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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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SOCIAL DYNAMICS AND LONELINESS IN ESPORTS: REFRAMING THE RELATIONSHIP IN COMPETITIVE GAMING

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I. INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is an internal discomfort caused by insufficient interpersonal interactions [1] that significantly impacts mental health and quality of life [2]. Despite eSports' growing popularity, limited research explores the psychological factors influencing participation, particularly loneliness [3]. This study examines the relationship between loneliness and participation factors in EA Sports FC™ Mobile, addressing knowledge gaps on player psychology and motivation.

II. METHODS

80 EA Sports FC Mobile users participated in the GGKL v3 on 9th-10th November 2024 and MVP Series on 21 December 2024 events were the study's target respondents. A questionnaire that included demographic information, a 20-item measure of off-esport loneliness using UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1978) [4] and 27 participation motives using C-MOGQ (Wu et al., 2016) [5] was used to gather data. Loneliness level was measured by the mean of the total score. For a 20-34 score, it means the level of loneliness is low, while 35-49, it will be a moderate level and 50-80 is a high level of loneliness. Spearman Correlation was used to examine the connection between loneliness and factor of involvement as the normality test highlighted the results as non-normal.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Loneliness

According to the study, participants' levels of loneliness were moderate (37.2 ± 15.9). This implies that the social atmosphere of e-sport competitions could reduce feelings of isolation while offering significant details on how gaming communities may encourage interpersonal connection.

B. Factor of Participation

The main factors that influence participation were found to be Recreation (4.74 ± 0.65) and Escape (4.57 ± 0.51), which highlights the significance of recreation and stress reduction in motivating participants. This underlines how playing eSports has psychological benefits.

C. The Relationship between Loneliness and Factor of Participation

Spearman Correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between loneliness and participation factors. This highlights a variety of psychological factors that influence e-sport involvement by showing that motivations like escape and recreation are unrelated to feelings of loneliness. Table 1 highlights the results of the findings.

TABLE I
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LONELINESS AND FACTOR OF PARTICIPATION

Factor of Participation	Loneliness	
	Spearman's rho	-0.148
df	78	
Sig (2-tailed)	0.095	

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on this study, EA SPORTS FC™ Mobile players show a low level of loneliness, with escape and recreation standing as major motivators. The fact that loneliness and involvement characteristics do not significantly correlate highlights the variety of psychological motivations that exist in e-sports. These results offer helpful data for future research and recommendations for intervention focused on e-sport communities.

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