attention of the potential customers. Promotion is a communication part of the whole Marketing mix. (Cleverism, 2014) It is important for the companies to be able to provide all the necessary, relevant and interesting information for the market in order to convince them about the relevancy of the company and quality of the provided service/product. The customers need to believe the company can fulfil their needs.

There are several different channels which a company could use, f.x radio, television, online, word of mouth, print, etc. (Marketing Mix, 2019) It is essential to decide which ones should be put on a main priority and should be invested in firstly (Marketing Teacher, 2019) and which ones could be less efficient and would be used after some time, if the funds would not be able to provide all the options.

7ps

Before arguing why in this timeframe of a research (presenting a new business plan for expansion to a new market) it is not necessary to include the additional 3ps in Marketing Mix, it is important to know what these Ps (ENACHE, 2011) are and what they mean. (Mohammad, 2015)

People are essentially human actors and employees who are part of the company. They are the ones which should be doing their utmost best in order to influence the buyer's perception.

Processes are the systems, processes and actions which are part of delivering the final product/service to the end customer. It is important to have a stable plan which includes these actions in order to be prepared for future business developments.

Physical Evidence are assets such environment and facilities which are used by the company to provide the service or the product for the customers.

All these three additional Ps (Goi, 2009) can be hugely dependent on size, resources and type of the company which would be interested in the expansion. Since from the start it was not determined what kind of fashion style this thesis is analysing, it is also the same with what kind of company and how big the company is. The company can be small reselling company, new start-up or a big name, international company. Therefore, these three additional Ps would be not as valuable to include now (in this stage of the potential business expansion) since it can vary hugely on the actual company. Also, since the thesis is focusing on the finding an option on how to enter this market, the basic 4ps are supporting this stage easily and is not necessary to include the 7ps

Netnography

Netnography is interesting and very useful tool for acquiring a lot of essential and useful data about customers. The tool focuses on gathering and analysing data customers are sharing online in forums, groups, etc. It also helps to understand and explore different worlds and cultures. The purpose is not only focused on the statistical part of gaining the data, but also trying to understand the social aspects of these comments, forums and also the actual

participants which are sharing their opinions on a relevant topic of their interest. If the researcher would be able to position himself into the community and understand the point of view of an actual customer, it would be more insightful and more useful than just owning a series of statistical data which could confirm some part of the research, but not being open all the possible outcomes. (Kozinets, 2014)

Data collection

The data that is needed for this particular research is the opinion of eSport scene on fashion overall. If the company wants to enter this market it is essential to know whether the market is actually interested in them entering and bringing their products. This is one of the pillars of decision making for companies which are looking for expansion to new, unknown grounds and if the effort would be invested into this research, it could save the company a lot of money if there would be a small demand. Or on the other hand gain a useful knowledge before actually starting to engage with this community.

In this case the online website [HLTV.org](https://www.hltv.org) was used as a source for this data. The reason behind selecting this website are several.

1. The website is focused mainly on the scene of Counter Strike: Global Offensive game. This game is one of the top competitive games in history and dates its beginnings 1990s. Nowadays the game is played by millions and viewed by even more. This game is also the main played game of the best CS:GO Danish team Astralis. In Denmark eSport is growing rapidly and is supported even by the government. Denmark sees a huge potential in competitive video gaming and is clearly showing this in their public actions. For example, the collaboration between Astralis and world-wide fashion brand Jack and Jones, opening of eSport college in Odense and hosting two huge eSport tournaments BLAST! located in Copenhagen and ESL one in Odense. According to Prime Minister Lars Loekke (Popat, 2019) in Denmark, 96% of young boys are playing games at-least 2 times a week, and it can be assumed that huge part of them are playing CS:GO since Astralis are the best team in the world in this game.
2. HLTV is not an official game forum and therefore people tend to use this forum more for than just discussing the state of the one game. There are multiple statistical data of the current eSport CS:GO scene, news regarding teams and events or even forum part which is not strictly restricted for creating posts only regarding CS:GO.
3. By trying to conduct somehow accurate research, HLTV was the website which provided the most usable data for this issue. This community showed interest in the fashion by publicly talking about different aspects of it.

The keywords which were used to filter out the only relevant forum posts which were “fashion” and “clothes” These keywords generated 74 forum posts and 2214 comments from which 1078 were irrelevant and 1136 were consider relevant for the purpose of this research. The criteria for considering the comment relevant were if they strictly mentioned any kind of emotion towards the fashion topic. Understanding that dealing with people online and in a possibility community under which a lot of younger audience can be part of, there were a lot of irrelevant comments which ranged from political, homophobic and other insulting messages up to discussions regarding different topics which were not relevant to the selected problem.

“fashion” generated 30 forums under which this term was used. These posts had together 876

comments from which 372 were considered relevant.

“clothes” generated 44 forums, 1338 comments from which 764 were considered relevant.

The forums were divided into three major categories depending on what was their main topic.

Overall from 1136 relevant comments, 797 were considered positive. This means the user were expressing their opinions and experiences towards fashion in very positive way. User were also stating mostly they positive relation towards fashion and towards their personal interest in purchasing fashion clothes. 339 relevant negative comments were mostly stating the opposite. User were rating negatively, sometimes in insulting manner other users fashion choices or simply stating their uninterest in purchasing branded clothes, since they prefer to spend their money somewhere else (mostly on computer setups) which in a way also support the suggestion for visually better-looking pc accessories.

Brand opinion

Forum posts in which people discussed different exact brands and how did other users like them and what is overall opinion about these brands were used 5 times. Mainly people were discussing the high fashion design products.

Fashion rating

This type of forums was the most popular and users created these topics 37 times. Under these discussion posts people were sharing their opinions on fashion news, how the trends are changing, what is popular in which country. Here the users wanted to discuss different fashion choices and style of eSport professional players, this topic was discussed in 9 individual forum threads. This is interesting, since this clearly shows that users are following and judging these athletes, not only for their in-game performances, but also outside the whole eSport segment. This data is confirming that these players are considered influencers for some, and their choices might influence and affect the customer's mind and their behaviours. Another similar topic was when users asked other users to rate their fashion choices. Users were also discussing eSport teams and players' official merchandises and sharing their experiences and opinions about them. This showed the interest from the users but maybe their hesitance in deciding if they should buy the products and if they would be quality goods. Lastly the users were discussing and sharing their favourite fashion brands. These topics could be just purely to discuss what brands do other user like, or the way some are trying to find new brands which they do not know, because of their fashion sense or limits in knowing the brands.

Fashion advices

Advices were also popular subjects of conversations in this community. 32 related topics. A lot of users were actually very engaged in sharing a lot of their fashion advices and opinions on certain topics. These topics were mainly in the highest numbers (28 out of 32) regarding the advices for places and online stores which other users use for purchasing fashion products. This was hugely overused topic and shows a clear interest of the eSport community in fashion but also maybe an insufficient promotion from the fashion side, since the customers are unable to find products and sources for purchasing them. This information is crucial for the fashion companies to maybe rethink their promotional strategies and create new ones which would be more sufficient for this new market. Users were acting very friendly towards these topics since they might understand the other users' pain in trying to find trustworthy and proper fashion stores or websites. However, in the major number the

requests for online stores was much higher than real-life stores, this most likely can be because of a popular online shopping trends and more comfortable experiences. Other topics which created a chain of discussions were actually fashion advices regarding either combinations of different fashion pieces, tips on what is appropriate to dress for certain events or just common fashion advices from other users.

1	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1892506/favelazation	18 Comments – 4 Relevant – 4 Positive	Brand opinion
2	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1386730/supreme	4 Comments – 4 Relevant – 3 Positive – 1 Negative	Brand opinion
3	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1955150/zara	91 Comments – 51 Relevant – 30 Positive – 21 Negative	Brand opinion
4	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1946789/rate-new-mibr-clothes	91 Comments – 70 Relevant – 45 Positive – 25 Negative	Brand opinion
5	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1797583/clothes	21 Comments – 16 Relevant – 12 Positive – 4 Negative	Brand opinion
6	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1815808/russiaa-cum-here	19 Comments – 4 Relevant – 3 Positive – 1 Negative	Rating fashion
7	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1762263/nowadays-fashion	25 Comments – 13 Relevant – 8 Positive – 5 Negative	Rating fashion
8	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1751592/rap-fashion	3 Comments – 1 Irrelevant – 2 Negative	Rating fashion
9	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1750152/what-happened-to-fashion	14 Comments – 12 Relevant – 5 Positive – 7 Negative	Rating fashion
10	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1633404/i-r8-your-fashion	170 Comments – 50 Relevant – 30 Positive – 20 Negative	Rating fashion
11	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1441329/poland-fashion	54 Comments – 12 Relevant – 8 Positive – 4 Negative	Rating fashion
12	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1416593/rate-my-fashion	15 Comments – 6 Relevant – 6 Negative	Rating fashion
13	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1324282/what-fashion-trends-are-in-in-your-country	9 Comments – 5 Relevant – 5 Positive	Rating fashion
14	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1284191/pro-player-fashion	5 Comments – 3 Relevant – 3 Positive	Rating fashion
15	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1154492/2016-fashion	12 Comments – 5 Relevant – 4 Positive – 1 Negative	Rating fashion
16	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/925652/new-fashion	15 Comments – 6 Relevant – 4 Positive – 2 Negative	Rating fashion
17	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/606922/fashion-designers	33 Comments – 12 Relevant – 8 Positive – 4 Negative	Rating fashion
18	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/277056/your-fave-fashion-designers	15 Comments – 5 Relevant – 3 Positive – 2 Negative	Rating fashion
19	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2048503/woxic-fashion-style	2 Comments – 0 Relevant	Rating fashion
20	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2048107/i-r8-your-outfit	44 Comments – 19 Relevant – 11 Positive – 8 Negative	Rating fashion
21	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2014582/teen-fashion	3 Comments – 3 Relevant – 2 Positive – 1 Negative	Rating fashion
22	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2011069/i-am-russian-r8-my-fashion-style	13 Comments – 6 Relevant – 6 Positive	Rating fashion
23	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2002073/sunny-fashion	55 Comments – 20 Relevant – 7 Positive – 13 Negative	Rating fashion
24	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1973169/ugliest-high-fashion-brands	8 Comments – 7 Relevant – 5 Positive – 2 Negative	Rating fashion
25	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2034045/clothes	56 Comments – 31 Relevant – 17 Positive – 24 Negative	Rating fashion
26	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1858740/rate-this-clothes	27 Comments – 18 Relevant – 15 Positive – 3 Negative	Rating fashion
27	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1843231/best-clothes	61 Comments – 46 Relevant – 31 Positive – 15 Negative	Rating fashion
28	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1841065/most-comfortable-clothes-and-shoes	10 Comments – 8 Relevant – 7 Positive – 1 Negative	Rating fashion
29	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1813156/snaxera-new-clothes	8 Comments – 3 Relevant – 3 Positive	Rating fashion
30	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1782817/whats-your-favorite-clothes-brand	11 Comments – Relevant – 11 Positive	Rating fashion
31	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1734932/best-clothes-brand	14 Comments – 9 Relevant – 9 Positive	Rating fashion
32	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1572631/clothes-you-wear	5 Comments – 1 Relevant – 1 Positive	Rating fashion
33	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1572632/clothes-you-wear	5 Comments – 1 Relevant – 1 Positive	Rating fashion
34	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1455510/where-u-buy-clothes-from	139 Comments – 51 Relevant – 38 Positive – 13 Negative	Rating fashion
35	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1315186/best-clothes-brand	1 Comments – 1 Relevant – 1 Positive	Rating fashion
36	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1314473/r8-polish-national-clothes	39 Comments – 17 Relevant – 15 Negative – 2 Positive	Rating fashion
37	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/12945397/olofmeister-clothes	9 Comments – 5 Relevant – 4 Positive – 1 Negative	Rating fashion
38	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1168425/fnx-clothes-for-calvin-harris-concert	3 Comments – Relevant – 3 Positive	Rating fashion
39	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1146033/your-favorite-brand-for-clothes-and-shoes	92 Comments – 45 Relevant – 32 Positive – 13 Negative	Rating fashion
40	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1111922/swedish-clothes	6 Comments – 2 Relevant – Positive	Rating fashion
40	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1111922/swedish-clothes	6 Comments – 2 Relevant – Positive	Rating fashion
41	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/752404/popular-branded-clothes	221 Comments – 133 Relevant – 86 Positive – 47 Negative	Rating fashion
42	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/714058/favorite-brand-of-clothes	28 Comments – 14 Relevant – 12 Positive – 2 Negative	Rating fashion
43	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1794246/fashion-advice	15 Comments – 13 Relevant – 11 Positive – 2 Negative	Fashion advice
44	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1779657/high-fashion-sites	5 Comments – 5 Relevant – 5 Positive	Fashion advice
45	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1758598/fashion-question	23 Comments – 20 Relevant – 18 Positive – 2 Negative	Fashion advice
46	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1640274/where-do-you-buy-your-clothes	15 Comments – 10 Relevant – 10 Positive	Fashion advice
47	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1567772/fashion-advice	4 Comments – 1 Relevant – 1 Negative	Fashion advice
48	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1565313/fashion-clothes	8 Comments – 6 Relevant – 4 Positive – 2 Negative	Fashion advice
49	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1321791/fashion-help	62 Comments – 31 Relevant – 17 Positive – 14 Negative	Fashion advice
50	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2023910/fashion	24 Comments – 14 Relevant – 8 Positive – 6 Negative	Fashion advice
51	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1301922/hltv-fashion-expert-giving-advice	184 Comments – 81 Relevant – 70 Positive – 11 Negative	Fashion advice
52	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2035673/what-clothes-you-wear-to-the-club	72 Comments – 32 Relevant – 20 Positive – 12 Negative	Fashion advice
53	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2019574/what-clothes-to-get-girls	56 Comments – 20 Relevant – 15 Positive – 5 Negative	Fashion advice
54	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/2018554/clothes	39 Comments – 23 Relevant – 19 Positive – 4 Negative	Fashion advice
55	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1975250/clothes-websites	3 Comments – 3 Relevant – 3 Positive	Fashion advice
56	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1939432/clothes-users-come-here	16 Comments – 5 Relevant – 5 Positive	Fashion advice
57	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1929156/clothes-help-thread	13 Comments – 8 Relevant – 7 Positive – 1 Negative	Fashion advice
58	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1875635/what-clothes-do-u-wear	27 Comments – 11 Relevant – 11 Positive	Fashion advice
59	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1764638/best-csgo-team-clothes	19 Comments – 15 Relevant – 14 Positive	Fashion advice
60	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1731387/cool-expensive-clothes	12 Comments – 7 Relevant – 6 Positive – 1 Negative	Fashion advice
61	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1636240/help-me-find-clothes	18 Comments – 6 Relevant – 6 Positive	Fashion advice
62	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1596643/where-do-you-go-to-buy-clothes	7 Comments – 7 Relevant – 7 Positive	Fashion advice
63	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1424180/new-clothes	27 Comments – 9 Relevant – 7 Positive – 2 Negative	Fashion advice
64	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1324116/buy-cool-clothes	14 Comments – 9 Relevant – 9 Positive	Fashion advice
65	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1261586/clothes	4 Comments – 3 Relevant – 3 Positive	Fashion advice
66	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1253315/online-gym-clothes-shop	16 Comments – 13 Relevant – 13 Positive	Fashion advice
67	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1243940/clothes	7 Comments – 3 Relevant – 3 Positive	Fashion advice
68	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1193741/clothes	9 Comments – 5 Relevant – 5 Positive	Fashion advice
69	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1154589/help-clothes-like	5 Comments – 0 Relevant	Fashion advice
70	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/1050213/i-need-to-buy-casual-clothes	3 Comments – 0 Relevant	Fashion advice
71	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/762369/best-clothes-website	8 Comments – 4 Relevant – 4 Positive	Fashion advice
72	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/698289/clothes-websites-uk	1 Comments – 1 Relevant – 1 Positive	Fashion advice
73	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/675011/cool-clothes-eu	29 Comments – 15 Relevant – 10 Positive – 5 Negative	Fashion advice
74	https://www.hltv.org/forums/threads/647352/need-some-information-about-shopping-online-clothes	8 Comments – 8 Relevant – 7 Positive – 1 Negative	Fashion advice

Conclusion

From the findings overall acquired by doing Netnography, it shows that the eSport and gaming market are interested in clothing products. The users are interested in both branded clothes and also lower tier products from a fast fashion stores. This supports the overall question about the potential of the cooperation between two communities. The users also issued the lack of their knowledge on where to obtain fashion and clothing products. This is significant information for a fashion companies that would be interested in expanding to this market. They would need to prepare their marketing and promotional actions sufficiently so they would reach the gaming market. These individuals might not be interested in following the mainstream medias (tv, radio, magazines) therefore the common ways of how fashion company is reaching the customers might be reworked to attract and mainly reach the new market with new type of end-customers.

From the findings it was also possible to find a more solutions on what type of products should the fashion company consider producing. Certainly, the main focus was set upon the clothing products, however there were mentions of user stating they care more about their “pc setups” and would rather invest in them than in the clothing products. This data is supporting the idea of creating pc accessories products designed with a fashion flavour and style.

Reflection

What could be improved and done in future could be to research more websites and forums posts. Even though hltv.org provided significant amount of data which was used to analyze this particular problem, there could have been more data available on different websites or forums posts. However, according to Kozinets (Kozinets, Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online, 2010), it is not necessary for every research to have a huge amount of data. (Kozinets, 2015) An interesting and useful conclusion can be drawn from a relatively smaller amount of data, if they contain enough information's which could be used in forging an answer to the problem which is being analyzed. Sometimes more data could be overwhelming and might distract the research from being focused on the specific point of research. Therefore, a solid data in a smaller amount might have same or even more valuable effect, than a huge amount of data. Also, it is very important for the researcher to be able to understand even the smaller number of data in order to gain a deep cultural sense and idea of what is going on in these posts. (Kozinets, The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography, 2002) To gain such knowledge it often requires the insider's knowledge, understanding of the community, linguistic terms, prolonged engagement and immersion in the culture. Since the researcher was part of this community for a long period of time, it was not necessary to gain immense amount of data in order to understand the community's opinion on this particular research question. However, in the future, if an exact fashion company would be interested in developing and understanding this issue deeper, then more data could provide a clearer picture. Also, for a more specific qualitative data there could be done an attempt to acquire interviews with individuals, which were freely and openly sharing their opinions online. It could be interesting to interview them in order to see if their opinion has changed, what trends do they follow now and what would they like to see from this particular cooperation.

In the end, the data collected support and shows a relevant structure for constructing a positive conclusion towards the problem formulation. Therefore, it is not necessary to use and follow every step of Netnography, since it can vary from case to case. It is important to know how to understand the data and how to properly use it.

Ansoff Matrix

Since the use of Ansoff matrix is to help the company grow, the fashion company should consider utilising this tool in their benefit. From the four growth strategies included in the Ansoff matrix, for this particular problem, which is focusing on fashion and eSport, three out of four strategies could be used in order to enter, be present, dominate and grow on eSport and gaming market. With the selected strategies of course comes possible risk, these would be however discussed and analysed in the Risk assessment part. This part of the thesis would be pointing out possible options for company to consider as a right choice for them. Possibly the company could be interested in all three opportunities and would execute all of them, and eventually they would see which of these options is the most profitable and which are not doing as expected, and these could be either terminated or would be cut with investments. And the ones which would be providing the best result should be focused, innovated and invested more if possible. In this part the brief ideas and descriptions would be mentioned, and more in-depth analysis of these suggestions would be conducted in next part of the analysis section.

Diversification

The risk in using the diversification strategy is the highest of all of the other options. It is mainly because the company which would like to pursue this strategy is planning to enter a new market with a new product. Therefore, they are risking that the product might have some issues or would not be appealing and attractive for the selected market and customers. The company should before use of this strategy, conduct a proper market research in order to find out if the similar or same type of product is already available on the market and how successful it is. This way the company would know about the competition and also about the customers. In this case the idea of the suggestion for a fashion company is to enter eSport and gaming market with virtual video game items. The whole microtransactions (Colagrossi, 2018) and virtual in game item concept is very popular (Kain, 2019) and this feature is available in all major games with the highest amount of user playing and some of them also hosting one of the biggest eSport tournaments. The items would be designed, put in the game stores or other obtaining methods, and people would be able to purchase the items for their in-game uses.

Market development

With this strategy the company is focusing their actions around introducing new products into existing market. Depending on the fashion company, the common items which are in product portfolios and which would be suitable for the eSport and gaming community are t-shirts, hoodies, and some apparel accessories. There are already some big companies which are starting to do the similar concept, however there is a lot of options which could be used, innovated and improved by other fashion company. The suggestions in this case would be to create the product lines which would be relevant and focused around eSport and gaming. This new line of products, with a proper promotion, should attract customers from both communities of gaming and also fashion. With this new eSport product line, more distribution and promotional ways would also open for the fashion company which might result in reaching higher amount of audience.

Product development

The last suggested strategy for the fashion company is to focus on developing and producing new products and sell them on both fashion and eSport and gaming markets. The company should collaborate with a technology company which produce computer accessories. The two parties will then develop a new peripherals with a unique and fashionable design. These products should still be produced with a high quality of the tech company and with a rework of the outside looks of the product, in order to make it more appealing and attractive for gamers, but maybe also for regular people who use these products. But the main focus should still be implemented on eSport and gaming community.

Suggestions

After being able to see the potential for fashion companies to enter and began their business on a new market such as gaming, it is essential to decide what options do these companies have in order to begin their new actions.

For the obvious and most logical first option, it is safe to say to stick with a market development strategy. Meaning the fashion company, that already produces or sell clothing products, just needs to focus and develop entering new, untouched markets with a market development strategy. The main goal for these companies should be to expand the reach into a different, new segments. However, the company would need to make sure to gather all the data and informations about the new segments, in order to be fully aware of different customers buying processes, how the customers think and act towards new companies, etc. Even though the company might have the “perfect” product line that would be attractive for the new segment, they still need to prepare promotional strategy for entering new markets.

Microtransactions

ESport and gaming is hugely growing market with more and more money invested in it. However, there are still different ways for game developer companies to be profitable after the customer purchase their game. It is called “Microtransactions” and covers in-game purchases of different kind of services or products. These purchases could vary from special unlock-able content of the game, in-game visual skins or game changing services which would make the buyer have an upper hand over his/her competitor. However, probably the most popular way of microtransactions are still reaming the cosmetics and visual changes which do not particularly change or improve the gameplay, they are basically just pixels which are used to show-off the wealth of the buyer. However, before discussing the potential connection with Microtransactions and fashion, it would be essential to know all the information about how these purchases evolved from small mobile game boosts to billion-dollar market itself.

Free mobile games were often referred to as “freemium”. This term mainly described no price of mobile games which had incorporated a microtransaction purchases options. These games were free to download; however, users were able to purchase in-game currencies which in the end gave the purchaser a significant in game advantage over the user who did not purchase currencies. The one of the most popular and known freemium mobile games was released in 2012 under name of “Clash of Clans”. (Lim, 2018) In 2015 the game alone earned 1.5 million dollars a day. (McAlone, 2015) All the earning came from the microtransactions where users were able to buy resources and speed up some processes in

game, which otherwise took a significant amount of time to be done. Why would people wait couple of hours, when they could spend few dollars and get the action instantly done? And these small actions quickly ended up in these incredible daily earnings. With all this earning the developer company could easily afford top celebrities to promote their game. For example, a super bowl ad featuring Liam Neeson (YouTube, 2015) which has around 165 million views on Youtube.

However, freemium mobile games were not the first ones to use the microtransaction option. The first encounters are dated to 2006 with a game from Bethesda studios Oblivion. The company announced the first DLC (downloadable content) which was in fact a pack with an armor collection for the in-game horse, which did not change the gameplay at all, only visual aspect of it. The user had to pay around 2,5 dollars in order to change them for 200 Microsoft points, which was the price of the DLC.

Even though the users did not like the concept of paying real-life money for a cosmetic item in games, the market grew, and game developers came up with a new solution for those who disliked microtransactions. With combination of fun, trivial cosmetics and microtransactions items the whole new concept struck the gaming industry was born in form of loot boxes. Among the most notable game developers was Valve who introduced their loot box in popular title Team Fortress 2. (Crecente, 2019) The concept was simple, the user could buy or randomly be rewarded a loot box in game. After acquiring the box, there was an option to buy a key which would open the lootbox and reward a player with a cosmetic item, varied from a different quality and rarity. The rarer item held more value. This concept could boost the overall reputation, improve the market and attract more people towards the game. A perfect example is Counter Strike: Global Offensive which was released in 2012. The overall release was good for the game; however, the full potential was revealed after the introduction of weapon skins in game. In February 2013, CS:GO was ranked 9th most popular game with concurrent players reaching up to 30.000. By January 2016 it was 2nd most popular Steam game peaking with 550.000 concurrent players. (Leack, 2016) The market for the skins grew exponentially with players being able to not only receive the items for themselves, but also to use them as a betting currency for online matches, where they could gain more in terms of skins, or, of course, lose them. People quickly gained a significant amount of skins which eventually could have been turned into real money. This attracted huge number of players which tried to gain some of that virtual currencies. It might have seemed all innocent and just as fun way for “kids” to earn some money. However, huge companies were also interested in this new market. The introduction of gambling aspect of this betting on matches was a begging of creation of different betting websites. These websites would take a percentage cut of each bet. However, with this huge amount of money comes also a possibility of something getting wrong. A lot of countries after some time banned the concept of gambling via in game items, since it basically (Carpenter, 2016) encouraged underage gambling. Before the bans, there were also issues with f.x professional teams “match-fixing” their eSport matches and deciding beforehand who would win in order to be able to bet on the winning team and gaining a huge amount of money. (Yin-Poole, 2015) Alongside with exposing of a certain Youtubers, who owned a betting websites and abused the systems by being able to fix the results in their gain and pretending that the winnings were legit, hence stealing from other users. (Frank, 2016) With all these problems and abusing of the system, some countries banned the overall betting and some even banned opening the loot boxes itself. (Game Central, 2018) However, after some time the whole market was cleaned with the over abusing companies and now loot boxes are a typical part of gaming market and usually all new releases have this option available in them.

Another form of microtransactions are also DLC, unlock-able content and Seasonal passes which offer a limited time special items, usually also customisation type.

Accessories

Another possibility for fashion companies to be able to make a mark in gaming community is to produce goods which game enthusiasts use daily. So, what do these individuals use in their daily routine? Gaming and computer accessories are the best friend of every person whose passion is oriented around gaming and eSport. There already are a lot of different types of gaming accessories available on market. The main ones which should be in every gamer inventory are the ones that are essential in order to play video games. However, they of course differ from a personal preference of individuals on what platform do they prefer. If they use computer and are falling under a “pc gamer” category, or whether they use consoles such as Xbox or PlayStation in fulfilling their gaming needs. For an individual who prefers PC gaming, the accessories which would be considered are mouse, mousepad, keyboard, headphones and maybe also an external microphone. For console players joysticks, toggle extenders and maybe special designed patterns for the console itself. A proper equipment is needed in a lot of different sport activities and eSport is no difference. Having a quality equipment could mean a huge improvement difference compared to owning some cheaper products. The “high” tier class brands such as Logitech (Logitech, 2019), Razer (Razer, 2019), HyperX (HyperX, 2019) are considered to be the one of the best manufactures on the market and they are always focusing on building and designing the products for the best comfort and quality for their customers. Behind these companies are often people that are also interested in gaming and know what is the best for them, therefore they can see the needs from a point of view of a customers. A great example is Razer and their motto “By gamers for gamers”. Even though this could be just a catchy slogan, usually in these companies, people are genuinely interested in gaming. However, the need of having a comfortable products during a long game time session is as important as having a comfortable sneakers for running sessions. If you imagine a typical day of a professional player, when their gaming training could take up to 10 hours a day, they need to have the best equipment available. The possible collaboration between a fashion brand and a accessories manufacturer could be very simple. The focus would be still put mainly on the quality of the product from a performance side, meaning so it would be designed to be comfortable to use for a long time period and the durability would be a strongly enhanced feature. The outside design should be the part of the fashion brands company, as they will be the ones that would design the appearance part for the product. This could be interesting for the users since usually the market is full of simple, black accessories with a small logo of the company placed somewhere on the product, highlighted with a RGB light. (Razer, 2019) This could be very popular and simple design, however something new would bring a eye catching and interesting improvement on aesthetic side. Some companies have already tried different designs on their product fx SteelSeries had a special, limited products in collaboration with a PUBG game. (Steelseries, 2019) It is common for these kinds of companies to create a special, limited collaboration with a different games, teams, organizations etc. Therefore, it would not be nothing new to see a collaborated collection in their product portfolio. The whole idea behind it would be to create more eye appealing products with same functions as the users are already used to, in order to not change the classics, but to make them more attractive. The perfect way of promoting these would be during the eSport events where the players are often shown with their equipment.



Clothing

The most apparent option for a clothing company could be to prepare and produce a clothing and accessories line connected with gaming and eSport. This would be the smartest and maybe the safest option since the market would be hopefully familiar with the both brands that would be collaborating. Creating a basic line consisting of t-shirts, hoodies, sweatpants and accessories such as hats and beanies could be the first batch of products.

The possible collaborations could be between different sides of eSport. The first option could be a fashion brand and an eSport team. Teams and players are overall considered as celebrities for eSport enthusiasts, therefore they have a huge audiences which cheers for them and like either their personalities, game style or history. Overall these teams are very popular, and people tend to often buy their merchandises which usually consist of the jerseys and t-shirts players use during the matches. The collaboration could be just simply combining a team and a fashion brand and creating special, maybe limited, products which would highlight both the brand and also the team. A similar concept has already been used by, for example, Swedish organisation Fnatic and fashion brand Champion. (Fnatic, 2019) These two companies created a set of products which were limited and only 500 pieces were created. The product line was supposed to follow and support the Fnatic during their performance in 2018 League of Legends World finals in Korea. The whole set consisted of a hoodie, collectors' magazine, Holographic sticker in real-life and virtual version and branded tissues. The idea behind the collaboration was to start the 2019 year with something very special for their loyal fans. Also, this was Fnatic's first time collaborating with Champion and the fact the limited edition sold out quickly only confirms that eSport enthusiasts are interested in these kind of fashion collaborations. (Jang, 2019) Another example of such collaboration is the case of Danish eSport team Astralis and fashion brand Jack and Jones. These two brands connected as Jack and Jones are one of the main sponsors of the team and they take care of production of the team's merchandise. These products are always worn by the players during the tournaments and are always available in-store and online of the websites of both the team and also the fashion company.

Product life cycle

Since the scope of the project is analysing potential options on how can fashion company enter new market, the possibility of creating and producing new product type is very promising. Fashion companies are known for producing, reselling and distributing actual physical products. Every product which will be developed and produced will eventually go through different stages of its existence on a selected market. The company therefore can prepare their strategies and actions according to the expected forecasts and assumptions, which are common during each one of the stages. It is essential to be prepared for every occasion, since it would save the company time, resources, a prevent lot of stress and unadvised and unprepared actions which could lead in negative effects.

Microtransactions

Introduction stage

This product type might be considered the riskiest out of other options, mainly the virtual market might not sound so promising and a lot of people do not know about this market and/or might not be interested in purchasing virtual items in-game. However, the numbers from previous data are showing the considerable growth and popularity in the unusual form of transactions. The focus would be set on creating awareness and motivating the market into purchasing these products. Since the combination of virtual items and fashion items in game is a new type of products, the company really needs to put a lot of effort in appealing attractive for the customers. Before fully executing the introduction of these products, the company might invest into having a customer testing reviews and initial market research. With data collected from these researches, the company would be able to visualise and benefit from the findings in more realistic preparation. Since the big part of the suggested promotion is using a influencer strategy, the company during this first stage needs to acquire and prepare not only the employees of the company but also the already mentioned influencers and go through all the possible variations of how the promotion and campaigns would be conducted from both sides. It would be necessary that all the arrangements, data and information sharing, and all communication would be well sorted out. It can be very hard to introduce new product to a new market and expect that it will instantly rise, if there will be miss-leading in important and crucial information. The *timing* might also be very important to decide when the best time comes to introduce the products. There are different options for this as well, from preparing a launch on a huge international tournament, to a seasonal launch even up to new game/update or expansion launching from the game. Although the company is not directly restricted to release their collection connected to these events, they can consider it when the whole marketing plan would be fully planned and sorted out.

Growth

After a successful introduction and start of being active with a new product, the company will, with well executed plan, enter a growth stage. During this stage it is important to persuade customer from wanting to try the product into preferring this exact brand. This is because during this stage a competition might come out and will want to prove their place on the market and attract customers towards them. Therefore, it is important to conduct a competition analysis in order to find out who the competition is, what products are they producing and what is their promotion strategy like. All these data could benefit the company in gaining an upper hand and adjusting their strategies and actions. A feedback

from customers might be essential information for the company in order to be more appealing to the new customers and also to the loyal ones. The buying behaviour, what promotion works more and which less, what new features the customers want or if they are satisfied with the state of the products as they are now, all of this data is crucial and highly important.

Since expecting the fashion company achieved a well-known reputation on the market, it might be a good time to prepare the same cooperating and in-game implementation as before, but now to expand into new games, which were not used in the introduction part. This could extend the brand image and knowledge to more communities and eventually attract new customers. Overall just to expand the product portfolio into new market might also bring a new influencer options and new cooperations which could result in more profit.

The demand during the growth stage is expected to rise, hence it might be essential to generate a new way of acquiring the products and distribute them to the customers. If the products will be very popular, then it can be interesting and new to have them on the official website of the fashion company. But not as a typical showcase of the clothing products, but to make the browsing of in-game items somehow interactive, interesting and fun to experience. It can be very beneficial but also risky, to be unique and come up with a new, attractive features which would differentiate the company from the competition. If the virtual item eshop would be designed professionally, this could cause the people to talk more about the new items and the brand.

As the products would bring more profit, the resources could be invested in new promotional ways. For example, in history of gaming, big major video games have used to have a tv-adverts with celebrities which confirmed and publicly stated they enjoy playing video games. Therefore, the fashion company could create a similar advert with either celebrities, sport athletes or big gaming individuals. Even though the community might prefer to watch video formats more online than on TV, these commercials could be also implemented online on all major video gaming platforms (Youtube, Twitch, etc)

Lastly the company might be prepared to adjust the prices mainly because of the competition. The competitors could penetrate the market with setting their prices very low and therefore attracting more customers, or they can create an image of setting the prices high in order to showcase the higher value and quality of the items. Therefore, the company should adjust to these competition's actions, but also still keep their focus on selling their product as the best option for the customers on the market.

Maturity

This stage can be considered the most competitive. Therefore, a huge focus should be set on research and development of the products, innovation, and marketing. The company should consider preparing some special deals in order to attract customers that might hesitate about the products or those that are still not one-hundred percent sure about the quality or features. The fashion company could create limited special deal when the customer buys the video-game in which the products are implemented, then he/she can receive a free loot box in which there might be a chance to receive the item.

On a similar note, when the customers buys any products from the fashion brand, they can receive a some sort of percentage cut off their next purchase for the in-game items. And the same could be done vice-versa. This could eventually bring profit to the company from both

real-life purchases and in-game.

This another suggestion is a cooperation between more parties. This would include, for example, live-streaming platform [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv), game League of Legends and the fashion company. If the user watches official livestream of any major big League of Legends tournament on twitch.tv, they can generate an in-game currency, thanks to which they can purchase the fashion brand in-game items and maybe even generate some discount codes for the real-life items. However, the focus should still be set upon the in-game currency and items. This way all parties promote each other.

Lastly, if customers are still not completely convinced, there could be an option for a free few days trial to try the items in-game and to see how the characters look with them, etc. Since the service would be free, it would not hurt the company's image, it can maybe assure customers of the quality of the items and overall rise the need of the items, if once they try them they might want them more.

Decline

Since the fact that in this case, new items are virtual products and the production of them is a one-time action, even if the products move to the decline stage, they still can be available on the markets and on stores. If the current market would not be interested in this collection, some new coming user might be in future. There would be no harm in keeping the products online and maybe just adjusting the prices so there would be some profit coming in. However, the company should maybe consider this as a side project and focus more on developing new collection with new unique features and designs. Also maybe consider different game for next collection, as there is a significant amount of popular games with big audiences, and the virtual market will only grow with releases of new games.

Lastly the company should review all the marketing strategies and cooperations with influencers and decide which ones are worth still keeping up and which ones are not performing up to the agreements and expectations. This could solve the future promotions, since this could give a brief overview on what tactics work, which ones to use and what to improve. Overall this first collection could be an excellent test to this new virtual market.

Accessories

Introduction

Launching this new type of products could be challenging. Mainly since the two different communities are connecting together to create something which is mainly focused for the eSport and gaming one, but the fashion community could still benefit, and enthusiasts could also enjoy these products. The promotion might be hard to decide upon from the start, but the market research can help so the companies would have some knowledge about the community.

The first launch of products should maybe be only the most important and most common used accessories. Keyboard, mouse, headset and mousepad are essentials for every gamer and eSport player. These products can also be used outside the gaming factor since a lot of people use these products for their work, free time, studying. Therefore, the launch might attract user from both communities if the promotion would be set properly and focused on benefits of the

products for everyone.

The promotion materials such as photoshoots, video-shoots could be done exclusively for both of communities. Again, selecting the right brand ambassadors could be tricky, but there would more to pick out from, as both communities have different known and famous people which could fit these promotions. Examples could be some either current or ex professional eSport player or streamer, since they are (or were) using these products on daily basis as their work tool. For a fashion community it can be some celebrity from music, movie or sport industry, tv personality or a famous blogger, model.

Not only eSport players could provide a beneficial and trustworthy reviews of the products. Tech and unboxing channels are hugely popular form of information and entertainment on YouTube. With some of them sustaining a long-time activity, people tend to trust their opinion and would love to have someone else do the research for them. Sending out free samples of the products before the launch and having the content creators ready to have the product review videos prepared for the post-launch would also be beneficial for the company.

Another segment of people which should get the products before the launch, in order to gain more professional and eligible reviews and word of mouth promotion, are naturally gamers, since people might be talking about what current gear are eSport players using and why. These individuals might also be the ones to think that these exact products would help them in their gaming sessions and therefore would naturally recommend them.

Growth

From the similar suggestions as were used before in the previous PLCs, something different could be used in this case. Recently, there was a huge case of “accidental” product placement in popular TV series “Game of Thrones”, where in one shot, there was clearly visible placed a Starbucks cup. Something similar could be used in this case. It can of course be presented as accidental, as it might cause even more people to talk about it. On the other hand, in the 2019 movie “Avengers: End Game” there was a clear promotion for a game Fortnite. This fits perfectly since this was the last Marvel movie of this saga, which was coming out for more than 15 years and Fortnite was and probably still is the most played and popular game in 2018. In this case it was not an accident or just a random game used, it was intentionally used and only helped the game and community, since a lot of people which like this game might be even happier about the fact that it was shown in one of the biggest movies in 2019. And if this would be a case and there would be some special event or seasonal promotion, there should be of course a limited edition of this accessories. It is common to produce a limited special collection collaborated with a even in Game, new releases, etc.

Another small detail which could be interesting for some eSport fans could be to have a limited-edition of products signed by professional players. People tend to collect sports shirts with signatures of their favourite football or basketball players, and same happens in eSport scene, however people tend to give their mousepads to players in order to sign them. This collection could be specially made for some tournament on which the fans of the team could play against the players and might have a chance to win this special edition.

The same concept of wholesalers should be used in this case were the products can be available on different e-stores. On eSport scene it is common for the big companies fx. Blizzard Entertainment to sell collaborated tech products. This way people can acquire these products from different sources or even might find them browsing the store. As an example,

Blizzard provides for their customers a collaboration of Razer and Blizzard themed gaming equipment on their official store alongside other merchandise and relevant products. (Blizzard Entertainment, 2019)

Maturity

Since customers sometimes care about their computer and gaming setups very much and would invest into the product hundreds of dollars, popular small detail for the products are LED lightnings. Nowadays almost every product could potentially be produced with some sort of LED light. Razer made sure this could work and inserted lightning into their mice, keyboards, headsets, headset stands and even mousepads. People tend to like this and even when owning the version without LED lights, they would upgrade to the one with lights just because it looks more appealing. Therefore, we can see the same type of for example Razer Chroma keyboard and Razer Chroma keyboard with LED lights. This small change with a fashion design could bring even new possibilities when talking about appearance of gaming products, therefore this could be something that the fashion company should consider in attracting more people towards same product.

On similar topic of taking care of computer setups come a very important aspect which is cable management. Owning a stationary computer with one keyboard, one mouse, headset, two or more monitors and speaker is usually the typical setup of a common eSport and gaming enthusiasts and a necessity for streaming personality. Imagine all of these products have at-least one cable, sometimes even more. This create a cluster of cables which doesn't not look appealing at all. Here people come up with creative ways of hiding these cables to make it look almost like wireless. Some companies already produce wireless products; however, these might not always be so popular as they usually need to be charged. As it started with monitors and slowly is getting into other products where companies tend to hide the cables in some innovative way. For monitors it is usually behind the monitor in a small stand on which the monitor is attached on. This could bring a big game changer opportunity, if the fashion company could somehow team up with the tech company and design the products with small to none visibility of cords. People who really wants to hide the cables of their accessories tend to drill a hole in their desks in order to hide them, this however brings a struggle of owning the proper equipment to do this and having at least some skill of using these tools. The company could include a small device in the packing which would drill the hole in the table for the buyer. It would be directly measured for the cord and would be minimalistic as possible.

Another interesting way of distributing the products and gaining more attraction towards the products can be to hold a online tournament. The tournament would be only, strictly online therefore the costs of actually creating the tournament would be minimal. Renting the servers, having staff and promoting the tournaments would be the main costs. The players could win either the products itself or some sort of discount codes. This tournament could be held multiple times and special limited products could be created as an exclusive prize for the winner. Online world is huge and there are several online tournaments happening during every week, why not holding one of its own.

Another similar concept but with higher costs would be to hold an actual real-life tournament. Of course, the tournament would not be on a level as some major events of such character but could be structured on a spider theme tournament. There would be an online qualification for people to attend with no limits, and maybe up to 10-16 teams would be qualified for an real-life tournament. This tournament would bring people to watch it since it would be streamed

on all major platforms. This might be considered risky but could start the trend of creating fun and entertaining tournaments in eSport and opening the hard-core competitive factors of eSport up to regular people which would one day would like to compete on professional ranks. There could be also special guests invited and special showcase matches versus celebrities, regular people or eSport players, sponsors, etc. Connecting these two communities could open up even higher potential one could imagine.

Lastly the fashion company should consider starting to appear with the stand and some special showcase of the products. Even though people might be sceptical from the start because of their involvement, being more active in community only show the seriousness and their good will in improving eSport with giving a hand in making it more recognisable and more respectable.

Decline

As the last resort the company should consider producing different products which were not launched in the start of the campaign. There are still smaller products which could help the image of the brand and prepare the customers maybe for next season of products. From accessories such as headphones stands, mouse bungees, gaming chair, microphones or even water bottles, company still can produce a lot of products with different use. Water bottles, even though they seem like being out of the segment, are very oftenly used by eSport players and streamers remind their audience that drinking water is very important. This shows that the gaming individuals are familiar with their “power” of influencing people and are using it for a greater good.

Lastly there could be some kind of special bundle for attractive price. Bundle could consist of the either the essentials such as keyboard, mouse, headset or to have the new smaller products put together as a smaller package. Overall the company should try to sell as much as possible and overall focus on research and development of the new sessions.

Clothing

Introduction

As previously mentioned, it is very important in the introduction stage to let the market and customers know that there is a new product line available by the fashion company. The overall promotion should be focused on letting the public know about all the unique features, designs, etc. Selecting the right influencers would be again crucial at this case. This time there could be used influencers from both communities of eSport/gaming and also the fashion. That would mean doubling the research, preparing all the arrangements, discussing all the data and information influencers should let their audience know, etc. Working with people can always be stressful and problematic and this would mean doubling the work with the influencers and doubling the potential risk.

Since this is a fashion oriented product, it is necessary to prepare a high quality photo and video promotional materials. However, for a well-established fashion companies this should be no difficulty and nothing new since they should already have a lot of experiences and know-how in this field. However, it is very crucial and should always be taken with care and focus as if it was their first time doing this. Nothing should be taken easily.

Another popular and common way of introducing new collection in fashion world is to host a

special reveal event. For this event a special, selected guest are invited, and the press takes the job of letting the world know about this new collection.

Growth

Distribution upgrades for apparel products could be to use a wholesaler. Meaning a different related fashion brand stores which sell similar products. This way they can promote the products to their customers and expand the overall knowledge of the product line.

Customer feedback could unravel a lot of different issues with the products, of course the company should be able to fix them and maybe have already prepared plans, assuming this is not the first collection they have released. But the potential changes in production regarding the designs, materials and quality might be the most common issues which could be discovered by a customer's feedback.

Very common feature are newsletters. Customers subscribe to the e-mail collection of the fashion company and are agreeing in receiving promotional material. These materials consist of news, special deals, upcoming events, etc. The company should focus on contacting all potential customers which might be interested in this new collection. The selection can be done via different factors. But maybe the first wave of newsletters should be sent out to the wider audience and from the statistical data of how many people opened and went to the added link, the better picture of customers would be assessed.

To create a bigger attraction and hype around the collection another possibility would be to partner up with celebrities and gaming personalities. They can be considered to be a more expensive and exclusive influencers, therefore this action should be conducted in the later stage of the products life cycle. There could be an agreement about celebrities wearing the collections products for a special event which would bring a lot of attention. Nowadays celebrities might wear anything they consider of high quality and comfortable and it does not strictly have to be a high fashion, designer brand. As an example lets look at American music producer Kanye West who on the most prestigious fashion events in the world, Met Gala, wore a 43 dollar Dickies jacket next to other celebrities which were dressed in clothes worth millions. (Hore-Thorburn, 2019) Even though these celebrities might not be exactly the face of the gaming and eSport community, this would bring attention and more recognition overall and could begin a new trend in fashion.

Maturity

Depending on what sortiment would be prepared for a release launch, in Maturity stage the fashion company can introduce and start producing products which were not on the begging roster. They can either be small accessories, apparel products such as pants, or very common joggers, since usually eSport players wear joggers during the official tournaments for the comfort. Or they can be even tech gadgets differentiating from phone cases to limited jewellery, there is a lot of potential which could be used to again attract customers and bring profit to the company.

The fashion company would use all the common and typical distribution ways for customers to obtain the products, such as official website and online store, real-life stores and wholesalers. Another possibility, with aim to sell to potential customers, is to partner up with either official tournaments and become an official sponsor for the specific event or be visible on all major tournaments and expo events and have selling stand or workshop on these events. For these events, the companies can also prepare a "meet and greet" events with some eSport

and gaming popular individual so it would attract more people which might not care in the first place about the products, but might buy them after meeting his/her favourite role model.

Another great way to attract attention are giveaways and similar competitions. These special announcements and special offers could be done via the official social media accounts for the both communities. Both companies have certain follower-base and therefore both companies can attract more people by these giveaways. Also, this is a common action influencers use, therefore they could either collaborate with the brands or do it on their own channels/social medias.

Decline

Depending on what extra features will the product have, this would be the time to produce the innovated version of the products. If, however, there is nothing to add from a functional purpose, then the company can still try to change the design the last time in order to see if people would like the new face of the products. Although, if that won't work, then the company should determine if some products would still be able to bring some profit, if there were some which became the community's favourites and if they are worth being kept on the line. If not, then the focus should be set upon new collection. Also, any marketing costs should be considered cut totally or set upon minimum importance and value. In fashion, trends do change quite often and usually companies tend to follow them in order to satisfy everyone needs. This won't be any different. If other competition will come up with some new unique models or innovation, the fashion company should consider using similar concept for their purposes.

Marketing Mix (4Ps)

Microtransactions

Product

From the brief description of the market for microtransactions and visual items in game, it could be clearer on what the product could be. Since it is very common and popular for video games to have at least some sort of microtransaction option in game, there could be a big potential to use this format for a fashion brand. For some people the visual elements in game are as important as a proper and quality gameplay. The freedom of expressing themselves in virtual world can be infinite and could be less strict and freer and could open up new possibilities for the individuals. These virtual items are also used by a lot of people as showing off the "wealth" of the person in real-life. Since the items could be costly, with this comes a possibility of being exclusive in-game and separate from the individuals which do not have the resources for these items. The creation and production for these products could be not so expensive as a production of an actual, physical real-life products. The creation of these products would consider designing of the actual skin or visual items for the game. However, before that the fashion company should decide what the design should be and what the actual item in the game should be. Meaning if the virtual item would be a clothing skin, accessory skin, etc. These however would differ from a game to game since there are divergent elements in games. For example, as we take a huge hit and one of the most popular game in 2018 Fortnite, the virtual items in this game consist of a visual skin and clothing of the players' character, weapon skin and other items which are used for gameplay. Other

similar games to Fortnite (Counter Strike: Global Offensive, Apex Legends, Players Unknown Battleground, Overwatch) have a similar market for these virtual skins, where players could change the clothes, weapons and other small details for their characters. Another popular video game genre MOBA (League of Legends, Dota 2) which are two of the most popular and played games also have a market for virtual items. Since these games are taken from an eagle position, meaning that the player sees theirs and other players from above, the virtual items are usually consisting only of clothing and appearance changes. This is an important difference from FPS games (First Person Shooter) where you as a player only see your weapon, however other players can see your character and your skin. Another game genre which strongly focuses on character development are RPG (Role playing games). These video games usually also have an option of seeing the whole character, therefore a lot of people care a lot about the appearance of it. Thus, these games which provide the camera option that shows the character could be the first ones which should be targeted for this new product lines. Products could be as have simple designs of a brand's logo, or perhaps some popular or iconic real-life pieces which could have a huge value or long-term history. A limited virtual skin for a special event, championships, tournaments or even seasonal holidays could be part of this line up. Another possibility could be to collaborate with an eSport team and create the skin with the team.

Price

There are two important factors which need to be considered when deciding price for this new type of products. One is that the production costs of these items are very low compared to other products. Mainly because these products are virtual items inserted in video games. Therefore, the actual costs of production itself would be to research the market, design the skins and then the most costs would be invested into promotion. Since this exact type of virtual items is something new to the market and to the communities, the focus on marketing would be essential in order to attract customers towards acknowledging the products and eventually buying it. However, since the fashion company would be first to produce such products, they can set the price and therefore they should use Premium pricing in order to establish an idea of high-quality perception and a big exclusiveness of owning these items.

Place

Since the final product is a virtual item, the best place where customers could obtain these products would be online. There are several options for online purchases when considering in-game items, therefore there is a higher chance of reaching a wider part of the gaming community. The first and the maybe most viable should be the online market/store of the game which will be chosen to be a part of the cooperation with the fashion brand. These markets are usually in game or on the platform on which you can download and play game. There are several different ones for different games and usually they are on the software from the gaming studio which created the game. For example Riot (League of Legends) Steam (CS:GO, Dota2) Epic Games (Fortnite) Blizzard (Overwatch, World of Warcraft). On these markets, players can trade/sell/buy the virtual items from each other. Or buy them from the games in-game store for either real-life currency or for an in-game currency or by converting the two different currencies (real-life -> in-game). This should be the main and first place that interested customers should be able to purchase their desired goods from. The process should be easy, fast and reliable so people wouldn't fear getting scammed or not getting the items they wanted. However, usually these in-game stores are well-known and already used by millions. By purchasing from the market/store the customers would be able to directly buy the product and receive it immediately. However, it is very common in these markets of

microtransactions to use the concept of loot-boxes. The idea behind it is very simple; the customer either obtains loot box by playing the game, or buys it and required item for opening the box (such as key). In the case/box itself are items from different price categories, from items which costs are very low, up to items which could reach up to thousands of euros. The customer is willingly paying for this chance of obtaining the item they want, however there is a percentage chance for each item to obtain and the rarer or more expensive have a really small chance. Customers are buying these cases in a pursue of profiting by paying small amount and obtaining a expensive item, however that might not always be the case. This leads to a risk-reward scenario and people are basically “gambling” their resources. This method should be also used for the special fashion virtual items, mainly because of the popularity of this transaction.

Secondary option of obtaining these items could be in-store of the fashion brand. This way more customers could be informed about the items. The way of selling these virtual items could be that customer would purchase a in-game code which when applied would result in the owner acquiring the virtual items. In store the customers should be able to see and review the products as he/she would do with normal real-life products. This would open a possibility of using virtual realities for having the immersive experience, and shopping in real-life would maybe gain more attraction again.

Promotion

There are more possibilities of promotion the company can use. However, it is very important to focus on what the promotion wants to deliver to the customer. Meaning it needs to be very clear what the product that the company will be selling is, since it could be a very new creation that might even surprise some people. Therefore, the promotion needs to clearly but effectively inform the public about the new product, what it offers and how can the customer acquire it. In gaming and eSport community the most famous individuals with a huge follower bases have the biggest potential to inform and influence the customers in ways of acquiring the products. There are multiple influencers in these scenes which could be perfect for the promotion. They can range from a content creators, to actual eSport players, casters, or even organizers of certain events. Therefore, it could be in some cases better to use certain individuals rather than others. For example, if the products would be designed and created for Fortnite, it would be smart and most likely more efficient to use a well known and trusted personality which is active in this community. More people would recognise this person and would trust his words, rather than a random player of a different game. These influencers have their follower base based on achieving something more or being good at the certain game or being a very entertaining personality, and people would often address and connect their names to the games which they are mostly known for. Great way of promoting the products would therefore be to partner up with some YouTube content creators and live streamers. The main reasons are that the content that both of these influencers create are connected with the actual gameplay of the games and therefore there would be a constant promoting going on, if the influencers would be using the in-game virtual items. The audience could first-hand receive an opinion of their favourite entertainer and even create their own, since they would be able to see the products. It would be also very important what the influencer would say and how he/she would be promoting the product. For some people the opinion of the influencers would be definite, and they would purchase the products of many factors which could affected their purchase. Other part of the community might not be particularly happy about the cooperation between their favorite influencer and the fashion brand, since they might consider it just as a money grabbing campaign. Therefore, the influencer needs to be very smartly chosen and the cooperation between the two parties

should go smoothly, since if there would be any problems, the audience would know about them and they might not like the information they would receive. Choosing the right influencer would differ again from a game to game. However, YouTube content creators could easily create gaming videos and also information videos about the new collection and the presentation of the items in-game. A livestreaming platform which is pulling huge numbers nowadays is [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv). This should be the main location the company should use when they would be considering partnering up with a live streamer. The selected and partnered individuals could also for a maybe first few days, be acquired with a purchase code for their audience. By applying the code, the buyer would get some percentage off of the purchase.

Another relatable promotion strategy could be to have an advert running on different platforms. If the influencers would be selected from YouTube and Twitch, understandably the ads should be running on these two. These ads should be designed to very briefly inform the viewer of the new collection and catch their attention in first few seconds, since usually there is an option to skip the ads after 5 seconds. Therefore, the first impression is essential in this case.

Also, a banner should be placed in the official stores of the fashion brand. Even though the items are only virtual, people visiting the store could be interested in the new collection and would be persuaded and attracted by the promotion.

Accessories

Product

For every eSport and gaming fan, proper and quality essentials are as important as in any other sport activity. These accessories basically allow the user to, first of all, play and enjoy the video game of their choice. Secondly, depends on the brand, these products are designed and produced for a comfortable and long-time use, since the gaming session for a real “hardcore” gamer could go up for hours every day. Not to mention the eSport athletes who’s daily routine consists of 10+ hours of training. Therefore, the products often focus on a most smooth materials, ergonomic design, easy to use, durability and many other factors. However, after some time the products also started to focus on the actual look and proper design of the product. Nowadays it is hugely popular in the gaming and eSport community to spend money, time and effort to create a “perfect” gaming and usability setup and to share (Reddit/Battlestations, 2019) and be proud of their creation. (Reddit/Gamingsetups, 2019) People spend thousands of dollars for expensive accessories which could bring a lot of personality, creativity, fashion and unique style for their own setups. (Reddit/Setups, 2019) There are several forums, YouTube channels (Youtube/TechSource, 2019) (Youtube/randomfrankp, 2019), social media (Instagram/desktopcsetup, 2019) (Instagram/minimalsetups, 2019) groups which focus only on these setups. People are sharing their own creation, helping each other with tips on where to buy xy product, or what should they upgrade next, or discuss new and upcoming releases of technological peripherals. The times had changed drastically from owning a one CRT monitor to people usually owning at least 2 monitors. It is safe to say that the community really cares about how their computer setups look and overall how the products they are purchasing not only functionate but also how the products look.

Since it is proven that the appearance is as important as the quality, this information is something that a fashion company should consider using for their gains. The overall design for these items may be somewhat similar since the companies usually just put the logo of the

company onto the product and put a few lights, small designs, etc. These minimalistic designs could be therefore also used in cooperation with a fashion company. However, this also opens a new possibilities for actually trying to create some unique and eye-catching design which would hold the fashion companies elements and people would recognise the brand easily. With this collaboration, quality and well-known products with a new and attractive design might attract certain part of the gaming and eSport community. But also this collection could be a better option for a casual people outside the gaming community, since a lot of ordinary people also use computers for work, study, leisure time. Therefore, this collaboration could potentially reach even wider public. But the main focus should firstly be set upon the eSport enthusiasts.

Price

Price for these products could follow three pricing strategies. Since the overall type of the computer accessories is well-known and popular product for a lot of people, they can use it for different tasks. Depending on the collaboration between the fashion and technology companies there could be two possibilities. If the two companies will focus on developing and innovating the tech products, or if the cooperation would only consist of creating the products with a new and unique design. In this case the companies could go for a premium strategy in order to bring up a need of owning an exclusive product in customers. Safer combination would, however, might be starting with price skimming since there might not be such a functionality difference between the products of what competitors are producing. Therefore, the market might still prefer the products which looks more appealing and are providing same performance and would choose the new collection. After that, by some time, the companies could use the bundle option in selling two or more products in some special offer in order to still sell some products and gain resources for launching and developing new one.

Place

Since these new products have some elements of technological production and also fashion, they could be sold on both of these two different communities common stores. Even though it could be a shock for other customers to see a computer accessories in a fashion store, there is already a huge sortiment of different products sold in fashion stores from sport equipment to fashion small goods. Another real-life store which should, of course, have the products available for their customer should be a electronics store. This would be most likely the main place where customers would want to see the products in real-life, since the idea that electronics store should have them would be more understandable than a fashion store.

On the other hand, the products should be also available online on official webstores of the two cooperating companies. Both companies should have the products on their product portfolio, but again the more customers might search the products on the electronics company website rather than the fashion one. Another option would be to sell through a wholesaler electronic products website. By operating with more different online stores, there could be a higher chance that wider public would be informed about the products and more people would want to purchase them.

These items should also be available for the public to see and purchase on public events for both communities. These events often are focused on new arrivals and projects and people can test and create their own opinion on these products.

Promotion

In terms of promotion there could be more options for this product range. The main promotion should be done via the eSport influencers. They would be able to provide an educated opinion on the quality of the product and its features. The fashion element of the product would be also easy for them to show either in a promotional video in case of a YouTube influencer or online on livestream if we are talking about Twitch influencer. These people are using similar products for a long time and their follower base would trust their opinion. These influencers could also provide an in-game testing of the products, so the public would have a first hand “expert” review. The content of review and unboxing videos is hugely popular on YouTube, and these channels are reaching huge numbers in views and subscribers. These content creators would be also very trustworthy voices which could influence their audience in purchasing the products. The quality of these videos is usually on very professional range since the content creators gain profit from these videos, therefore the companies would not have to focus on this kind of promotion directly. They might just supply the creators and influencers with information which should be mentioned in their influencing strategies and after that just review the finished content to see if it fulfils the terms of the agreements between two parties. This kind of promotion might be sufficient for people interested in these kinds of products and in eSport and gaming overall.

On the other hand, for audience more focused on a fashion part of the product, the more suitable influencer should be selected for this segment. Now it would also depends on the fashion company and their background. If the company is a high fashion company, a fashion influencer and bloggers would be more affective in this case. The concept would be same as with the gaming influencers, just with more focus on the aesthetics and design features of the products, since these characteristics might be more interesting for this part of the customers segment. With nowadays fashion trends, it might not be such a uncommon marketing strategy to use a fashion known celebrities in the promotional materials. The celebrities could be used in a creating advertisement which should be aired online and maybe also in TV, depending on the budget of the company. Similar commercials should be done for the gaming segment as well, with a well-known name in eSport community. Professional players, streamers with a big follower base, popular Youtubers should be the ones which should be considered the most efficient ones.

As previously mentioned, another great way of informing a wide public about new products are related real-time events. On these kinds of events a lot of technology companies promote their new products and let people try them. These kinds of showrooms are also available during some big major tournaments which is also a great place for showcasing a new product, since these tournaments attract enormous numbers of visitors.

Clothing

Product

After covering the two new product lines a fashion company can use, the one which might be the most understandable and expect type of product, would be clothing and accessories products. From the findings it is clear that the stereotypes of gamers are in fact changing and eSport and gaming fans do care about clothing. Therefore, a fashion company should use this knowledge for their growth and expansion. The company now has more options by which clothing products they should select and enter the new market. If the company is well known and already has successful product line which could be interesting for the gaming

community, then they should continue on promoting and selling this product line. However, to be more interesting and more appealing it would be beneficial to create some new product lines specially for this new market segment.

Company could design and produce products within a gaming theme. There are several popular elements in gaming history and the company can either focus on creating the design with, for example, retro style and use old-school popular gaming topics or games. From retro games such as Pac-Man or Tetris, to games which created eSport community as it is known today. Names like Quake, Counter Strike, League of Legends are titles which are popular, known and even respected by millions since they can be considered a first bricks which helped to build a video games community as it is today. There already were some similar collections which themed their product line around Nintendo Games. The streetwear clothing company Vans collaborated with a retro console and created a special set of footwear, apparel and accessory with gaming designs. (Vans, 2016) Nintendo, of course, is a veteran in gaming history and a lot of people grew up owning one of their consoles. There are numerous other multiplayer games which would fit for a fashion company to create a collaboration. However, do not forget a lot of great single player titles which have touched millions by heart. As an example, serves the recent Moschino collaboration with life simulator game "The Sims". (Rearick, 2019)

Another possible, and already popular, collaboration could be to team up with an official eSport professional team. These teams are highly popular and have huge fan bases. The fans might be interested in representing their favourite team by obtaining and wearing their favourite team's logo/name on a clothing product in order to show their affection towards the team. This kind of clothing is already very popular among other types of sports. From a fashion style of having a basketball dress up to owning a football organisation dress. ESport themed clothing is starting to appear more and more, recently with examples of Danish teams North and Astralis and their cooperation with huge fashion brands such as adidas and Jack and Jones. Another possible collaboration between two parties could be teaming up with a major tournament and becoming official partner for it. Creating unique, limited merchandise for events, which are selling out stadiums and are watched by millions, could also be a great way of letting the eSport and gaming community know about the company's involvement and acknowledgment of this rising phenomena.

Alternative option can be to create a collection which would be focused on similar topics to gaming but would not follow any mainstream idea. Since there is a lot of aspects of gaming world, fashion can relate to them in a creative and unique way. For example, with gaming closely connected is technology. With technology topic people can connect ideas about space/network/internet/hacking or some underground part of the population. Similar concept was developed and executed by a Swedish brand DRKN. They branded their image around being tech-wise underground gamers.

Place

These products type (clothing) is nothing new, the products should be sold by already known ways. The most obvious place for customer to find the products should be the fashion company store. If the company will work with a wholesaler, then the products should be also available in different stores. Another trusted option for customers to acquire the products should be online stores of both the fashion company and, if partnered with another organisation, then also on their store. These purchasing option are fairly common when dealing with clothing products, therefore there would be a higher chance for customers to be

able to easily direct themselves to possible options.

Another option which was also suggested for the computer accessories is the gaming events and official eSport tournaments. During a year there is several major tournaments and smaller tournament happenings for each of the main competitive games. These tournaments take several days and attract huge numbers of visitors. However, there is also number of related events happening too, for example one of the biggest LAN parties and tournaments at the same time “DreamHack” was firstly only European LAN party. With the success it showed during the years, now it hosts their events also in the United States. And a popular event with a focus set up more on socialising are any kind of convention events, where its common to meet up with a popular content creators, streamers, game developers, etc. Depending on the community, there are several major events such as Twitchcon, which is the event organised by the biggest livestreaming website [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv). These events do not only bring together a lot of people interested in livestreaming scene, but also these events are hugely promoted and streamed by the streamers, which could lead up to higher promotion.

Price

This type of product is already present on the market from the fashion company and also from the competitors. The company most likely have a set of rules and plans for setting up the price of clothing products. Therefore, this new collection should not be anything different and should set the price similar as other collections, so the customers would not be surprised with a totally new type of collection and collaboration with a higher price that they are already used to and familiar with. This way the customers could see that the quality and brand is still the same (if not better) and that this, even though is first collaboration of such type, it still is the same brand as the customer loves. If the collection would have positive feedback and would be profitable, that would clearly show that the market is interested in this new ideas and business plans. This data and information would also confirm possibility of future similar collaborations. This being said, if the company would plan to continue in this eSport x fashion partnerships, the first collection should after some time be lowered with the pricing right before the new collection would be announced and released. This strategy is known as a Skimming strategy and is very popular and used as away for companies to still be able to sell some older or less popular products to customer. Market is used to this strategy therefore people could be already waiting for this switch. Hence it is important to have a new attraction prepared for the customers.

Promotion

On a similar note the clothing products should be promoted using an influencer strategy. However, in this case there should not be the campaign focused around influencer from eSport and gaming community, but also from individuals from a fashion/blogger world. These influencers also have a huge follower bases and mainly they function on social medias such as Twitter, Instagram and some of them also are creating content on Youtube. Last but not least come blogs of fashion, that are also very popular and great way of finding out new informations from a fashion scene.

Both types of influencer should also be provided with some code for their audience for a percentage amount off from their purchase. By this the influencer can receive a portion of the purchase and this way it might motivate them to promote and mention the partnership often and creatively. Another promotional strategy could be to have one or more official brand ambassadors which will be “the face” of the collection. The ambassadors should be chosen from both communities in order to reach the highest portion of public.

The promotion should also be highly focused online. Advertisements, banners on related fashion/eSport websites and a cooperation with some of the major websites should be also prepared before the official launch of the collection. Also, these should be a several themed video format promotional materials uploaded frequently on official accounts of the brands. The same effort should be put into creating an appealing and unique photoshoot. Overall the campaign should be, from the brands position, using a lot of popular actions such as creating special launch events where the product lines would be firstly shown for the public. It would be necessary to invite the right quests, bloggers, influencers, eSport and fashion individuals.

Influencer strategy

As it was suggested multiple times during the thesis, the fashion company should consider using Influencer marketing strategy. Influencers are nowadays a huge and common source of inspiration for a lot of people. These influencers usually have a big audience which follows them and trusts their opinions and reviews on a certain topics, services or even products. (tapinfluence.com, 2019) There are multiple platforms on which influencer may operate and each platform is somehow different from the other. There are popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook. Content creating platform YouTube is still the most sought and viewed video platform online. A massive website with enormous numbers of daily unique views, twitch.tv, is a champion on the livestreaming platforms. All of these websites create a number of communities with thousands of people connected by similar interest and passions. Amongst users of these websites, there are some which have a certain “power” and voice, and by whom other users can be influenced. They have an ability to change the behaviors, trends, demands and overall impact decisioning making processes in regards of certain goods. Users trust their influencers because on their platform of choice, they created a relevant and sufficient content on a specific topic which reached a lot of users and helped them decide in some way.

The brands and companies gain a lot of traffic and recognition on the market when relevant influencer mentions them, or just some information or news connected towards the brand. This can of course happen in both positive and negative way, but for the sake of argument, only positive mentions are considered. These are easily reached by signing a contract with said public persona. This agreement is called *sponsored partnership*. This way, the company benefits from partnering up with the influencer and the more exposure brings potentially new customers and more profit. Overall, influencer strategy has developed during the years, mainly changing that it is not anymore only about celebrities. Today, influencer could be any individual from general public, with a similar interest and passion for the same thing as hinders of common people. If they want to share their opinions and thoughts and are able to do so in a creative way, their actions will catch public’s attention. Some individuals might even trust more the regular influencers more than the celebrities.

There are several steps (Traackr , 2019) needed to follow in order to correctly prepare and execute a successful Influencer Marketing strategy. (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019)

- Setting up goals

It is necessary to outline the goals a company wants to reach. It is important to

definite this in early stages, since it will help the strategy during the run of a company and it will also help in tracking and monitoring the performance and success of the campaign. With setting up goals it is also crucial to prepare a proper way of actually measuring the results of the campaign. It can be measured in different factors depending on what the company wants to achieve. Some common ones are Awareness, Purchases, Considerations, Preferences and Loyalty and of course by a Return of Investment (ROI)

- Defining the Target audience

However, this step is for most of the companies already answered in their business plan. Eventually the firm needs to know who their target customer is and what market are they trying to engage with. This is still necessary to be confident on when preparing IMS (Influencer Marketing Strategy) since this would have an impact on the future steps. It should also be easier to find a relevant influencer as they most likely would already be active on this market and would have the same goals within the market.

- Plan the influencer strategy

The company needs to determine, and plan how should the whole strategy look like, what kind of information should be shared by the influencer, how often the influencer should mention the cooperation with the company, etc. (Berger, 2018) Having an idea about the cooperation would also help the influencers to be able to faster adapt to the terms and agreements and would allow them to prepare the suitable content more easily and in faster speed.

- Discovering the most appropriate influencers

This step can be considered the core of the whole strategy and one of the most important tasks that the company will have to face. Finding right influencers will also regulate how the whole strategy will be conducted and how successful it will be. The influencer needs to be considered as “face” of the company for the period of time the partnership will last. A lot of them go as far as reaching the “*brand ambassador*” level and hence more people connect them with the brand immediately. The selected influencers however should not always be picked by their popularity. The person needs to be considered by his audience as a leader character and therefore he/she needs to behave properly to this title. It is also important that this influencer would be relevant towards the products or services the company is offering for the public.

- Measure and collaboration

After finding the proper Influencer, signing the contract agreeing to all the terms and plans and both parties being on the same boat with same ideas, the company should measure the current success of the campaign. (Kosaka, 2019) This would preferably take place after some agreed time. After finding the results positive, it would be appropriate to consider prolonging the contract with the influencer. The new campaign should be discussed to see if there is some potential in creating some new content. In case of advertisement not reaching the goal, which organization aimed for, dealing with a different influencer could be considered. Also, during this stage there would be time to fix some issues, conduct research for what aspects of the campaign should be improved and overall to see if the campaign is actually worth keeping alive.

Suggestions for IMS

After a brief description of what Influencer marketing strategy is and the basics of the tools, now the search would look into some potential ideas to consider as a suitable influencer for this new entry to a eSport and gaming community.

As already mentioned, in this community and market there are several different potentials for being a relevant and successful influencer. Since eSport overall is a huge industry, there is a lot of factors and aspects that people do not even consider important and some of them are hugely important for the growth of the community as it is now.

eSport teams and players

When talking about eSport and gaming, in order to impress the common user and fan, the most relevant influencer could be an eSport athlete, team or organization. Therefore, this would be the first suggestion. Since there are a lot of different games, which all have their top tier rank teams and players, the potential for the fashion company can be considered very big. These games have their fan bases, however there are some video games which are significantly more popular and more suitable. Suitable meaning as in being the right game for the entry to an eSport market. Currently the most watched (TwitchTracker, 2019), played and known competitive games in are: Fortnite, League of Legends, Overwatch, Hearthstone, Counter Strike: Global Offensive and Dota2. (TwitchMetrics, 2019) These titles are hosting the biggest eSport tournaments (ESport Earnings, 2019) with the most viewers and the highest prize pools. (ESport Earnings, 2019)

The selection of the right team or organization could be more difficult than it seems. There are few organizations which focus on having a roster for every popular games. Some of the most known are Cloud9, TSM, Team Liquid, but there are of course many more. Usually these parties have teams in all the popular games and are doing exceptionally good in most of them. (Settimi, 2018)

Therefore, this is another factor the fashion company should consider when they want to find the proper organization to team up with.

If the company would be interested in firstly focusing into one specific game and one team, they could, depending on the budget, reach up to the top tier teams or focus on new upcoming underdogs which are showing big improvements. Similar case is the collaboration of Jack and Jones, Danish fashion brand and team Astralis. Astralis is team of Danish origin as well, that focuses only on game Counter Strike: Global Offensive, where they currently hold the position of being the best in the world. (HLTV, 2019)

It could be easier to start with just one team majoring one game, since there could be less problems in discussing the whole process of the campaign, because of the direct content with the management and the players themselves. This also brings us to the next option for the company to consider when finding the right influencers.

Individual eSport players

This trend of turning an eSport player into the brand ambassador is something that eSport and

gaming community did experience many times. It brings a closer “relationship” between the audience and the influencer, since the player is not branded by the company’s name. Gaming community and audience does not see this player performing on either big stages or online, they only see him as a character in the video game. However, social media are allowing these players to show their fans the “behind the scene” content of their personal lives and how they live outside the eSport scene. A great example can be a Swedish CS: GO player Olof “Olofmeister” Kajbjer Gustafsson. In 2015 Olof was ranked the number 1 CS: GO player in the world (HLTV, 2016) during this time he was playing for an organization called Fnatic. During this time a Swedish fashion brand DRKN acquired this eSport athlete and he became an ambassador for the brand. (Bohlin, 2016) The player often wore a branded accessories during the major tournaments, which were viewed by millions. His activity was also on his social media accounts on Twitter and Instagram where he posted related posts to DRKN company. Shortly after the brands products could have been seen also worn by either people in the audience or even by other CS:GO players or casters. The company also created a special limited collection with another Swedish team called Ninjas in Pyjamas. (NiP, 2016)

Live streamers

From the Introduction of livestreaming, the whole platform became hugely popular. Nowadays, more than a million users are watching their favorite streamers on twitch at any given time. (Carpenter, 2018) These numbers are increasing with constant new updates and new innovative features in creating even better environment and community for streamers and viewers. The social aspect of livestreaming is however one of the most important things to understand. The possibility of viewers communicating with either rest of the audience or the live streamer himself, creates a friendly and welcoming environment for the whole community. Users creates relationships with each other or with the streamers and moderators. These people are also supporting their favourite streamers in extreme ways. There are several occasions of people donating tens of thousands of dollars to streamers as a gesture of appreciation and support. (Puschina, 2019) Some of the biggest streamers are pulling intensive amounts of viewers. The amounts are in thousands and even hundreds of thousands. For example Tyler “Ninja” Blevins during one of his streames had generated more than 600.000 viewers. Tyler played with a popular music artist Drake and after some time Travis Scott and NFL player Juju Smith-Schuster also joined the duo. (BBC, 2018) Depending on the game and a person, some of the biggest and well-known streamers are pulling around 20.000 viewers per stream on daily basis. (Twitch Metrics, 2019) Now imagine this from a company’s perspective, one person can promote their services or products for a thousand of people online creating content as before. hence, these live streamers are perfect examples of influencers, because very often people come to their streams for the interaction and social aspects, rather than for the actual gameplay. Of course, the purpose of twitch is strongly focused on games and the gameplay is a huge part of it, but the human factor is important as well, if not more. A lot of people are committed and strongly loyal to their favorite streamers that they follow them everywhere on every social media. This way the influencer can reach their audience even on bigger range since he/she are not limited to only one platform. These streamers mostly use also a webcam which is perfect for promoting different products. For the purpose of this thesis the clothing products, tech products and also the in-game products would be easily promoted at the same time. Intentionally or naturally the partnered streamers can mention their opinions on these products and give their honest reviews to thousands of viewers. Also, popular form of attracting huge amounts

of people are special giveaways and special discounts codes. By providing a unique discount code to every partnered influencer, the company can also monitor how many users actually use this codes and determine which influencers are bringing in the end more profit or more traffic and visits.

Depending on the choice of game there are several big streamers which are focused only around one specific games by which the public knows them. There are also types of streamers which fall under the category of “Variety” which means they stream all the popular games and new titles despite if the games are multiplayer or single player. Therefore, the fashion company could have a lot of different options to choose from, depending on the resources and how much they would be willing to invest into this new marketing strategy. Some of these live streamers are also content creators on YouTube, so this brings some additional plus points to these ones, since they could have two communities and, on some platforms, might produce higher numbers than on the other one.

YouTube content creators

Lastly the great way of reaching an enormous part of eSport and gaming community is, as stated above, by YouTube. There is plenty of different channels which focuses their content on relevant topics. As already mentioned, some of these content creators are also building their audience in livestream world, these could be considered as little bit more advanced for the promotion. It is no surprise that a number 1 channel on YouTube (Social Blade, 2019) is a gaming channel created by a Swedish YouTube personality Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg, also known as “PewDiePie”. There are however hundreds of different channels with a great huge potential. Gaming related content is growing, and more and more people are showing their interest in creating new and unique videos for the public. These content creators, similarly as live streamers, could easily promote all three suggested products. Since the videos could be discussed and prepared before recording, this gives a better idea of how the video should be constructed, what kind of information should be included in the video, and also the company can review the video before publication of the influencer. Also, after releasing the video it is easy to measure the success of the videos because of likes/shares/comments. There is plenty of creative ways how the fashion company could work with a youtuber. Very popular trend on YouTube are unboxing and reviews of products which are send by the companies. People are always curious on how the products might look on video captured by another person and not how they look on stock pictures, since these could be easier to adjust, to look most appealing. Moreover, before selecting which YouTuber would be suitable for being a brand ambassador, the fashion company can easily research the potential candidates. The companies could analyse the YouTube channel, social media, third party websites which shows the frequency of subscribers, likes and comments. The one of the most known websites for these analyses is socialblade.com

Risk assessment

It is essential for any company, if planning to execute a new business plan, to be prepared for every possible scenario. Meaning if the new strategy would be executed correctly, then how to keep the profit still being conjured and how to sustain this situation as long as possible. However, there is also another side, represented in the potential issues and dangers which could come up with this strategies and actions. Risk assessment is a tool, that analyses the

potential negative actions, situations and outcomes for which the company should be prepared. The tool also creates awareness of hazards, profit losses or even injuries. (CCOHS, 2019) However, for the purpose of this research, the tool would be mainly used to analyse the situations regarding the business actions, not so much about the potential health issues consequences. Although they certainly should not be ignored in a real-life scenario, even in business environments.

- One of the most feared and avoided negative possible outcomes is that the product which the company will decide to present as their entry to the eSport market, might not be attractive for customers. This, however, could be somehow prevented by conducting a market research on a wide spectrum and the company should be able to perform it for longer period of time. It is crucial to know how the market operates, how the customers prefer their products and also if there aren't already same products on market available. In this case the fashion company has 3 different options for entering the new market. It probably is unlikely that all of the products would fail their potential, since the demand for these products will continue because of the overall popularity or future developments and growth of eSport scene. Thus, it is mainly crucial on how the company will promote their products.
- Promotion could not attract a substantial amount of the community, or it might not deliver the full message of the benefits and features of the products and overall might not evoke the need for owning these new goods in potential customers. The promotion could go wrong in many aspects. People might see the collaborations between two communities as a way of “outsider” trying to enter the eSport market and only look for profit. They might not see the bigger picture of possible growth of both communities. The trends might also change and overall whole eSport marketing might turn into something very different than it is today. Now eSport tournaments, livestreams and YouTube are hugely popular sources for a lot of eSport enthusiasts. However, if these phenomena would change, the company will need to adapt to these changes. Also, as the influencer strategy was suggested as one of the main promotional strategies, there could be a lot of problems likewise in this case. The influencers might lose their audience, the audience might not be interested in the products they will be promoting. A miss-communication of the important informations might fail and the audience might not be properly influenced.
- Overall the two new communities might not have the chemistry together and there could be issues with combining them together. Some individuals could not see the potential in helping both communities by this cooperation and would try to share their negative opinions and forward them maybe to others.
- Competition might rise faster than expected and the initial first launches might be forgotten because of better promotion or higher quality products from the competitors. These two communities are well known and cannot be considered new. Although the eSport is younger and is in the growth stage, people still know about this phenomenon. Therefore, other companies might be also preparing their eSport entries and could launch them in similar timeframe.
- Trends in fashion are always changing. Considering a lot of different styles, designers and outside factors which are determining trends and changes in this world. Factors such as music, sport, pop culture, cinematography, etc. All of them could have some part of changing what is trendy and what will be sought by customers. This same event could occur in gaming and eSport world, when a certain game could lose their player-bases and would lose the numbers. This happens a lot in this market, some games are played for

years, some will not survive even first month, very recent example is Apex Legends. This game was released on 4th of February without any major leaks or information regarding. Immediately it gained huge numbers and even overcame a giant in video games; Fortnite. However, with the introduction of a new feature, the game quickly fell down and from generating the viewers peaking up to 670,000 to roughly 30,000. People assumed that this title would be the one that will defeat Fortnite, however that never happened. Fortnite is still the number 1 game on [twitch.tv](https://www.twitch.tv) with generating always the highest numbers on a regular basis. Therefore, it could be tricky to choose which game should the fashion company collaborate with, because of potential trend changes, as it was in this case.

- On a similar note, deciding the company which should be selected as the most suitable one to create collaboration with can also present a risk. There were suggested diverse businesses under which the company could operate, ranging from tech companies up to eSport organisations. These different companies and organisations might not be interested in this new partnership and might decline the offers. Therefore, it would be beneficial to have other options researched, if the worst-case scenario would happen.

Discussion

From the overall findings which were obtained and analysed there are significant showings and predictions that the fashion companies could enter eSport and gaming market. From the results of the forum posts, it shows that video game enthusiasts are interested in fashion and in the products, which are trendy. There is, however, deficit in their knowledge of different sources for purchasing clothing merchandises. Therefore, the popular topic in the forums were “where other users purchase clothes”. There were mentions of popular big reselling websites such as asos.co.uk, amazon.com and some physical stores such as Primark. This could be a very important information for any fashion company that would consider entering this market. They would hugely need to focus on promotion and creating marketing that would be able to reach these customers. Since they might have different interest than the common customers of a fashion company, the organizations needs to research all the possibility on how to let the new potential customers know that they are offering best products for them.

On terms of suggested products, these ideas would let the company to enter the market from different segments. Accessories from a tech perspective, which every gamer needs in order to be able to fully pursue their passion in video games. The need for fashion choices and options was already displayed before in data collection. Lastly, the popular form of microtransactions and rapidly growing market shows the potential for the creation of in-game fashion products. This suggestion is fully supported in latest news of the 22nd of May 2019. The information about collaboration was released, regarding already mentioned giant in video game industry; Fortnite and well-known sports fashion company Nike. These two organizations agreed on creating a special version of one of the iconic Nike products, shoes familiarly called “*Jordans*”. This type of introduction of in-game fashion items in competitive multiplayer game was a first of its kind. This shows that major companies such as Epic Games and Nike did not only consider investing in their collaboration, but also tried what products might be successful for eSport and gaming community. There are multiple different competitive games which could in future be also used for a similar campaign. However, it is not surprising that an enormous game such as Fortnite was the first to try this new trend. Epic Games were

trying to connect a popular mainstream events or communities with eSport and gaming. For example, one of their campaigns was a collaboration with a Marvel's movie Avengers: Infinity War. There were also special limited skins for Olympic games and other major sport events. Overall, it seems that Epic Games are trying to show public that video-games are much more than just pixels and that users are interested in different aspects. However, this was not entirely the first case of implementing virtual items into video-game. A high fashion brand Moschino created a in-game version of their collection with roleplaying single player game The Sims. The collection in real-life had more products related to the game, however in the game there was only one item available for the players to buy. This is different from the Fortnite x Nike case in many aspects. The two games are different in their player base and also in the purpose of the game, Fortnite is multiplayer eSport game and The Sims is relaxing, simulator game. Also, Moschino is focused mainly on production for female audience and this seemed like a perfect match with Sims, since majority of the players of this video game are female players.

Another topic which was often mentioned in the thesis is a hugely popular marketing strategy that a lot of companies use nowadays. This strategy was used for all three products events though they are quite different from each other. The purpose of the Influencer marketing strategy is to gain a more recognition and customers with a help of a individuals with a significant "power". These influencers have a voice which their followers might trust and understand more than for example the information they would receive from the official company's website or social media. The eSport and gaming community is hugely active online. Therefore, major part of game fans is also active on different social platforms. Social aspect of eSport is as important as the gameplay of the games. The suggested influencers in eSport are also active on social media, since this is a great way of creating a "relationship" between the audience and the influencer. Especially when talking about live streamers and content creators. Their job is in a way entertaining an audience and being always public and social. During the time people might develop different emotions and opinions towards these entertainers and the ones which are enjoying the content they produce, might trust their opinions more than they would official social media accounts of the actual fashion company. Huge part of the follower base is considering these influencers as a role models and they would like to wear and do what they are doing. It is important for the influencers to have a positive impact on these fans, because some of them most likely are in younger segments. These influencers might have bigger impact on these users than they would even recognize. However, it clearly shows that eSport and gaming scene does not consist of just small children, that care about video games and killing, as some of the media portraits them. There were several occasions when gaming communities tried to offer a helping hand in charitable organizations. Several livestreaming charity events were held by the exact influencers with their fans, during which they have raised significant amounts of money. This shows that this community is not only children and teens, but smart, emotional people. Therefore, the transition with fashion company might be more difficult to do alone and IMS might be the perfect way of how to enter this market. The fashion organization needs to show they want to help and improve gaming community and connect them with other huge, mainstream part of the world. Not just to show up for the huge growth that eSport is showing and future bigger predictions it holds.

Conclusion

After all the findings, the analysis shows there is a huge potential for a fashion company entering eSport and gaming market and hence the community. This group is interested in clothing products and the predictions are showing that the eSport is only going to grow and might reach enormous size. There are different aspects which the fashion company can invest in and enter the market. The suggested options are structured around collaborating in production of some of the main products that user might be interested in. From the necessary computer accessories, to hugely popular virtual in-game items and lastly to actual clothing products, which gamers are looking for. All these entries could reach a significant portion of the eSport and gaming market. The big focus needs to be set upon promotion. Since this will be a new market and community, the fashion company needs to convince the users about the quality of the products and also about the goals and bigger picture which could lead from this connection. With fashion being part of eSport, this would mean more recognition in a mainstream world and more people would be interested in the other community more. Meaning people which were interested in fashion, would be more interested in gaming and vice versa. This could also mean the public might understand that the eSport trends have changed, and video-game fans are far apart from being “nerds” as it was common opinion in the past. These eSport athletes, content creators and live streamers are considered celebrities and role-models for huge part of the community. Exactly these types of entertainers could be the main and most valuable asset that the fashion company could have. With their knowledge about the market and community, with their fanbase and achievements and passion for video-games, they could bring new ideas and suggestions on how to properly execute this partnership. They have the knowledge from both perspectives of the table. They once were also younger and just common fans of video games. But now they are on the other side, being the personalities that people watch instead, and still have the same passion and interest in this world as they had before. Therefore, they could see how the typical gamer would react to certain strategies and adjust to that. They know their followers more than anyone, since eSport and gaming community are very close, and people are building close and friendly relationships and loyalties. The main influencers which might have the biggest voice probably are the live streamers. They talk, interact and entertain these users very often, in some cases daily and one could argue that they put more energy and emotion into their profession. Certainly, the eSport athletes put a lot of training and effort into making sure they are in their best condition mentally, physically and skilfully in the game. But they have a less close interaction with their fans. Thus, they certainly should be considered as a sufficient influencer in the IMS.

Overall eSport and gaming community is still in development and trends are changing, new games are coming out and age segments spread as much as they can. This community is hugely based on social aspect and the fashion company needs to understand how these users think and how to actually help the community grow even bigger. If the user would see the good-will from the fashion company, they would show their empathy towards them. This community is active online, therefore the opinions, news and stories are reaching a lot of users fast, hence it is extremely important to show good impression. People tend to be ruder and more relentless regarding expressing their opinions

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