



SPONSORSHIP ACTIVATION IN ESPORTS:

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ALCOHOL, ENERGY DRINKS,
JUNK FOOD, AND GAMBLING CATEGORY SPONSORSHIP

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Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

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As a leading advocate of evidence-based research, FARE contributes to policies and programs that support the public good, while holding the alcohol industry to account. FARE works with leading researchers, communities, governments, health professionals and frontline service providers to bring about change and reduce alcohol harm.



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INTRODUCTION

This report summarises findings from a content analysis study examining the impact of esports participation upon young audiences' consumption and preferences in relation to alcohol and other potentially harmful product categories. Project outcomes will be used to inform health policy and governance of the esports industry. In addition, it is anticipated that this project, of which this report is an initial phase, will position policy-makers to make informed decisions in this critical and burgeoning landscape in sport and entertainment.

Online, competitive gaming has become one of the most popular recreational activities, not only among children and adolescents, but also among adults (Entertainment Software Association, 2017). Video games have evolved into competitive and collaborative platforms, that simultaneously link millions of players and spectators through online environments. The skills involved in playing and mastering these video games have led to the professionalisation of this activity, resulting in the emergence of a new type of video gaming known as electronic sports, or 'esports' (Seo, 2013; 2016). More recently, esports playing has become a career avenue and is now included as an option for collegiate athlete scholarships (Faust, Meyer, & Griffiths, 2013; Griffiths, 2017). Esports viewership is also beginning to surpass that of traditional sports, resulting in rapid commercialisation of esports, largely through sponsorship and advertising. For the first time, esports have also rated among the top competitions in terms of prize money, exceeding most traditional sports (Business Insider, 2018). In 2018, Dota 2 and League of Legends international tournaments had prize money exceeding \$US 24 million, placing esports among the top prize pools in sport (Business Insider, 2018).

A systematic literature review undertaken in the initial phase of this project revealed that since 2016, more than 600 esports sponsorship agreements have been made (Welfare et al., 2018) with major brand categories including fast food, alcohol, betting and energy drinks (e.g., Doritos, 5-Hour Energy, and Red Bull). Despite this, there have been no empirical studies directly assessing the impact that exposure to these brands has on esports participants' (players and spectators) consumption and preference behaviours associated with sponsorship and advertising embedded in esports. In particular, existing research overlooks minors' engagement with esports, and no research has examined the impacts of partner activations through esports, particularly in relation to Australian consumers.

Quantification of the extent and nature of alcohol-branded messaging that players and young consumers are exposed to during game play, viewing and attending esports events, and the impact of this on alcohol-related behaviours is needed. As an initial step in understanding the impacts of sponsorship and advertising through esports, this report summarises findings from a content analysis undertaken during 2019, aimed at identifying the prevalence and type of activations typically undertaken by partnering brands in popular esports competitions and games held nationally and globally. Specifically, activations by alcohol, gambling, junk food and energy drink brands were coded according to commonly used activation types including naming rights, product placement, gaming equipment, apparel, endorsement, streamed advertising, branded content and event/experiential marketing. Insight into both the prevalence and trends in activation are critical to informing policy, related to the burgeoning esports landscape and its influence among young, often vulnerable audiences.

Overall, our findings from this study demonstrate that all categories examined (alcohol, gambling, junk food and energy drinks), engaged with esports commercially through a variety of activations, reflecting strong investment in streamed advertising (i.e., advertising placed during streaming of esports games on popular platforms such as Twitch or YouTube), followed by event-related activation and player apparel. However, different patterns of activations were exhibited within categories. Junk food engaged in streamed advertising activation the most of any category, closely followed by alcohol, with both categories activating heavily through branded content, player apparel and event-related marketing. The uniquely engaging and unregulated landscape of esports combined with its continued commercialisation and audience growth suggest that ongoing monitoring of exposure and its impacts is warranted.

REPORT AIMS

The following research was conducted to address two key questions:

1. To what extent are alcohol, energy drink, junk food and gambling brands partnering with esports?
2. How do these brands, especially the alcohol category, activate sponsorship through advertising in esports?

METHOD

A review of esports sponsorships between 2009–19 was conducted to collate information on four sponsorship categories of interest (see appendices): alcohol; energy drinks; junk food; and gambling. The strategy to identify sponsorships was two-fold. Firstly, searches were conducted on Google and Google Scholar using the following terms: "alcohol and esports", "alcohol sponsorship of esports", "alcohol and video games", "alcohol sponsorship of video games", "alcohol advertising and esports", and "alcohol advertising and video games". These searches were repeated systematically replacing the term alcohol with 'energy drinks,' 'junk food,' and 'gambling.' Secondly, to ensure that all prominent Australian events were covered, a list of leagues and tournaments with Australian involvement (Wikipedia^a, 2019), and a list of Australian esports clubs (Gfinity, 2019) were used to conduct direct searches of sponsorships.

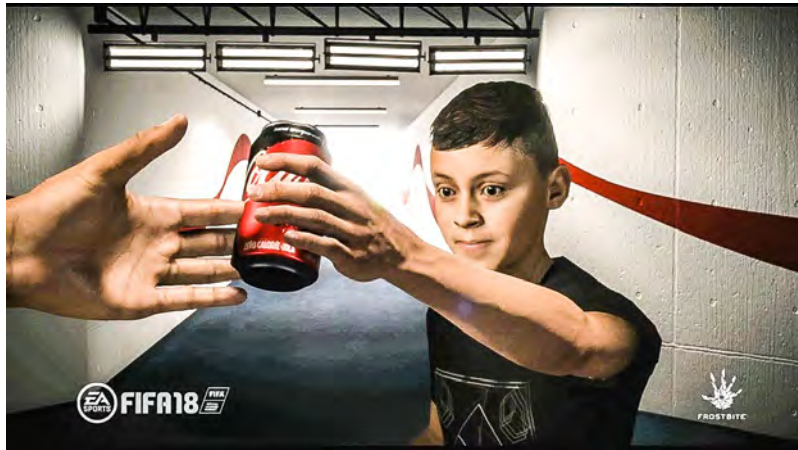
The primary platform for streaming of the events identified was Twitch. Additional streaming platforms included: YouTube, azubu.tv, Douyu, Panda.tv, Facebook, and nimo.tv. Within each category, the sponsorships were further classified in terms of activation type, based upon typical sponsorship activations identified from existing sponsorship literature and consultation with an expert panel of three commercial sponsorship directors from professional sports. Nine sponsorship activation types were derived (see Sponsorship Activation Key in Table 1 below). Descriptions and examples of each sponsorship activation are outlined in the following section.

TABLE 1
ACTIVATION STRATEGY CODED CATEGORIES

1	Product placement
2	Venue branding
3	Gaming equipment/infrastructure
4	Event/experiential
5	Naming rights (tournament, rankings)
6	Celebrity endorsement
7	Branded content
8	Media platform
9	Team or player apparel

^a Note: Wikipedia was deemed an appropriate source to identify major tournaments and leagues with Australian involvement. The list captures the vast majority of both active and defunct tournaments and was last updated on April 28th, 2019.

- 1. Product placement:** Reference to a specific brand or product integrated into the esports game, for example, the main character becomes an ambassador for CocaCola in FIFA18 story mode.



- 2. Venue branding:** Brand or product advertising integrated into the physical venue of the esports event, for example, Bud Light lounge during 2018 Overwatch League.



- 3. Gaming equipment/infrastructure:** Branded equipment designed for gaming or esports (such as headphones, consoles, chairs, mousepads, screens, scoreboards) and branded physical or organisational structures designed to facilitate viewing or playing of esports, for example, Sour Patch Kids digital-board messaging system for Overwatch League.

- 4. Event/experiential:** Brand integrated into the event in an interactive manner, for example, product displays, giveaways, or promotional competitions at events. Other experiential activations include online voting competitions for prizes such as ELEAGUE's Kraken Boss Battle sponsored by Kraken Spiced Rum where fans play against professionals in front of an audience. The Kraken partnership with ELEAGUE, announced in 2018, incorporates branded content integration across all ELEAGUE programming and content on both linear and digital. This includes a presence within ELEAGUE's AdTracker, which facilitates uninterrupted game coverage, as well as branded promotion across ELEAGUE's digital platforms that will be amplified by Launchpad.



5. Naming rights: Sponsorship agreement allows the sponsor's name to feature in the title of the game or tournament, league, or team name, for example, Red Bull Battle Grounds Dota 2.



6. Celebrity endorsement: Well-known influencers (includes players, commentators and streamers) promoting sponsoring brands. Brands may engage celebrity endorsement as a part of sponsorship activation, or only endorse individual teams or players, separately from tournament or game sponsorship, for example players from Team Gamma and Solo Mid promoting Energy drink company G Fuel in images below.



7. Branded content: Creation of gaming/esports-related content that is funded by the sponsor. Examples include Harbin Beer's customised aluminium cans for China's League of Legends Pro League.



8. Media platform: Sponsor features on media advertisements linked to the game, influencer, or tournament, including branded streaming, social media posts, and website branding. The example below features San Miguel in Team Heretics Instagram posts.



9. Team or player apparel: Brand logo featured on individual or team jerseys or other player apparel, for example, MindFreak members wearing Monster Energy branded attire.

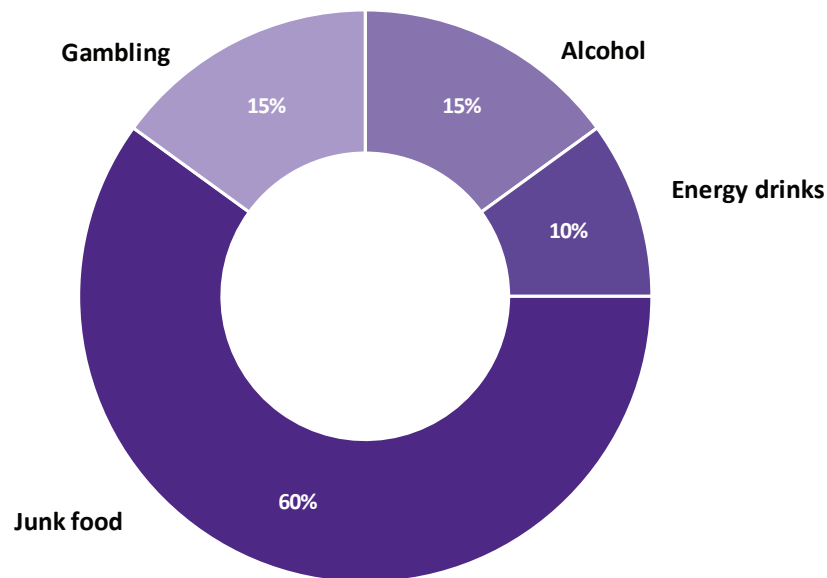


FINDINGS

Analysis of the alcohol, junk food, energy drink and gambling advertisements found in esports revealed that junk food advertisements were the most prolific, with 60 per cent of the advertising reviewed associated with junk food. Figure 1 summarises the frequency of sponsorship by product category, highlighting the prevalence of all four categories and the extensive sponsorship associated with junk food.

FIGURE 1

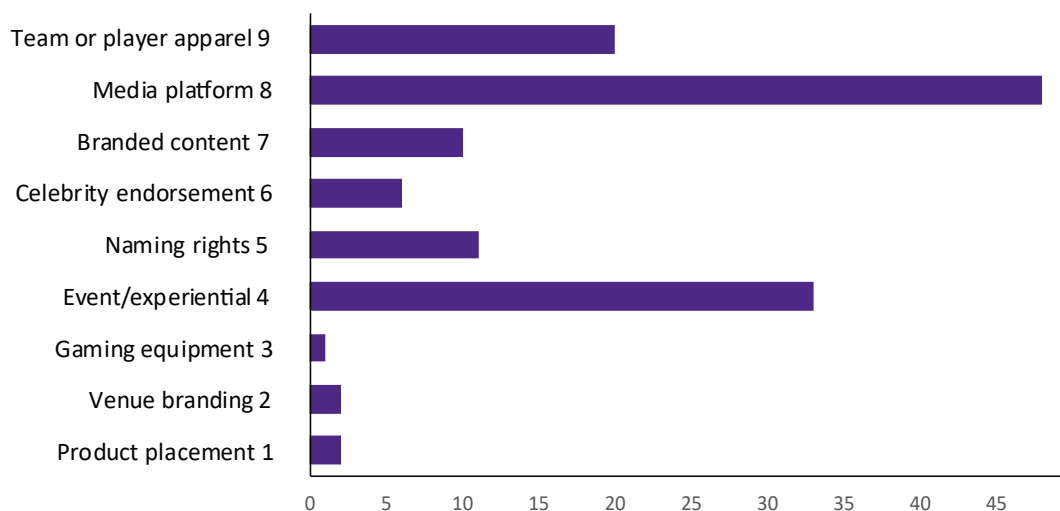
FREQUENCY OF ESPORT SPONSORSHIPS AS A FUNCTION OF SPONSORSHIP TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



Overall, combined activation across the four categories examined in this research reflected a strong investment in streamed advertising, such as media platform (8 occasions), followed by event-related activation, and player apparel. Relative frequency of sponsorship activation type is outlined by Figure 2, revealing sponsorship of the media platform adopted for streaming (for example channel or broadcast) to be the most common form of activation adopted.

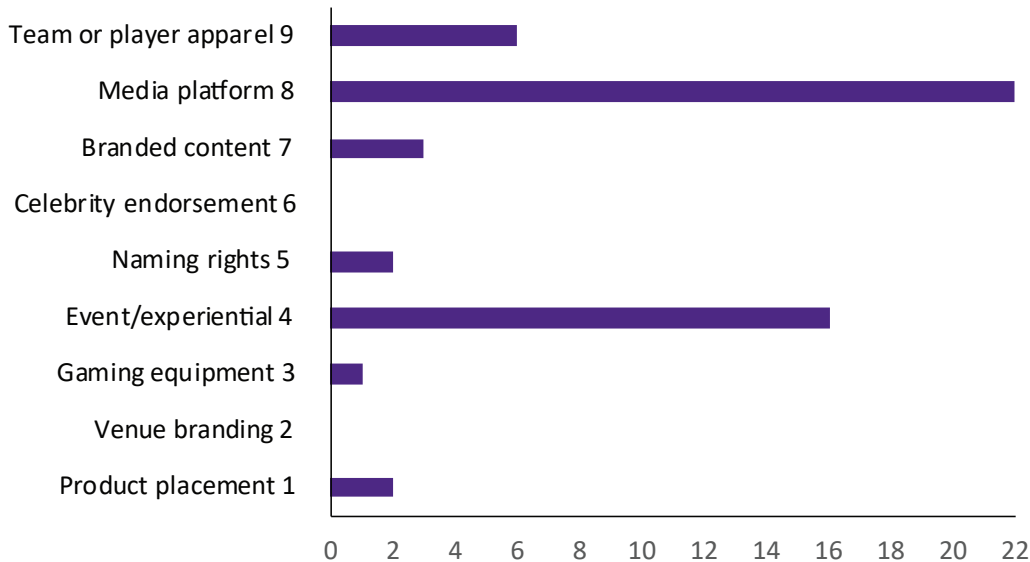
FIGURE 2

FREQUENCY OF SPONSORSHIPS AS A FUNCTION OF ACTIVATION TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



However, different patterns of activations were exhibited within categories. Junk food engaged in streamed advertising activation the most of any category, closely followed by alcohol, with both categories activating heavily through branded content, player apparel and event-related marketing. Figure 3 summarises the frequency of junk food activations.

FIGURE 3
FREQUENCY OF JUNK FOOD AS A FUNCTION OF ACTIVATION TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



Alcohol was observed to activate mostly through streamed advertising, followed by event-related marketing and branded content. The frequency of the different types of alcohol activations are shown in Figure 4.

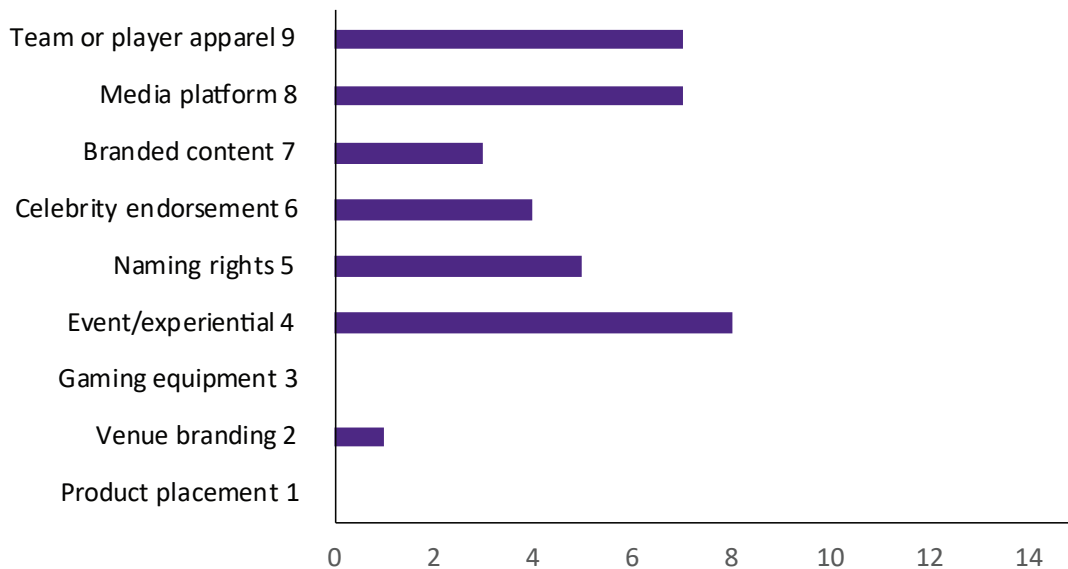
FIGURE 4
FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL SPONSORSHIPS AS A FUNCTION OF ACTIVATION TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



Energy drink activation was a more evenly dispersed placement across streamed advertising, event-related marketing, apparel, branded content, naming rights and player endorsement assets, as observed in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5

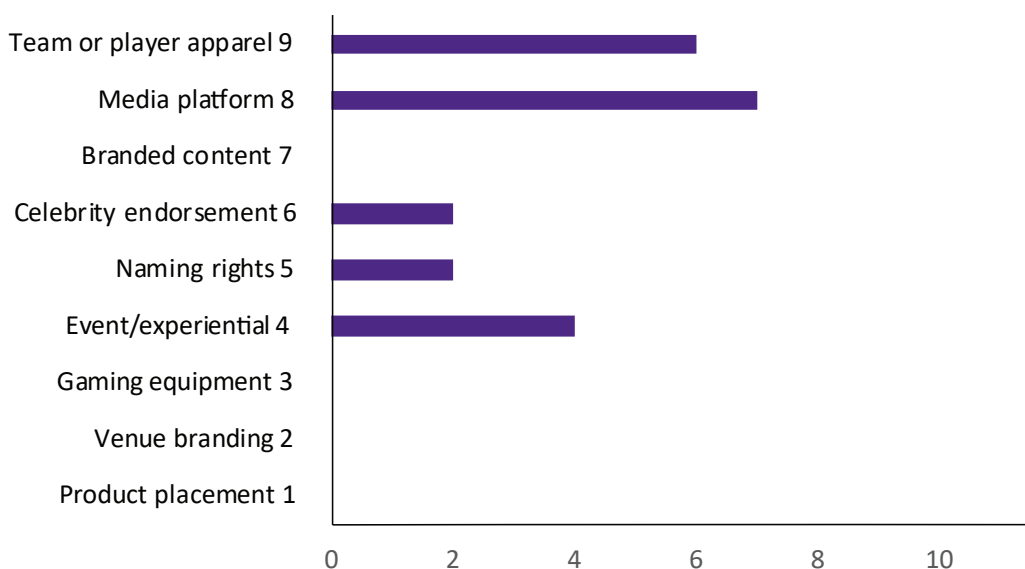
FREQUENCY OF ENERGY DRINK SPONSORSHIPS AS A FUNCTION OF ACTIVATION TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



Gambling also revealed more evenly dispersed activation across streamed advertising, player apparel, event-related marketing, branded content, naming rights and player endorsement. These can be observed in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6

FREQUENCY OF GAMBLING SPONSORSHIPS AS A FUNCTION OF ACTIVATION TYPE (PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE)



Content analysis findings are summarised in the four tables in Appendix A. In addition to the specific activation type identified, the following categories were coded:

1. Brand
2. Category: alcohol, energy drinks, gambling, junk food
3. Game/team sponsored
4. Tournament sponsored
5. Location
6. Activation description
7. Activation type (coded 1-9 following the scheme outlined in Table 1)
8. Following (if available).

In many cases, it was difficult to determine audience size of the events, due to the ownership of this data by publishers. The extensive ownership of games, tournaments and teams by publishers effectively restricts access to critical data on player and audience statistics, reach and profiles, and owners are reluctant to disclose this data. It should also be emphasised that the ability to livestream to an extensively engaged live audience globally is unique compared to traditional sports and other content. While it is possible to livestream any content to a global audience, it is only in the realm of esports that a global audience of minors and young adults are captured simultaneously for long periods of time. Another unique aspect highlighted by this research underpinning esports spectating, are the number of hours of streaming available for viewing, and therefore the potential for greater extent and duration (i.e. intensity) of exposure of sponsorship-linked advertising and activations to these audiences. The purely commercial motivation underpinning esports is another driver of sponsorship and advertising revenue, which combined with an unregulated environment, provides strong potential for this exposure to reach vulnerable minors.

DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to identify the extent and nature of advertising and sponsorship activation by harmful product categories across key esports tournaments in order to understand the potential risk associated with promotion of these products to players and spectators. We undertook a content analysis which coded for sponsorship activations in accordance with existing sponsorship literature and was validated by a panel of sponsorship experts. Coding categories included naming rights, player/team apparel, media platform, venue branding, gaming equipment, player endorsement, product placement, event/experiential, and branded content. Tournaments sampled included the most popular competitions globally and those in which Australian teams participated.

Previous research has established advertising and sponsorship exposure as important influencers of preference, liking and consumption of advertised and sponsoring brands, particularly among highly engaged and captive audiences in sport (e.g. Walraven, Koning & van Bottenburg, 2012). The burgeoning phenomenon of esports, presents a new challenge for public health advocates, due to the large and growing young audiences engaging in a largely unregulated landscape. The unique features of this landscape including the length and depth of potential engagement through playing online games and viewing them, often for lengthy periods, unsupervised accessibility to minors and the direct influence and power of streaming professional players, provide strong justification for examination of the nature and extent of exposure through esports.

While the Australian esports landscape is still evolving, and not as commercialised as many competitions in the USA, Europe and Asia, it is important to emphasise that Australian esports fans follow these competitions and are therefore exposed to content via streaming on platforms such as Twitch or YouTube. Australia is also exhibiting a strong trajectory of growth, and is likely to reflect commercialisation trends in northern hemisphere markets. The unique features of esports streaming include a longer duration of exposure and greater depth of engagement than many traditional sports and content, with many fans watching esports for hours at a time (PWC, 2019; Business Insider, 2018). One example, revealed by our content analysis revealed a peak of 600,000 viewers and over 23 million views in relation to the League of Legends European Championships held in 2019.

The power of gaming influencers is strong in this context, with activation perceived as more authentic when delivered by them during game breaks determined by them, rather than paid advertising placement. The prevalence of the four categories examined in this study also highlights the lack of regulation of advertising and sponsorship by harmful categories, suggesting that it is critical to monitor the esports landscape as it continues to evolve. While this study has not examined esports tournament activation exhaustively, it does provide a useful snapshot into the commercialisation activity and trends associated with harmful product categories partnering with esports.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this content analysis study highlight that exposure to harmful categories through esports is pervasive and raises questions about regulation. Activation trends identified indicate that partnering is well integrated in gaming content and environment, and often advocated by gaming influencers during streaming. The exponential reach of esports via platforms including Twitch and YouTube combined with uniquely engaging content consumed in extended periods, means that these activations have potential to leverage strong exposure more than any other media. Junk food and alcohol categories were most active among the four harmful categories examined, largely adopting streamed embedded advertising and event-related activations. Different patterns of activation were exhibited across categories, with alcohol and junk food revealing more focused activations, and gambling and energy drinks demonstrating more diversified activation strategy.

This study highlights the importance of continued monitoring of the commercialisation growth of esports and associated growth in exposure to harmful brands. Findings will inform further research on the impacts of exposure to harmful brand partnering through esports, including links between exposure and consumption. Evidence of these effects is also needed to guide regulation and health communications through esports.

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APPENDIX

Table A. Alcohol sponsorship activation in esports

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME/TEAM	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
San Miguel ¹		Team Heretic Sponsor	Madrid, Spain	Online media advertising, e.g., Instagram posts ²	Media platform
		CS:GO		Logo displayed on team jerseys ³	Player/team apparel
		Clash Royale		YouTube ad ⁴	Media platform
		CoD LoL		Heretics Teams participate in ESL Play Events. Under section 3.2.4 of ESL Play Global Rules, "The ESL administration reserves the right to prohibit or remove teams with sponsors or partners that are solely or widely known for pornographic, drug use or other adult/mature themes and products from partaking in ESL Play events at any time." However, ESL spokesperson said that as San Miguel is a brewery, the brand should not have sponsorship issues.	
Budweiser - Bud Light ⁵	Dream Hack Atlanta, Dream Hack Austin Budlight AllStars ⁶	Wizards District Gaming	America	Bud Light All-Star campaign: fans voted for top players who then streamed weekly on Bud Light branded Twitch and YouTube channels.	Media platform Event/experiential
				Bud Light happy hour: fans watching unique content with the opportunity to win exclusive prizes.	Media platform Event/experiential
				Documentary style film for each of the Bud Light All-Stars ⁷ .	Media platform
				Bud Light Lounges at DreamHack Austin and DreamHack Atlanta.	Venue branding
				Dedicated Twitter handle: @BudLightEsports	Branded content Media platform
Harbin Beer ⁸ (owned by AB InBev)	The International 2017	DOTA2 LoL	China	Limited edition aluminium bottle packages for players.	Branded content Gaming equipment
				Partnered with LGD Gaming (esports organisation in China), included branded advertising on LGD's twitter and other social media platforms ⁹ .	Media platform
				Livestreamed competitions.	Media platform
				Creation of own competition: Harbin Beer Esports Legion ¹⁰ .	Naming rights Branded content

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME/TEAM	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
Kraken Black Spiced Rum ¹¹	ELEAGUE Street Fighter V Invitational	CS:GO	America	ELEAGUE Kraken Boss Battle, a show where fans go head-to-head with esports superstars.	Event/experiential Naming rights
				Custom branded website.	Branded content
				Presenting partner of ELEAGUE's E3 Industry Party LA. Guests receive gifts and can walk on the "Kraken black carpet."	Media platform Event/experiential
				Branded content integration: Kraken will have a presence on ELEAGUES AdTracker which facilitates promotion on digital platforms.	Branded content Media platform
Warsteiner ¹²	ESL Germany	CS:GO	Germany	Official partner at national events. Integration into live broadcasts of ESL Championship, ESL One, and ESL Arena. "While the deal specifically involves non-alcoholic beer, the brewery's popular beer is available at such events but is not involved in the sponsorship." ¹³	Event/experiential Media platform
New Belgium Brewing Co. ¹⁴	Dream Hack Open	CS:GO	Austin & Atlanta	DreamHack Social Media Posts. ¹⁵	Media platform
				New Belgium Brewing Twitch Stream.	Media platform

Table B. Energy drink sponsors of esports

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
Red Bull	League of Legends European Championship ¹⁶	League of Legends	Berlin, Germany	Activations during live events.	Event/experiential Naming Rights
	Red Bull Battle Grounds	StarCraft II/ Dota2	United States, Portugal, United Kingdom, Denmark, Japan, Germany, Sweden, France, Poland, Canada, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar.	Development of a new European grassroots League of Legends competition. ¹⁷	Event/experiential Naming Rights Team/player apparel Team/player apparel Celebrity endorsement Branded Content Media Platform
	Red Bull Gaming Ground	Dota2			
	Red Bull Kumite	Ultra Street Fighter 4			
	Red Bull Clash Course & Red Bull Quest	Destiny			
	Red Bull Team Brawl	HearthStone			
	Red Bull Player One	League of Legends			
	Influencers: Sponsors 25 world class esports athletes from 13 different countries.				
Red Bull Conquest ¹⁹	Street Fighter V: Arcade Edition, TEKKEN 7, and Guilty Gear Xrd REV2.	Germany	Branded Gaming Arena.	Venue branding Events/experiential Naming rights	
Teams/ Organisations: Cloud9 ²⁰ OG Berlin International Gaming ²¹ The Chiefs Esports Club	League of Legends Dota2 CS:GO	Australia	Jersey Logo Official Logo Long-term multi-year partnership will involve launch of joint events and campaigns.	Team/player apparel Event/experiential Media platform	
Street Fighter 30 th Anniversary ²²	Street Fighter	Australia	Displays at the live event in Melbourne, Twitch streaming and social media posts, limited edition packaging with characters displayed on cans, sticker sets, unique arcade machine displayed in store, each can gave access to exclusive Street Fighter V costumes that could be used on Playstation4 systems. ²³ Exclusive "World Warrior Luggage" gift pack sent to 10 prominent members of the fighting game community, branded with Red Bull tags and containing character cans. ²⁴	Event/experiential Branded content Media platform	

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
GFUEL	Team Gamma ²⁵	Fortnite, CoD, CS:GO, FIFA		Slogan "The official drink of esports"	Celebrity endorsement
				YouTube videos/promotions with streamers	Media platform
	SoloMid ²⁶	Fortnite		Energy drink flavours inspired by professional esports players and teams	Celebrity endorsement
				Discount codes	Celebrity endorsement
Monster Energy	Mindfreak (Australian esports organisation) ²⁷	PSG.LGD (Dota2 Team)	Shanghai, China	Logo on Jerseys	Player/team apparel
	Teams/Influencers: Alliance, Team Envyus, Evil Genuises, Fnatic, Team Liquid, Natus Vincere, Pain Gaming, Alia A, Goldglove, Iljeriichoi, Lolrenaynay, Summit1G, Timthetatman, Wizzite. ²⁸	Call of Duty	Australia Sweden, United States, United Kingdom, Ukraine	Logo on jerseys, twitch streams, promotional social media posts. ²⁹	Player/team apparel Media platform
Mountain Dew: MTN DEW® AMP® GAME FUEL® ³⁰ (Pepsico ³¹)	Teams: Optic Gaming, Counter Logic Gaming, SK Gaming, Dignitas, Immortals, MIBR	Call of Duty CS:GO	America	Release of product range "Game Fuel" - 'the first drink made by gamers, for gamers' ³²	Branded content
				Exclusive taste test ahead of release at Call of Duty: Black Ops 4 event, CWL Las Vegas held in December 2018. ³³	Event/experiential
	League Partners: ESL, MTN DEW League, Call of Duty World League, Counter Logic Gaming	Rocket League	India	ESL and Mountain Dew partner to run the annual Mountain Dew League. Exclusive twitch live streaming of the event. Competitions for fans to vote/win prizes and amateurs to become pro (Next Big Caster). ³⁴	Event/experiential Naming rights Media platform
		Street Fighter	Australia		
	Mountain Dew Arena ³⁵	CS:GO		Mobile Mountain Dew branded gaming arena. "3 trucks rigged with 16 screens travel across 41 cities." Chance to win prizes and get featured on the Mountain Dew bottle.	Event/experiential Naming rights
Intel Extreme Masters			Social media activations, sponsored replays, jersey logos.	Media platform Player/team apparel	

Table C. Junk food sponsors of esports

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE	
McDonalds	ESL ³⁶	Fifa18 Global Series	America	Branded advertising	Media platform	
	Rocket League OCE Championship, Rocket League Championship Series	LaLiga esports	Australia	Naming, on-ground activations, content integration and branding across all touchpoints linked to the event.	Event/experiential Naming rights Media platform	
		Starcraft 2 World Championships ³⁷				
		CS:GO	Denmark	Menu using counterstrike phrases ³⁸	Branded content	
	Rocket League	Australia	McDonald's branded custom video focused on grassroots stories. Twitch media plan promoting McDonald's products.	Media platform		
Coca-Cola ^{39,40}	EA SPORTS FIFA 18	LoL/Riot Games	America	Partnered with Riot Games and cinemas to host 200+ viewing parties of the LoL Championship tournament.	Event/experiential	
	eCOPA Coca-Cola 18			In-game integration in FIFA 18's story mode, 'The Journey: Hunter Returns' main character becomes brand ambassador for Coca-Cola Zero Sugar. ⁴¹	Product placement	
	League of Legends (LoL) 2016 World Championships	Overwatch League		Beverages served at all Overwatch Events where Activision Blizzard controls the venue.	Event/experiential	
Buffalo Wild Wings ⁴³	ELEAGUE, Team Dignitas	CS:GO	America	Buffalo Wild Wings Stream of the Month, popular Team Dignitas streamer Elle "Ellektrikk" Lockyer conducted all-day live streams on video platform Twitch. Buffalo Wild Wings and the team also presented an amateur League of Legends tournament at TwitchCon in October 2017, with prize packs which included \$300 Buffalo Wild Wings Giftcard. ⁴⁴	Event/experiential Media platform	
		SF V				Logo on team jerseys.
		Tekken				
		RL				
Arby's ⁴⁵	ELEAGUE	CS:GO	America	Regular content play, twitch livestreaming, ELEAGUE competitors taken to real-life gun range to shoot at its sandwiches, advertisements reflecting gaming culture, "map walkthroughs" showing in-game arenas for a behind the scenes perspective. ⁴⁶	Event/experiential Media Platform	
		SF V				
		Tekken				
		RL				
Mate Tea (Pepsi Co) ⁴⁷	n/a	Optic Gaming	America	46 custom videos, teamed with 7-Eleven to deliver the Universal Open Rocket League, featured exclusive new limited-edition flavour. ⁴⁸	Media Platform	
Hungry Jack's ⁴⁹	Riot's Oceanic Pro League		Australia	In-game engagement, giving fans the chance to meet and play with the top players in their region. ⁵⁰	Event/experiential	

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
KFC		Royal Never Give Up (RNG) Team Heretics ⁵¹	China	Logo placement on jerseys, arena logo presence, social media channel coverage, RNG exclusive toys and meals. ⁵²	Event/experiential Branded content, Media platform Player/team apparel
Nissin Cup Noodles ⁵³	Evolution championship series		America	Booth at the event, social media giveaways (e.g., pass to the tournament). ⁵⁴	Event/experiential Media platform
	Super Smash Bros 2GGC: Genesis Saga Tournament		America	Competition winner awarded comically oversized instant noodle cup.	Event/experiential
Totino's frozen pizza ⁵⁵	Pittsburgh Knights Team	PlayerUnknown' Battlegrounds	America	Jersey logos	Player/team apparel
				Promotions with popular twitch streamers ⁵⁶	Media platform
Kickass Beef Jerky ⁵⁷	n/a	Tempo Storm	America	Social media activations, product giveaway, discount code. ⁵⁸	Media platform
Snickers ⁵⁹	Rocket League Championship 6 Series	Rocket League	America	Sponsor a number of segments and air spots during telecasts, pre-game media content. ⁶⁰	Media platform
	FlyQuest Team	League of Legends	America	Jersey logos, social media activations, branded content series featuring a weekly fan vote. ⁶¹	Player/team apparel Event/experiential Branded content
Baren-Treff ⁶² Lollies	League of Legends Championships Europe, sponsored Unicorns of Love Team		Germany	Social media posts	Media platform
Sour Patch Kids ⁶³	Overwatch League	Overwatch	America	Free candy at matches, sponsored livestream segments, branded thundersticks and a digital-board messaging system. ⁶⁴	Event/experiential Media platform Gaming equipment
Dr Pepper ⁶⁵	Team SoloMid		America	Comedic commercial featuring SoloMid players. ⁶⁶	Media platform
				Social media activations, e.g., sponsored posts. ⁶⁷	Media platform
Indomie ⁶⁸	Australian Esports League (University Cup)	DOTA2 Rocket League CS:GO	Australia	Social media activations.	Media platform

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
Burger King	SuperLiga ABCDE League of Legends Tournament	League of Legends	Brazil	Activities at final event, throughout the tournament the MVP receive a crown and title "King of the Match." ⁶⁹	Event/experiential
				Twitch streaming	Media platform
	PlayStation		Spain	"Burger Clan" – professional gamers sneak into multiplayer sessions and place other player's burger king orders during the game. ⁷⁰	Event/experiential
Jack in the Box	Team Dallas Fuel ⁷¹	Overwatch League	America	Exclusive jersey rights Branded merchandise	Player/team apparel
Maxibon ⁷²	Avant Garde Professional Esports		Australia	Jersey logo	Player/team apparel
Dare Iced Coffee ⁷³	Gfinity Elite Series Australia	Rocket League CS:GO Streetfighter V	Australia	"Drink it through" campaign integrated across 42-live broadcast events.	Player/team apparel
Real Coffee Ice Break ⁷⁴	Avant Garde Professional Esports		Australia	Social media activations	Media platform
Dorritos ⁷⁵	The Doritos Bowl, in partnership with Twitch	Call of Duty: Black Ops 4	America	Hosting event "The Doritos Bowl" where 4 streamers (Ninja, Shroud, CouRage, DrLupo) battle each other in CoD.	Event/experiential Naming rights
Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bar with Reese's Pieces ⁷⁶	Ninja and DrLupo (twitch streamers)	Fortnite	Australia	Streamed live from TwitchCon to promote the new candy bar, handed out free samples.	Event/experiential media platform
Wendy's ⁷⁷	Nairobi "Nairo" Quezada (twitch streamer)	Supersmash Bros	America	Stream featuring a Wendy's logo overlay, delivery of Wendy's food during the stream.	Product placement Media platform
Jersey Mike's Subs ⁷⁸	League of Legends Championship Series	League of Legends	North America	"Tasty" activations for on-site ticket holders, gift-with-purchase promotion, promo codes for in-game LoL prizes and items, sweepstakes for an all-expenses paid trip to the League Championships Final.	Event/experiential

Table D. Gambling sponsorships of esports

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
Rivalry.gg ⁷⁹	FNATIC Streamers/Players: Nahz Dota, h0lyhex0r, HS CSGO, noobfromua, DotaCinema, Dota Digest, cancel^^, wagamama Alex "MACHINE" Richardson (famous CS:GO host/commentator) ⁸⁰	League of legends	America	Promocodes for bonuses on Rivalry.gg betting site, social media activations.	Media Platform
	Richard Lewis (esports journalist, tournament host and analyst). ⁸¹	CS:GO	America	Unique videos and exclusive behind-the-scenes content from tournaments and events.	Celebrity endorsement Media platform Event/experiential
	Companies: Dexerto, Dot Esports, OpenDota, DatDota, joinDota, DBLTAP, FACEIT. ⁸² Rivalry CIS Invitational	CS:GO	United Kingdom	Monthly events with Richard featuring Rivalry.gg content	Event/experiential Naming rights
VKGame	OpTic Gaming	Dota2	America	Jersey logo	Player/team apparel
				Featured on betting platform's website ⁸³	Media platform
Pari-Match	Virtus.pro			Jersey logo, social media activations, feature on team's official website. ⁸⁴	Player/team apparel Media platform
Betway	ESL Invictus Gaming Ninjas in Pyjamas (Team) MIBR (Team)	CS:GO	America	Jersey logo	Player/team apparel
				YouTube videos with pro players, tours of the NiP gaming house, star players breaking down infamous plays, in-stream branding.	Event/experiential Celebrity endorsement Media Platform
	Berlin International Gaming ⁸⁵		Germany	Jersey logo, social media activations, giveaways.	Player/team apparel Media platform

BRAND	TOURNAMENT	GAME	LOCATION	SPONSORSHIP DETAILS	ACTIVATION TYPE
GG Bet	Natus Vincere ⁸⁶	CS:GO	Ukraine	Jersey logo	Player/team apparel
	North ⁸⁷	CS:GO	Denmark	Jersey logo, documentary style series on North 2018	Player/team apparel Media platform
	Fnatic ⁸⁸	CS:GO League of Legends Dota2	America	Jersey logo, documentary style series on North 2018	Player/team apparel Media platform
Loot.Bet ⁸⁹	Partnered with UCC Title sponsor of Bullet Blizzard Tournament, LOOT.BET/CS and LOOT. BET/dota leagues.	CS:GO Dota2		Collaborating with UCC (esports company specialising in broadcasting and organising events) to conduct pro CS:GO and Dota2 events.	Event/experiential Naming rights

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