

The Commercialization of eSports and the Emergence of Fan Hierarchies: Gender Dynamics, Emotional Engagement, and Community Tensions in Digital Fandom

Authors : Anwen Ren

Abstract : This study explores the commercialization of eSports and its impact on fan hierarchies, focusing on gender dynamics and emotional engagement. Through mixed-methods research, it examines the divide between "traditional fans" and "groupie fans," highlighting how gendered stereotypes marginalize female fans. Using the case of professional eSports player Scout, the paper analyzes parasocial relationships and their role in the fan economy. The findings reveal the need for inclusivity in fan culture to address gender bias and optimize eSports' commercial potential. This work contributes to understanding the intersection of gender, representation, and digital fandoms.

Keywords : eSports, fan culture, gender dynamics, commercialization

Conference Title : ICCSH 2025 : International Conference on Culture, Society and Humanity

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : January 30-31, 2025