

# Gaming turizam

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POLYTECHNIC OF MEĐIMURJE IN ČAKOVEC  
TOURISM AND SPORTS MANAGEMENT

DAVID STRELEC

GAMING TOURISM

FINAL PAPER

Čakovec, 2022.



MEĐIMURSKO VELEUČILIŠTE U ČAKOVCU  
MENADŽMENT TURIZMA I SPORTA

DAVID STRELEC

GAMING TURIZAM

ZAVRŠNI RAD

Mentor:

Marija Miščančuk, v.pred.

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Smjer: **Menadžment turizma**

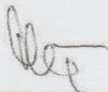
Zadatak: **Gaming turizam**

Opis zadatka:

Ukratko opisati što je to turizam i koje su specifične vrste turizma, s posebnim naglaskom na gaming turizam, i to posebno u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama. Opisati gaming turizam i njegove specifičnosti. Koliki je udjel ove vrste turizma u ukupnom prihodu od turizma u državi. Tko su najčešći gaming turisti i na koji način se ova vrsta turizma ostvaruje i što uključuje. Tko su gaming turisti i koje su njihove najčešće destinacije. Statistički podaci vezani uz gaming turizam.

Zadatak uručen pristupniku: 5. siječnja 2021.  
Rok za predaju rada: 20. rujna 2021.

Mentor:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Marija Miščančuk, v. pred.

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\_\_\_\_\_

## **ABSTRACT**

*With the emergence of new technologies and the development of existing technology, the world is one step closer to digitalization every day. Most of the work we do is done by machines and a large number of jobs are done online. This paper deals with gaming, a recent phenomenon whose characteristics and elements are used in various aspects of tourism and other activities, in order for them to be performed more efficiently or to introduce game-like elements in these same activities. Gamification or the introduction of game elements has been practised for a long time, and we can find them in almost any field of work. Specifically, in the field of tourism, gaming has achieved great success. Museums, exhibitions and city tours have developed a lot due to gaming, giving challenges and tasks in a fun way. The digitization of tourism has provided many people with experiences that greatly change their views on tourism. The offer for tourists is also undergoing a transformation, which is evident by the emergence of more and more gaming hotels, cafés and other hospitality establishments. More teenagers and younger generations are getting involved and travelling because of gaming. Esports have consolidated into the market with their income and have proven that games can cumulate as much as, if not more, money than traditional sports. The great world-famous arenas are quickly getting sold out so that spectators can enjoy the competitive spirit of teams competing while playing on desktop computers. Their popularity also comes due to the great accessibility of games, since most of them take place via the Internet, which can be found anywhere in today's age. This paper conducted a study using an online survey questionnaire. The survey aimed to explore how informed people are about gaming tourism and esports; to explore how much they are willing to travel for video games, and what opinions they have about gaming in tourism activities and the gaming tourism offer. With data collected from this research, it can be concluded that the inclusion of gaming in tourism is a good thing, and that gamified tourist activities and tourism offers are a great help to tourism as an activity. The research has also proven that people are ready to accept the changes brought about by esports and their huge contribution to the tourism market.*

**Keywords:** *esports, gamer, gamification, gaming, tourism*

# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	4
1. INTRODUCTION .....	7
2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAMING IN TOURISM.....	9
3. GAMING TOURISM .....	11
3.1 Digital gaming tourism .....	12
3.2 Gaming hospitality facilities .....	13
4. ESPORTS.....	16
4.1 The development and importance of esports.....	17
5. RESEARCH ON GAMING TOURISM AND ESPORTS AWARENESS.....	19
5.1 Research methodology.....	19
5.2 Research results .....	20
5.3 Research restrictions .....	28
6. DISCUSSION.....	29
7. CONCLUSION.....	29
8. REFERENCES .....	31
LIST OF PICTURES .....	32
LIST OF FIGURES .....	32
ATTACHMENT .....	33

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The research problem is based on the fact that more different types of tourism are being established due to the tourism experience. The tourism offer is adapted to the tourists as individuals in order to meet their specific needs. One of these many new types of tourism is gaming tourism, which is emerging as a new specific form of tourism tailored to a certain type of tourist.

Gaming by itself has become an equally important motive in the last few years, in some cases even bigger than sports, since some schools even give scholarships for gaming, and special career paths have occurred because in some places it is considered a sport. This is largely due to the emergence of esports, which have opened the door to fame for many gamers. Esports have launched a trillion-dollar industry involving brands such as Coca-Cola and celebrities such as Michael Jordan. The emergence and success of gaming tourism have changed many people's views on tourism and given some tourists better opportunities to spend their free time.

The subject of this research is gaming tourism and esports. Firstly, gaming tourism is analysed, then the readiness to travel for games, and tourism motives related to games and gaming. Furthermore, it explores how the application of gamification affects tourism and tourism activities, and what people think about the gaming tourism offer. Finally, information about esports and their impact on opinions about games as a sport will be investigated.

The goals of this research paper include analysing gaming tourism as a phenomenon, exploring the motives of tourists involved in gaming tourism, exploring the connection of gaming tourism with other types of tourism, analysing the appearance and development of esports, and what impact they have on gaming tourism. The paper is thematically divided into 4 parts. The first part is dedicated to the introduction, problem, subject, and research goals. In the second part, secondary research was carried out. This part seeks to analyse gaming tourism as a phenomenon, which implies describing the reason for its occurrence, its growth in the past few years, exploring the motives for which people engage in this form of tourism, exploring the connection with other types of tourism and ways in which gamification in any form is involved in tourism and how its application to tourist activity can be better, more interesting and profitable.



The third part is related to the primary research on a sample of 101 people. They responded to a survey on gaming tourism and esports awareness based on their opinions and experience on the topic. The fourth part presents a conclusion based on the research, and methodology which describes the examination of the sample.

## 2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAMING IN TOURISM

The term gamification first appeared in 2008 and has been popularized since 2010 (Deterding 2011). The term implies the use of game design elements and game-like thinking methods in non-gaming contexts (Deterding et al., 2011).

Gamification has already been successfully used in many fields (marketing, healthcare, education) and is a tool with a lot of potential, which has long been implemented in tourism. Any activity that involves collecting points to be used for some kind of bonus or reward is a form of gamification. Sweepstakes<sup>1</sup>, loyalty cards, and educational quizzes also belong to this group. An example is restaurants that give free products for the achievements of virtual game players such as Foursquare<sup>2</sup> to improve brand recognition (Frey 2012).

Tourism is a tertiary activity that is oriented around customer service, where the most important part of the experience is the impression that it leaves on the tourist. Tourists want to spend quality free time and have a unique experience. Therefore, the implementation of gamification in tourism is a good business opportunity for the development of tourism offer and an opportunity for tourists to have a valuable and unique experience. Tourism organizations can increase consumer involvement in value creation depending on how empowered they are to play a role in creating new products (Weber et al., 2013).

On the other hand, gamification also affects tourism organization employees themselves. Involving employees in multiple activities improves their working experience, as well as their willingness to work. Therefore, the main goals of gamification are to increase the motivation of tourists and employees in order to achieve a change in behaviour when buying products and working efficiently, and to enable tourists and employees to participate in creating value, as well as creating a unique experience (Weber et al., 2013).

From the first cases of using gamification to date, the offer and quality of gamified content in tourism have developed significantly. From using augmented reality and enhancing tourist experience for better destination navigation to digitally visiting real and unreal destinations from the comfort of your own home.

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<sup>1</sup> A form of gambling, in which all the stakes are divided among the winners.

<sup>2</sup> A website and mobile app used for searching information on events and facilities and their reviews in the user's current area.

Good examples of using gamification in tourism are quizzes about cities and destinations to tell stories more attractively, interactive games in museums (virtual maps for getting around, special facts that are unlocked by solving tasks) and treasure hunts (searching for hidden objects by following clues) ([https://medium.com/@kate\\_ojoo/tourism-gamification-examples-and-what-is-there-for-you-9e2f697830ae](https://medium.com/@kate_ojoo/tourism-gamification-examples-and-what-is-there-for-you-9e2f697830ae)).

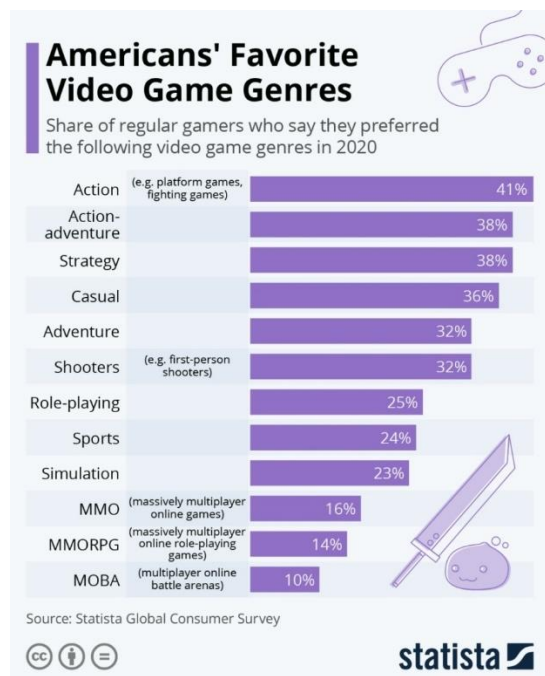
### 3. GAMING TOURISM

To understand the concept of gaming tourism, we must first define what the terms game and tourism mean, and how exactly they apply to each other. The term gaming refers to the practice or activity of playing games (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gaming>).

Juul (2003 p. 36) defines a game as "a rule-based formal system with a variable and quantifiable outcome, where different outcomes demonstrate different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable." The key factor in describing games is the active involvement of players in activities that are different from everyday and normal life, creating a completely new but artificial experience. Depending on the type of game, it can involve conflict or player cooperation, even fighting the game system, and solving various challenges. There are various types of games that are divided into categories or genres.

Picture 1 shows the most popular video game genres in the USA for the year 2020. It also shows what percentage of players prefer which genre of the game.

**Picture 1.** America's favourite video game genres in 2020



Source: Statista, <https://www.statista.com/figure/24700/favored-video-game-genres-in-the-us/> (3.5.2021.)

Tourism is a movement, a migration in which a person travels from a permanent place of residence to another place (with the intention of returning) for a minimum period of twenty-four hours to a maximum of six months solely for the purpose of quality leisure time or idleness and pleasure (<https://tourismnotes.com/travel-tourism/>).

Every tourist gets involved in travelling for a certain reason. Tourists have a need to travel because they are motivated by various facilities, landscapes, feelings, attractions, and even health conditions. For the most part, these reasons are subjective, related to the personality of the tourist himself and his personal interests and desires. Tourist needs are associated with tourist motivation, which consequently provokes tourist activity under the influence of individual and external influence factors (Holloway, 1994).

Among the individual factors of influence are hobbies and lifestyle, both of which may be related to playing games. Thus, the term gaming tourism refers to a specific form of tourism in which tourist supply and demand are motivated by gaming.

### **3.1 Digital gaming tourism**

In addition to traditional tourism where the tourist travels to a tourist destination, there is also digital tourism. Digital tourism can be defined as digital support for the tourism experience before, during and after the tourist activity, and it is all about improving the tourist experience at each of these stages (Benyon et al., 2014). Digital tourism focuses on a wide range of destinations and contexts, e.g. museums, gatherings, landscapes, zoos and theme parks (Durrant et al., 2011a).

The development of technology has brought us many opportunities in tourism. Travel technology, as part of digital tourism, implies the application of information and communication technology (ICT) or information technology (IT) for providing information and support for hospitality, tourism and travelling (<https://www.daytranslations.com/blog/digital-tourism-travel/>).

This paper seeks to better explain the concept of digital gaming tourism, which is a little more specific than ordinary digital tourism. Digital tourism allows travellers to recreate all the sparks and beauties of exploring the real world, with the difference that parts of their

journeys take place in the digital world. It is the crossing of classic tourism and a video game (<https://www.roughguides.com/articles/introduction-to-digital-tourism/>).

The transition from the real to the unreal world is the most important element of digital gaming tourism. Since it visually looks like the real world and yet takes place in a digital dimension, it looks like a game. This allows people to immerse themselves in remote and inaccessible, or fictional and non-existent places in a way that goes beyond usual multimedia experiences (Cruz-Neira et al. 1993).

Video games are an art form. Young tourists who grew up with newer technology associate these games with nostalgia and good moments. In the context of games, gaming tourism is playing games with the primary goal of exploring the fictitious world, without interference. Games that are made for gaming tourism do not expect players to think quickly and logically, but are fully dedicated to the experience they leave to their players (<http://vectorpoem.com/tourism/>).

### **3.2 Gaming hospitality facilities**

According to the ordinance on classification, minimum conditions and categorization of hospitality facilities, hospitality establishments in the Republic of Croatia are classified into five groups; hotels, campsites and other types of hospitality facilities for accommodation, restaurants, bars, canteens and meal preparations.

A fact that should not surprise anyone nowadays is that there are hospitality establishments that are arranged for tourists who are motivated by games, such as gaming hotels and gaming cafés. Gaming hotels are special hotels for tourists who love holidays and games. There they can enjoy their hobby because these hotels are equipped with all the necessary accessories and act as battle stations for gamers (<https://woduels.com/en/news/gaming-hotels-train-like-a-pro-or-travel-like-a-true-gamer>).

One of the best examples of such hotels is the Arcade Hotel in Amsterdam, which is also the world's first gaming hotel. It is equipped with modern and retro game consoles, headphones and gaming chairs, and a fast internet connection so that online gaming isn't an obstacle. The rooms are the usual size, but the Game Room is unique. It's a 270-square-foot room that

features six gaming computers, each modern game console, and a virtual reality section (<https://www.alltherooms.com/blog/best-hotels-for-gamers/>).

Picture 2 shows the Game Room at the Arcade Hotel in Amsterdam. All the gaming equipment can be seen.

**Picture 2.** Game Room, Arcade Hotel, Amsterdam



Source: Frikistation, <https://frikistation.com/blog/hotel-gamer-espana/> (26.5.2021.)

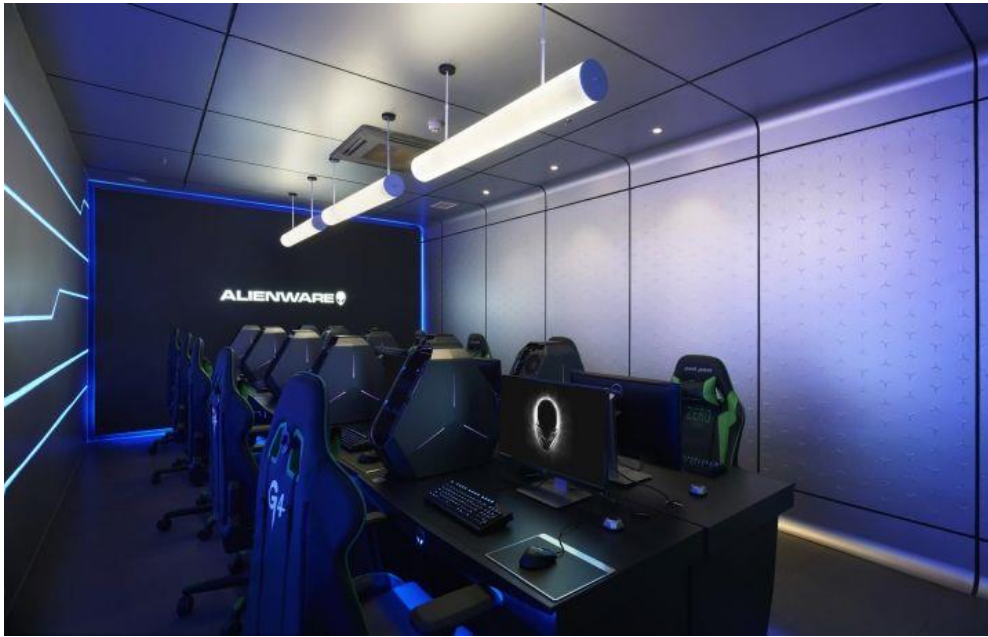
In addition to gaming hotels, there are gaming cafés. Unlike the similar term internet café, gaming cafés are specifically designed for gamers (<https://dailly.com/are-gaming-cafes-profitable/>).

The difference is that the definition of an ordinary internet café is linked to a café that houses desktops or laptops, and where a certain amount can be paid for internet use (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/internet-cafe>).

Like gaming hotels, gaming cafés are equipped to meet all the needs of gamers looking for rest, entertainment or the most ordinary cup of coffee. The best example of this would be the Alienware Internet Café in China. Despite its name, the café is ideal for gamers because it is equipped with top-notch gaming equipment and a viewing room where it is possible to watch other computer games while they take place. In addition, it is possible to order something to eat and drink. It has all the black walls and professional gaming chairs that suit the most serious gamers (<https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/alienware-internet-cafe>).

In picture 3, you can see the futuristic design of the Alienware internet café.

**Picture 3.** Alienware Internet Café, China



Source: Trendhunter, <https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/alienware-internet-cafe>  
(26.5.2021.)



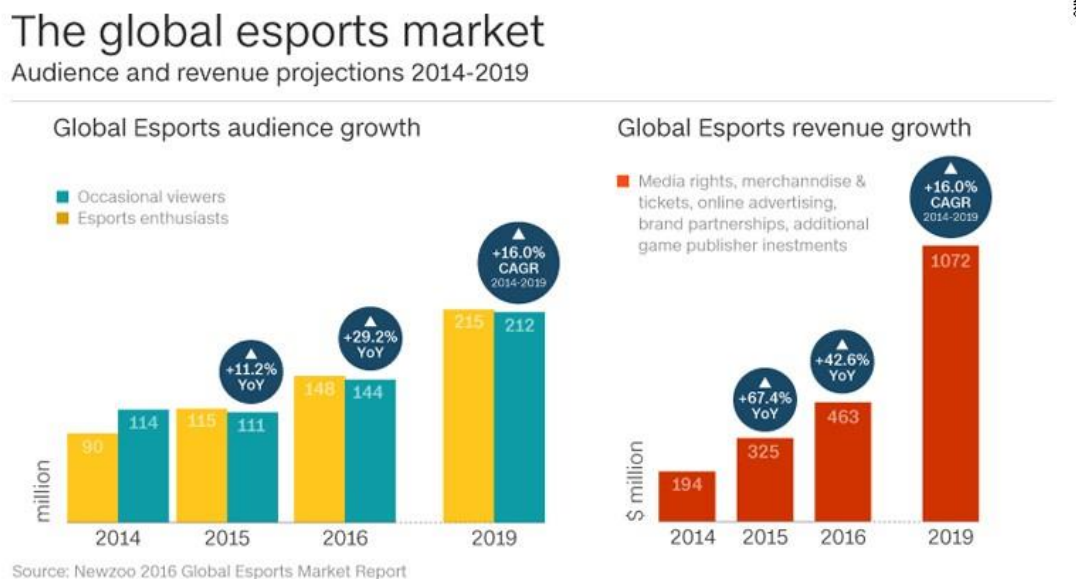
## 4. ESPORTS

Esports, also called e-Sports or Electronic Sports, represent organized video game competitions. They function like any traditional form of sport, where players form teams that compete with each other for victory, and often a cash prize. It is a very profitable market for game manufacturers, brands, and players. Since its inception 30 years ago, the EA Madden franchise has sold about 130 million copies and generated revenue of \$4 billion. Players also generate a lot of revenue, as they often play in tournaments where the main prizes are millions of dollars that are usually divided between players on the winning team. The best players easily make millions, whether it's from rewards, sponsorships, or salaries. The organizers of these competitions are also filling their pockets. In 2017, the League of Legends tournament generated \$5.5 million from tickets. These competitions are very popular and are watched by millions around the world via TV, online or streaming services like Twitch (<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/27/us/esports-what-is-video-game-professional-league-madden-trnd/index.html>).

Esports attract a large number of spectators. The market analysis company Newzoo predicted 380 million viewers around the world for 2019. Most esports fans come from South Korea, North America and China (<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/27/us/esports-what-is-video-game-professional-league-madden-trnd/index.html>).

Picture 4 presents a graphic representation of the increase in casual and regular viewers of esports and an increase in industry revenue. The number of viewers went up from 114 million in 2014 to 212 million in 2019. The global revenue growth also went up by almost \$900 million.

**Picture 4.** Graph projections of the audience and revenue of the global esports market from 2014 to 2019.



Source: Edition, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/08/27/us/esports-what-is-video-game-professional-league-madden-trnd/index.html> (29.5.2021.)

#### 4.1 The development and importance of esports

The industry only started to be talked about in the last few years. People did not know about esports until "big faces" like Michael Jordan started investing large sums of money into them. The first esports event was designed by the writer and editor Stewart Brand and it took place in the 1970s when Stanford University students were competing in a game called Spacewar to win the annual Rolling Stone magazine subscription. Stewart Brand was the first to compare these players to top athletes. The first large-scale video game tournament was the Atari championship in the game Space Invaders, in 1980, involving 10,000 players from the US. After that, tournaments for other popular games, such as Pacman, began to be organized. Esports also began appearing on television. In 1996, the EVO (Evolution Championship) series was created due to popular fighting games such as Street Fighter. Gaming was chained to consoles, but soon came games for computers (PC) that laid the foundation for today's esports. With titles such as Quake and WarCraft, PC games have had a significant impact on the gaming market, and tournaments like the Cyberathlete Professional League and

Professional Gamers League have been established. In 2000, the Korean Esports Alliance was established, which introduced the global growth of esports thanks to the influence they had in South Korea. Today the industry is in a very favourable position; the numbers of the audience are already higher today than of rugby and football combined. Revenues from the industry exceeded the amount of \$1 billion in 2019, while the number of viewers reached 443 million. If we take the rapid growth of the industry into account, statistics tell us that this kind of stable growth could lead to 2.3 billion in the next few years. Brands like Red Bull have begun to recognize the potential of esports and started to get involved, with celebrities like the musician Drake also investing in players and teams. The line between traditional athletes and esports athletes is shrinking. What used to take place in small rooms and basements today has the power to sell out world-famous stadiums in a flash (<https://supernyx.com/articles/a-brief-history-of-esports>).

Picture 5 shows the most profitable games in esports. According to this picture, Dota 2, which is a MOBA<sup>3</sup> game, is the most profitable with over \$222 million in revenue. A close second was Counter-Strike, a shooter game, with over \$93 million in revenue.

**Picture 5.** Top 10 esports games

#### **TOP 10 ESPORTS GAMES**

- Dota 2 - \$222,137,605.71
- Counter-Strike: Global Offensive - \$93,079,692.43
- Fortnite - \$84,475,824.64
- League of Legends - \$73,572,368.24
- Starcraft II - \$32,737,447.08
- PUBG - \$22,512,816.62
- Overwatch - \$21,698,821.28
- Hearthstone - \$20,398,088.36
- Heroes of the Storm - \$18,141,257.92
- Arena of Valor - \$13,747,834.22

Source: Supernyx, <https://supernyx.com/articles/a-brief-history-of-esports> (1.6.2021.)

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<sup>3</sup> Multiplayer online battle arena.

## **5. RESEARCH ON GAMING TOURISM AND ESPORTS AWARENESS**

The subject of this research is finding out how well people are informed about gaming tourism and esports. The main goal of this research is to explore the readiness to travel for the sake of games, and the motives for tourism related to games and gaming. It will also explore how gamification affects tourism and tourism activities, what people think of it, the gaming tourism offer, and information about esports and their influence on opinions about games as a sport.

### **5.1 Research methodology**

The research goals in this paper are the analysis of gaming tourism as a phenomenon, the investigation of tourist motives involved in gaming tourism, the connection gaming tourism has with other types of tourism, the analysis of the appearance and development of esports, and what impact they have on gaming tourism. In addition, the opinions that respondents have on the topic based on information or experience are also examined. The survey was conducted using an online survey. In addition to the speed of collecting responses, a great advantage of online testing is the fact that anyone can respond anonymously, so it is possible to collect a large number of unique and different responses.

The survey was made by the author of the research. The poll consisted of eighteen questions. The first few questions were about the gender and age of the respondents, whether they liked games, and whether they were playing video games. After the introductory questions, they were asked if they thought video games could be the motive of a tourist trip, whether they would personally travel primarily for video games, and what motives for tourism they would associate games with. Furthermore, if they agree that the introduction of game elements improves tourist activities, whether they have experienced virtual and augmented reality and if so, if they liked it, and whether they have the desire to visit some fictional world. Finally, their answers about gaming catering establishments and esports were examined, and their views about the aforementioned. The questions were mostly closed type, of which there were

twelve, two questions were open type, and there were four issues with a scale of one to five for measuring.

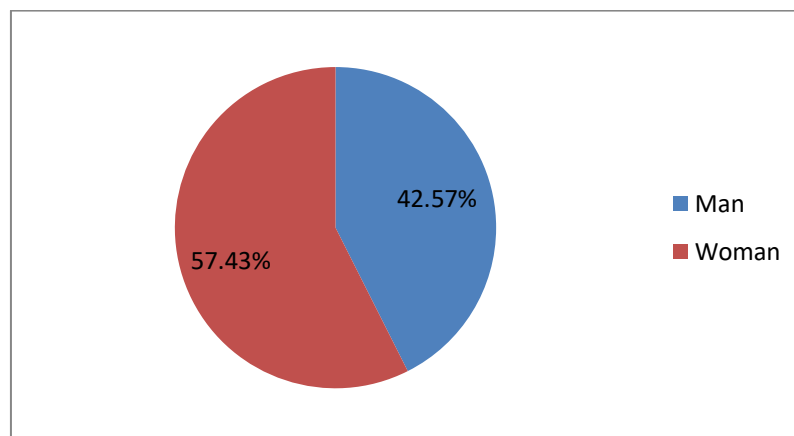
The survey was conducted between 20 May and 3 June 2021. Before conducting the research, the respondents were informed about the purpose of data collection, the objectives of the survey, and that the survey was anonymous.

The survey was conducted on a sample of 101 respondents of different demographic characteristics, from the area of north-western Croatia. The collected data was collected using Google Forms and additionally processed in Microsoft Office Excel. The answers are expressed in percentages, graphically presented and are explained below.

## 5.2 Research results

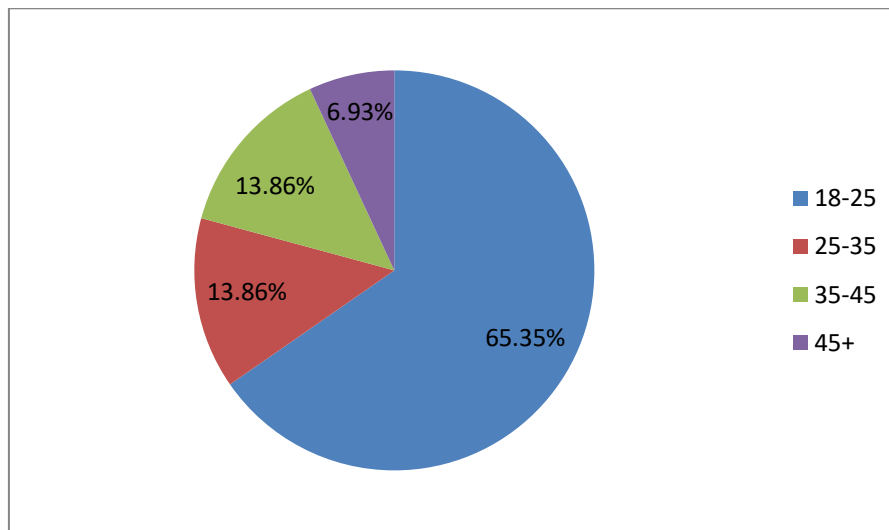
The survey was conducted on 101 respondents, of whom 58 were women (57.43%) and 43 were men (42.57%) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Gender of the respondents



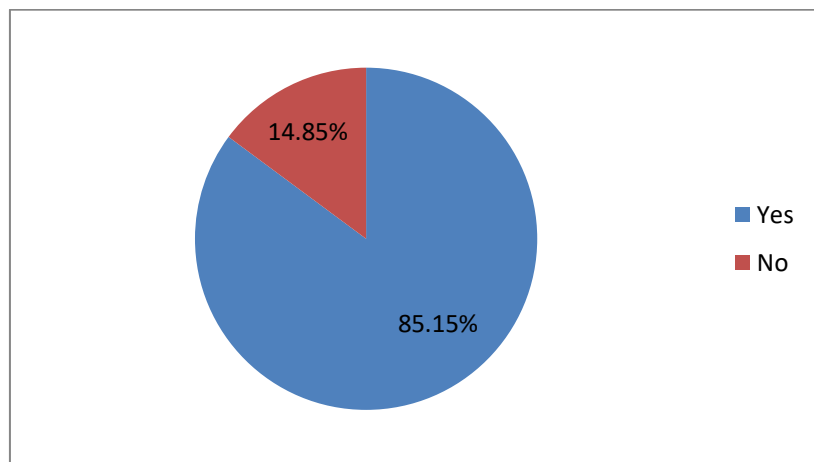
Source: author

The majority of respondents were in the 18-25 age group or 65.35%, followed by those aged 25-35 and 35-45 years with 13.86%, and finally, those aged 45 and over, represented by 6.93% (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Age of the respondents

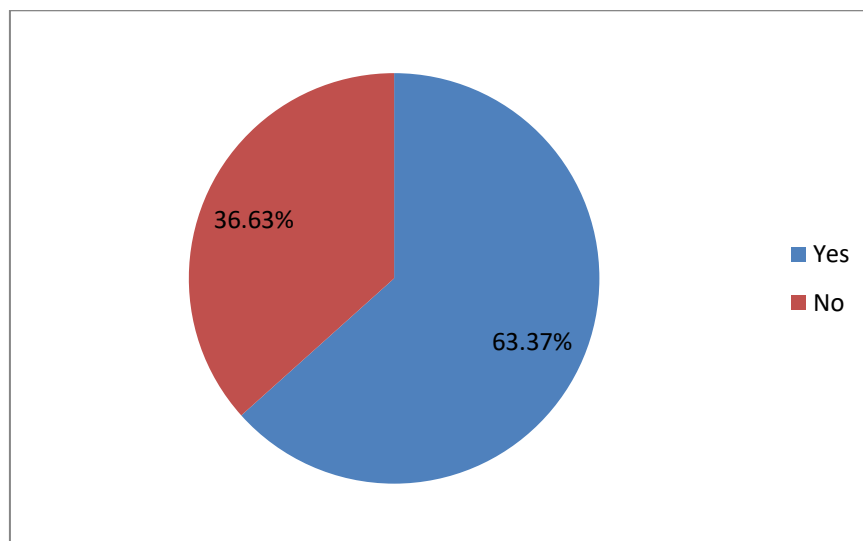
Source: author

When asked if they liked games, 86 respondents said they loved games or 85.15%, while 15 of them said they did not like games (14.85%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Love for games

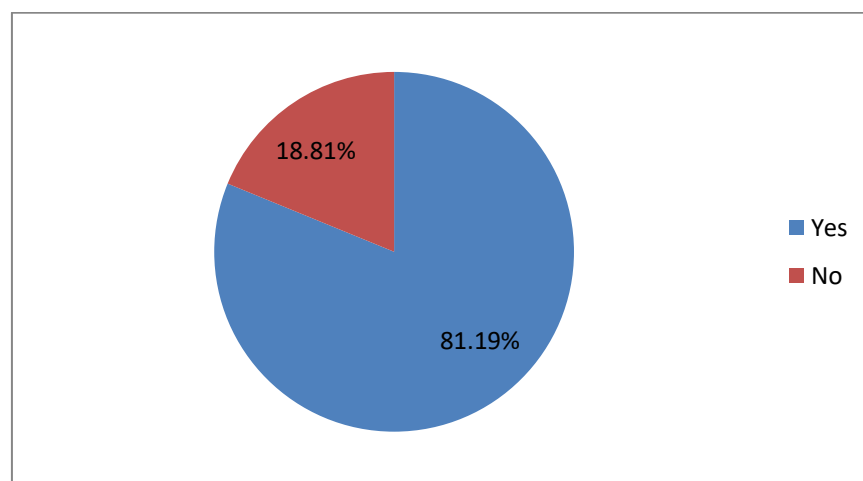
Source: author

When asked whether they have played video games, 64 respondents or 63.37% replied that they have, while 37, or 36.63%, replied that they have not (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Video games play rate

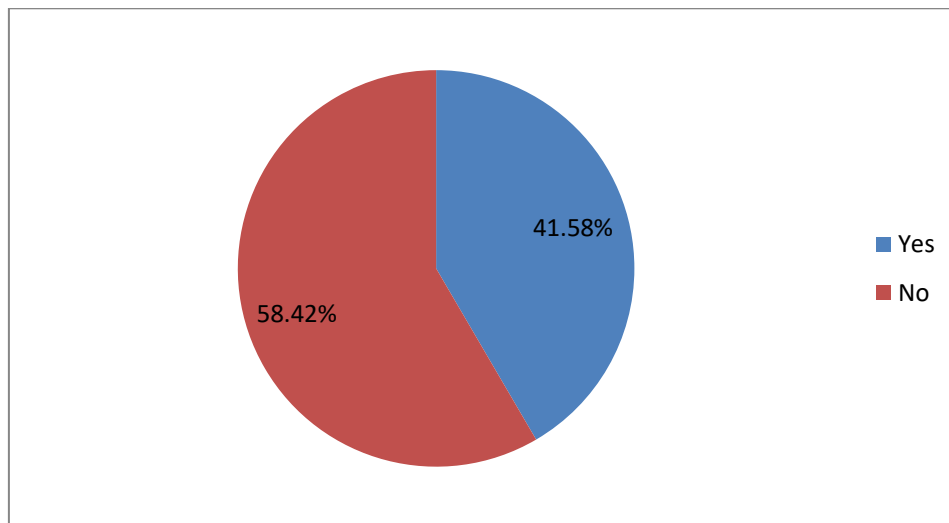
Source: author

Figure 5 shows that for 81.19% of respondents or 82 of them video games could be the motive for tourist travel, and for 18.81% or 19 of them it could not (Figure 5).

**Figure 5.** Videogames as travel motives

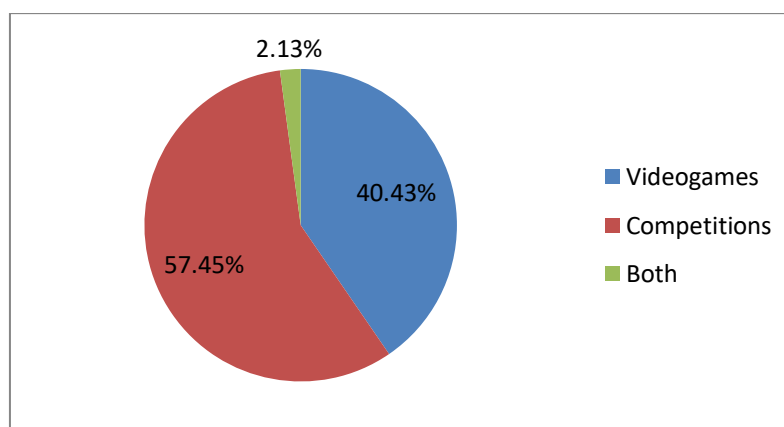
Source: author

The following question asked if they would ever travel primarily for video games. A majority of 58% or 59 respondents said no, and the other 41.58% or 42 respondents replied that they would (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Videogames as the primary travel motive

Source: author

The seventh question was for those who in the previous question answered that they would travel primarily for video games. They were asked what kind of games they would travel for. 57.45% of them chose competitions, 40.43% chose videogames and 2.13% chose both (Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Game types

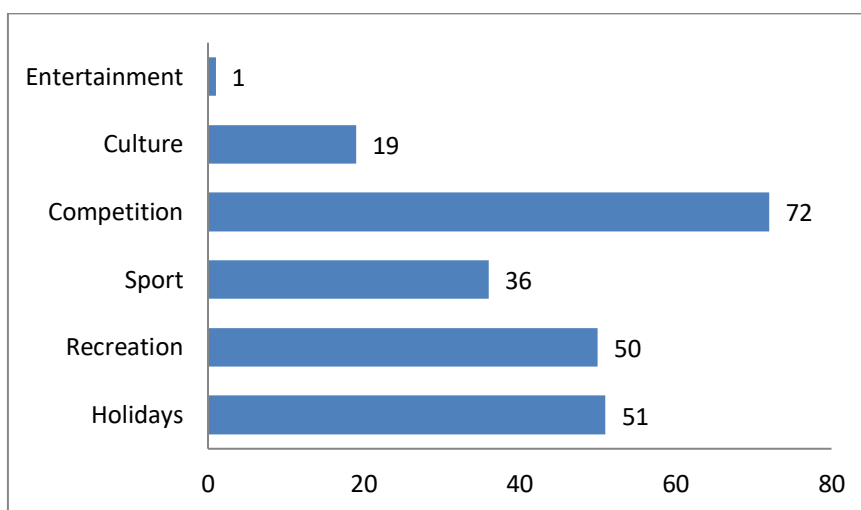
Source: author

When asked which tourism motives they would combine games with, 72 respondents (71.3%) chose competition, 51 respondents (50.5%) chose holidays, 50 (49.5%) chose recreation,



36 (35.6%) chose sports, 19 (18.8%) chose culture, and 1 (1%) chose entertainment (Figure 8).

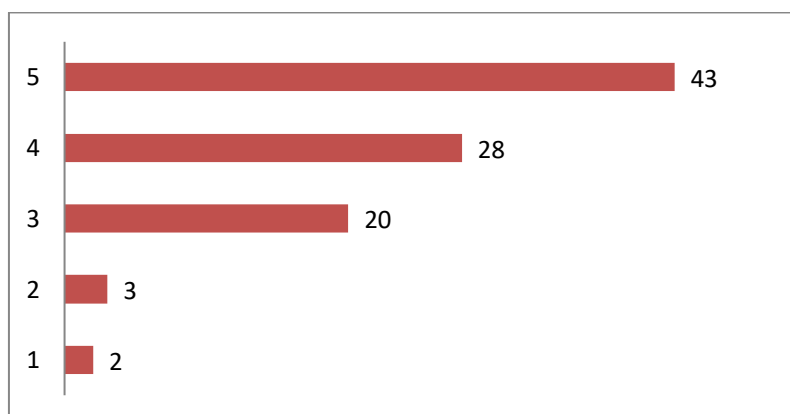
**Figure 8.** The connection between games and other tourism motives



Source: author

Questions 9-12 were introduced a few hours after the initial publication of the survey, with 96 respondents answering them. They were asked if they agreed that the introduction of gaming elements improved tourist activities on a scale of 1 (which means the respondent strongly disagrees) to 5 (which means the respondent strongly agrees). 44.4% chose 5, 29.2% chose 4, 20.8% chose 3, 3.1% chose 2 and 2.1% disagreed (Figure 9).

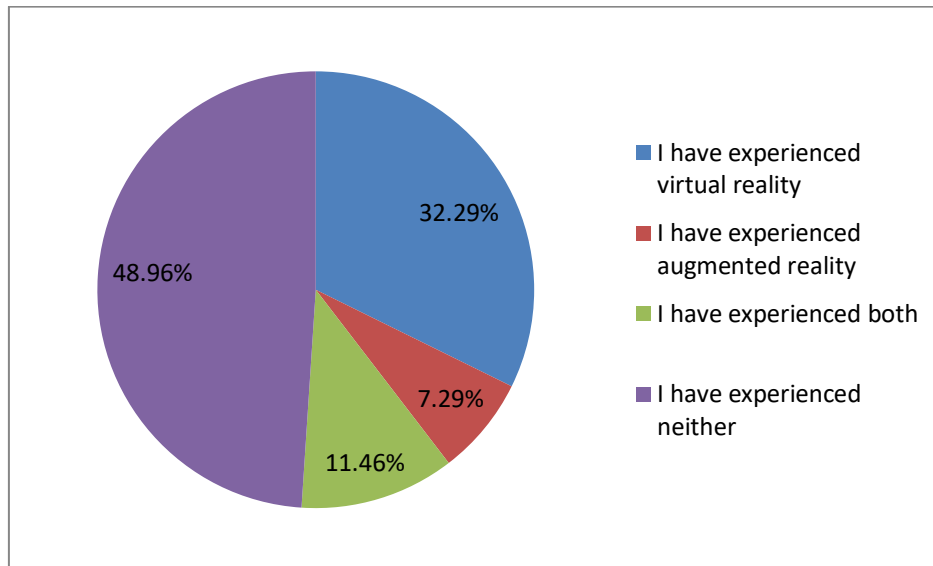
**Figure 9.** Gamification in tourism



Source: author

Afterwards, respondents were asked if they had ever experienced virtual or augmented reality. Virtual reality was experienced by 32.29% of them, 7.29% experienced augmented reality, 11.46% experienced both, and 48.96% experienced neither of them (Figure 10).

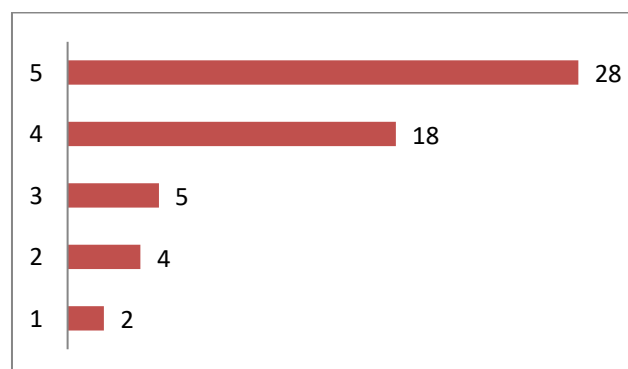
**Figure 10.** Experience with virtual and augmented reality



Source: author

Question 11 was answered by those who experienced virtual reality, augmented reality, or both. It asked for information on how much they liked the experience on a scale of 1 to 5. 49.1% of the respondents liked it very much, 31.6% liked it, 8.8% of them were neutral, 7% did not like it, and 3.5% did not like it at all (Figure 11).

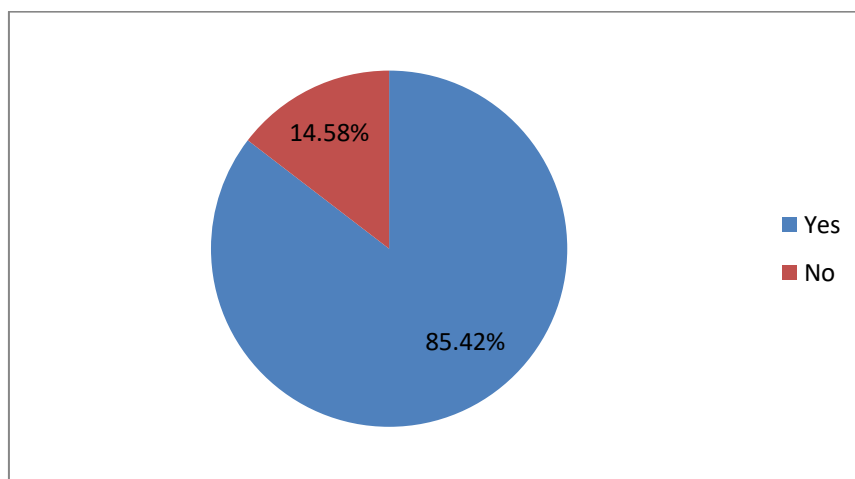
**Figure 11.** Experience satisfaction



Source: author

The twelfth question aimed to figure out how many respondents had a desire to visit a fictional world in digital form. According to the results, 82 of them are ready to make the digital journey to their favourite fictional world, and 14 are not (Figure 12).

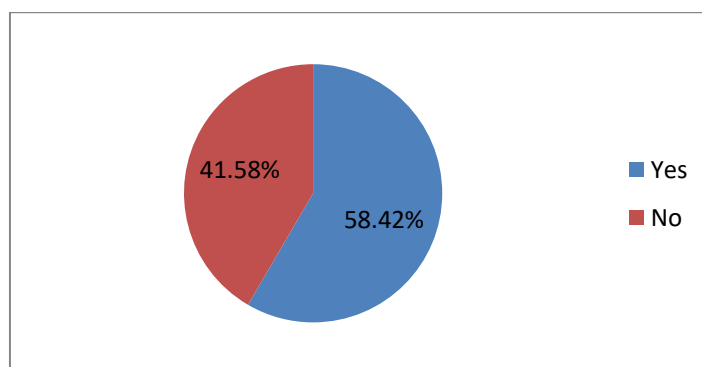
**Figure 12.** Opinion on digital gaming tourism



Source: author

Figure 13 shows how many respondents knew about the existence of the gaming-related tourism offer. 42 of them did not know about the gaming tourism offer, and 59 were familiar with it (Figure 13).

**Figure 13.** Familiarity with the gaming tourism offer



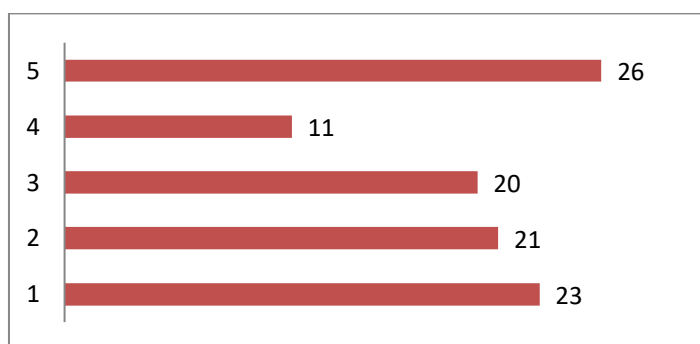
Source: author

Question 13 was open-type and the respondents were asked to write whether they would visit a gaming hospitality facility and to explain their answer. Most of the respondents said that

they would visit such a facility, and among the most common reasons were curiosity, having good times with friends and a common interest, which is gaming. Those who responded that they would not visit such a place, mostly argued that it was too high a price, a lack of interest, or that they already had game consoles at home, so they did not need to visit a facility specialized in gaming.

Question 14 asked the respondents whether they were familiar with the concept of esports on a scale of one to five. 25.7% of them are fully familiar with the term, 10.9% are familiar, 19.8% are not, and 22.8% are not familiar at all (Figure 14).

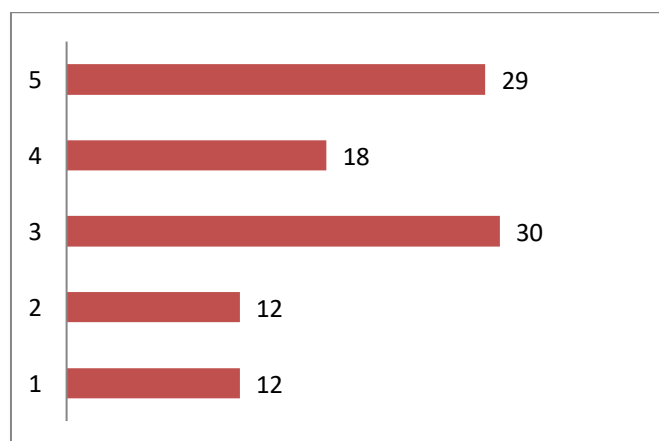
**Figure 14.** Familiarity with esports



Source: author

The following question also included a scale of one to five, but this time it was about whether the respondents agreed that video game competitions can be considered a sport. 28.7% of them fully agree, 17.8% agree, 29.7% are in the middle, 11.9% disagree, and 11.9% fully disagree (Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** Opinion on gaming being a sport

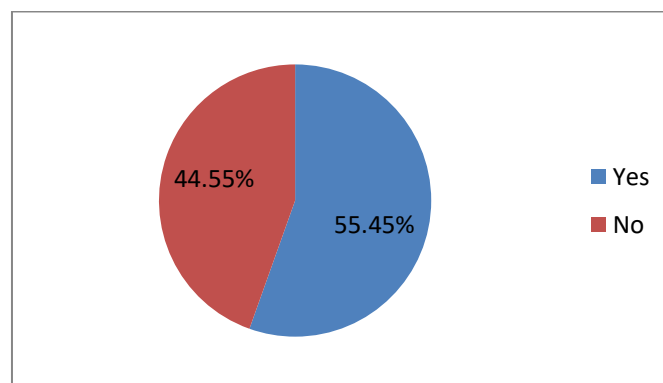


Source: author

Question 17 was open-type, and was not mandatory. The respondents were asked to explain their answers to the previous question. Those who agree refer to the fact that esports are about mental and physical activity, there is a competitive spirit, the importance of thinking speed and communication skills. They also say it is an industry that spins millions and can very well be considered a sport. Those who disagree argue that it is not a traditional sport, and that video games cannot be considered a sport. The main argument for people who disagree is the fact that gaming does not require nearly as much physical endurance as traditional sports, like basketball. Nevertheless, it has become a huge money maker and attracts audiences all over the world, and the players go through long and extensive training, much like traditional athletes.

More than half of the respondents, 56 of them or 55.45% think that competitors in esports put in as much effort as traditional athletes, while 45 of them, 44.5%, are of the opinion that they do not put in the same effort (Figure 16).

**Figure 16.** Opinion on competitor effort



Source: author

### 5.3 Research restrictions

With each research, there is a possibility of encountering some problems. By using online surveying, one of the problems is the availability of the Internet for potential respondents. Also, disinterest in the topic is a big factor in whether people are willing to participate. Since the poll is anonymous, there is a slight chance some people may respond frivolously. Apart from a few frivolous responses and unequal gender representation, there were no problems.

## 6. DISCUSSION

After concluding the research, it is undeniable that gaming and gaming elements create additional attraction to existing tourist activities. The majority of respondents show love for games and are attracted to gamified content. Younger respondents are more willing to accept these changes, and most of the ones who have experienced virtual and augmented reality are very satisfied with their experience. With today's technology, there is no doubt that a lot more businesses and tourist destinations are going to evolve in that direction. Gaming has also spread to hospitality facilities like gaming hotels and cafés, and the respondents are on board with it. Theming accommodation after specific tourism motives is guaranteed to fit the needs of tourists who are travelling because of them, and it is no different with gaming. Their opinion on esports was also mostly positive, with most of them agreeing that gamers can be athletes. Just like football being able to fill up entire arenas and stadiums because of people's love for the sport, esports have managed to do the exact same thing. These results were very positive because the nature of gaming itself is competitive and unique, and combining it with any form of activity should result in a growth of interest and positive experiences.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Gaming tourism is a new phenomenon that has managed to attract millions of tourists and viewers for a reason, whether it is passive inclusion in the form of watching some competitions or unconsciously engaging in games in tourism which improve their experience, or active adventurous inclusion, organizing and conscious participation in gamified tourist content such as treasure hunting or fighting with other competitors and cooperating with teammates in large-scale video game competitions. It cannot be ignored how much the implementation of the game has improved ordinary tourism activities, different facilities and destinations, the tourism offer and even the tourist trip itself. These changes alongside the advancements in technology have not only opened the door for many new tourists who have an interest in the topic, but have also improved the existing activities by introducing changes in the quality of life.

In addition, the emergence of digital tourism breaks the boundaries of reality and fiction with the possibility of visiting created worlds using virtual and augmented reality and brings the

ability to add countless new improvements to existing destinations with products such as Google Glasses, which virtually enhance the human environment. Hotels, cafés and other hospitality facilities always adapt to various target groups, including gamers. Esports have become a huge competitor to traditional sports, as their viewership was already higher than rugby and football in 2019. Technology is improving, and the world has indeed become a global village with the development of the Internet. According to the results of the conducted survey, it can be seen that the vast majority of respondents accept the changes brought by gaming tourism with open arms.

Most of the respondents claimed they were ready to visit a gaming hospitality facility. According to the survey results, the motives mostly associated with games were competition and rest. Accordingly, it can be concluded that they are aware of how big esports are. Finally, it can be concluded that gaming is a positive thing with the ability to transform tourism as we know it, and that it really improves experiences in tourism and represents a good tourist motive.

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## LIST OF PICTURES

<b>Picture 1.</b> America's favourite video game genres in 2020 .....	11
<b>Picture 2.</b> Game Room, Arcade Hotel, Amsterdam.....	14
<b>Picture 3.</b> Alienware Internet Café, China .....	15
<b>Picture 4.</b> Graph projections of the audience and revenue of the global esports market from 2014 to 2019. ....	17
<b>Picture 5.</b> Top 10 esports games .....	18

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.</b> Gender of the respondents .....	20
<b>Figure 2.</b> Age of the respondents .....	21
<b>Figure 3.</b> Love for games.....	21
<b>Figure 4.</b> Video games play rate .....	22
<b>Figure 5.</b> Videogames as travel motives.....	22
<b>Figure 6.</b> Videogames as the primary travel motive .....	23
<b>Figure 7.</b> Game types.....	23
<b>Figure 8.</b> The connection between games and other tourism motives .....	24
<b>Figure 9.</b> Gamification in tourism.....	24
<b>Figure 10.</b> Experience with virtual and augmented reality.....	25
<b>Figure 11.</b> Experience satisfaction .....	25
<b>Figure 12.</b> Opinion on digital gaming tourism .....	26
<b>Figure 13.</b> Familiarity with the gaming tourism offer.....	26

<b>Figure 14.</b> Familiarity with esports .....	27
<b>Figure 15.</b> Opinion on gaming being a sport .....	27
<b>Figure 16.</b> Opinion on competitor effort .....	28

## ATTACHMENT

### Survey

Question 1: Gender

Question 2: Age

Question 3: Do you like games?

Question 4: Do you play videogames?

Question 5: Do you think that videogames can be the motive for tourist travel?

Question 6: Would you ever travel primarily for videogames?

Question 7: If you answered the last question with “Yes”, what kind of games would you travel for?

Question 8: Which tourism motives would you combine with games?

Question 9: Do you agree that the introduction of gaming elements improves tourist activities? For example, an interactive game at a museum or a treasure hunt.

Question 10: Have you ever experienced virtual and augmented reality? (Virtual reality creates the impression that you have become part of the world/game, while augmented reality takes the world we live in and adds its own elements)

Question 11: If you have experienced virtual or augmented reality, how did you like the experience?

Question 12: Would you like to visit a fictional world in digital form (virtual and augmented reality)? Like Star Wars or Harry Potter.

Question 13: Did you know that there is a tourist offer related to gaming? (Gaming cafés, gaming dining rooms, gaming hotels, etc.)

Question 14: Would you visit a gaming hospitality facility and why?

Question 15: How familiar are you with the term "esports"?

Question 16: Do you agree that video game competitions can be considered a sport?

Question 17: Please explain your answer to the previous question.

Question 18: Do you think esports competitors put in as much effort as traditional athletes?

## Research on gaming tourism and esports awareness

Dear participant,

this survey is part of an undergraduate thesis on gaming tourism.

The survey is conducted by David Strelec, a student at the Polytechnic of Međimurje in Čakovec.

The aim of the survey is to explore how informed people are about gaming tourism and esports, how willing they are to travel for video games, and what opinions they have on the gaming tourist offer.

I thank you in advance for your time and effort!

Gender \*

Man

Woman

Age \*

18-25

25-35

35-45

45+

Do you like games? \*

Yes

No

Do you play videogames? \*

Yes

No

Do you think that videogames can be the motive for tourist travel? \*

Yes

No

Would you ever travel primarily for videogames? \*

Yes

No

If you answered the last question with "Yes", what kind of games would you travel for?

- Videogames
- Competitions
- Other...

Which tourism motives would you combine with games? \*

- Holidays
- Recreation
- Sport
- Competition
- Culture
- Other...

Do you agree that the introduction of gaming elements improves tourist activities? For example, an interactive game in a museum or a treasure hunt. \*

- |          |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |             |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|          | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |             |
| Disagree | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Fully agree |

Have you ever experienced virtual and augmented reality? (Virtual reality creates the impression that you have become part of the world/game, while augmented reality takes the world we live in and adds its own elements) \*

- I have experienced virtual reality
- I have experienced augmented reality
- I have experienced both
- I have experienced neither

If you have experienced virtual or augmented reality, how did you like the experience?

- 1            2            3            4            5
- I didn't like it at all                        I liked it very much

Would you like to visit a fictional world in digital form (virtual and augmented reality)? Like Star Wars or Harry Potter. \*

- Yes
- No

This picture shows the "Arcade Hotel" in Amsterdam, which is designed in video game style and has everything a gamer needs, like gaming consoles that guests can use freely.



Did you know that there is a tourist offer related to gaming? (Gaming cafes, gaming dining rooms, gaming hotels, etc.) \*

Yes

No

Would you visit a gaming hospitality facility and why? \*

Long answer text

How familiar are you with the term "esports"? \*



1      2      3      4      5

Not familiar at all                        Fully familiar



Do you agree that video game competitions can be considered a sport? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Fully disagree      Fully agree

Please explain your answer on the previous question.

Long answer text

Do you think esports competitors put in as much effort as traditional athletes? \*

Yes

No

Thank you!

Description (optional)