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The impact of novelty seeking on media consumption intentions in eSports: A study of the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games using the model of goal-directed behavior

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Abstract

Background: ESports has gained global recognition in media consumption and sports tourism, with its inclusion in major events affirming its legitimacy. Despite this, limited research has explored how the novel experiences in eSports influence audience viewership motivations and behaviors.

Purpose: To gain a deeper understanding of eSports mega-event audiences, this study aims to examine the influence of novelty seeking on desire and media consumption during the 2022 Asian Games, utilizing the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB).

Methods: An online survey of 433 respondents was administered, employing the MGB to examine the relationships among novelty seeking, perceived behavioral control, desire, and media consumption intentions.

Results: The results indicate that novelty seeking significantly enhances the desire to watch eSports, which, in turn, positively influences media consumption intentions. Moreover, perceived behavioral control positively impacts desire, further strengthening media consumption intentions. This study underscores the importance of providing novel, engaging experiences to attract eSports audiences. It contributes to understanding how novelty seeking and perceived behavioral control enhances audience engagement and media consumption.

Keywords: Novelty seeking, eSports, model of goal-directed behavior, sport mega-events

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1. Introduction

At the outset, eSports is defined as "a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams as well as the output of the eSports system are mediated by human-computer interface" (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017, p. 221). Recently, eSports has gained global recognition and popularity as a new phenomenon in media consumption (Lee et al., 2024; Oh et al., 2024), digital entertainment, and sports tourism (Funk et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). The industry continues its rapid expansion, with total viewership reaching 2.76 billion hours in 2023, representing a 75% increase since 2020 (Xu, 2024). Globally, the eSports market, valued at $1.64 billion in 2022, is projected to exceed $10 billion by 2032, driven by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 21% (Gough, 2024).

As a novel form of entertainment and commercialization, the eSports industry has rapidly expanded into a global experience, often in the form of mega-events (Cunningham et al., 2018). In 2020, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced that eSports would debut as an official medal sport event for the first time in the history of sport mega-events at the 2022 Asian Games, which took place from September 24 to October 2, 2023, in Hangzhou, China, after being postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Galindo, 2021; Goh, 2023). This indicates that the demand and capacity for eSports can be an integral part of sport competitions, similar to traditional sports (Kim & Kim, 2022). This historic inclusion of eSports in a major sporting event underscores the growing recognition and legitimacy of eSports as a competitive field.

Several studies (e.g., Jang & Byon, 2020; Thompson et al., 2022; Xiao, 2020) have predicted consumption behaviors among eSports and online gaming enthusiasts, who are more likely to exhibit novelty seeking tendencies (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Pu et al., 2022). Additionally, a key theoretical critique of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)is their omission of a latent motivational factor between antecedents (e.g., attitudes, subjective norms) and behavioral intentions. The Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB) addresses this limitation by incorporating desire as a motivational state (Bagozzi, 1992), along with anticipated emotions, to enhance its explanatory power. While the MGB has been successfully applied in fields such as tourism and hospitality management (e.g., Choe et al., 2020; Meng & Han, 2020), there is limited empirical evidence exploring how the novel experiences associated with eSports influence audience viewership motivations and subsequent behaviors.

This study seeks to explore the role of novelty seeking and desire, as conceptualized by the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001), in shaping future eSports media consumption intentions following the 2022 Asian Games. Mega-scale sport tourism events, such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and Asian Games, are distinct in the substantial experiences they offer. Therefore, understanding eSports audiences within the context of these mega-events is critically important. To guide this investigation, two research questions are posed: (1) How does individuals' novelty seeking influence desires and media consumption intentions? and (2) How does desire mediate the relationship between novelty seeking, MGB motivations, and media consumption intentions?

2. Literature Review

Research Background

Mega-events, such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and Asian Games, significantly influence media consumption behaviors, drawing vast global audiences and fostering extensive media engagement. These events catalyze the development of online platforms (e.g., Tiger Tooth Live, Penguin Gaming, and Hummingbird Gaming) that facilitate media interaction and consumption on a large scale (Tang et al., 2024). Research indicates that mega-events significantly boost viewership and media interaction due to their large- scale appeal and the sense of novelty they provide (Roche,2000). The anticipation and excitement

surrounding these events often lead to increased media consumption, as audiences seek to stay updated with live broadcasts, news, and related content (Billings & Ruihley, 2013). Additionally, the immersive experience offered by advanced broadcasting technologies enhances viewer engagement, making mega-events a critical driver of media consumption (Boyle & Haynes, 2009). Studies have also shown that the cultural and social significance of mega-events contributes to their high media consumption rates, as they foster a sense of community and shared experience among viewers (Whannel, 2008). Therefore, understanding the impact of mega-events on media consumption is crucial for stakeholders in the sports and media industries to optimize strategies for audience engagement and content delivery.

Model of Goal-Direct Behavior (MGB)

The Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB), proposed by Perugini and Bagozzi (2001), extends the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which identifies attitudes and subjective norms as antecedents of behavioral intention, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), which builds on the TRA by adding perceived behavioral control as a factor for predicting behavioral intention. The MGB distinguishes itself from these earlier models by incorporating habitual, emotional, and motivational components. To address prior limitations and enhance explanatory power, the MGB specifically incorporates: 1) desire, 2) two dimensions of anticipated emotions (positive and negative), and 3) past behavior in terms of frequency and recency. A common critique of the TRA and the TPB centers on the absence of a latent factor between antecedent variables (e.g., attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) and intention, arguing that these models overlook the motivational element necessary to drive intention. To address this gap, desire was integrated into the MGB to represent the motivational state that Energizes the link between antecedents and behavioral intention (Bagozzi, 1992). Another criticism of TRA and TPB is their failure to account for emotional, social, and cultural dimensions when predicting human behavior (e.g., Xie et al., 2013). Bagozzi et al. (1998) proposed goal-directed emotions and included anticipated emotions in the MGB, which were empirically validated. Previous research (e.g., Bagozzi, 1992; Bagozzi et al., 1998) has empirically demonstrated that the MGB is effective in understanding decision-making and human behavior.

The Model of Goal-directed Behavior (MGB) has been applied across various contexts, notably in sport and tourism, with particular emphasis on mega-events (Choe et al., 2020), sport consumption (Yim & Byon, 2020a, 2020b), and travel decision-making processes (Meng & Han, 2016). Researchers have sought to revise and expand the model by introducing additional variables—such as novelty-seeking, knowledge, authenticity in tourism, and patriotism—to broaden its explanatory power for understanding human behaviors (e.g., Choe et al., 2020; Li & Su, 2022; Meng & Choi, 2016; Yim & Byon, 2020a, 2020b).

While substantial research exists on motivations for participation in eSports and fans' motivations for viewing eSports events (e.g., Pizzo et al., 2018; Pu et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2024), there is a marked lack of studies exploring the specific motivational factors, such as novelty-seeking, that drive audiences to view eSports live streams—particularly in the context of sport mega-events on a global scale. This research gap suggests a need to address limitations within prior studies and the current literature. Specifically, previous applications of the MGB in understanding media consumption behaviors fall short when applied to eSports events, especially as they intersect with the tourism and sports sectors in the context of novel global eSports mega-events.

Moreover, although the MGB integrates the frequency and recency of past behaviors to enhance its predictive capacity (e.g., Meng & Choi, 2016; Yim & Byon, 2020a, 2020b), this study excludes these factors, given that eSports' inclusion in the Asian Games represents a novel sport mega-event, rendering past behavior or prior experience inapplicable. Additionally, only a limited number

of studies have examined novelty-seeking as a key factor within the MGB framework to account for consumer behaviors. Consequently, this research proposes incorporating novelty-seeking while excluding past behavior variables within the MGB framework to more accurately capture media consumption intentions among eSports viewers.

The Relationship Between Novelty Seeking and Media Consumption Intention

Novelty is defined as the extent to which current perceptions deviate from prior experiences (Pearson, 1970). It reflects a propensity to seek new experiences and environments, enabling consumers to explore unfamiliar sources of stimulation and fulfill their curiosity and desire for knowledge, as opposed to familiar stimuli (Assaker et al., 2011; Li & Su, 2022). A review of relevant literature suggests that novelty seeking is a component of stimulation that can influence consumption behaviors (e.g., Pu et al., 2022; Raphael & Heng, 2021; Sjöblom et al., 2020).

In the tourism and hospitality industries, novelty seeking has been recognized as a strong predictor of decision-making, particularly among tourists driven by arousal (Lee et al., 2017; Li & Su, 2022). Previous research on novelty-seeking motivations among pop culture enthusiasts highlights that the drive for unique and new experiences is a significant factor prompting fans to attend pop culture events, such as anime conventions (Labuschagne & Burger, 2022). Furthermore, Liu et al. (2020) developed an extensive motivation scale specific to anime tourism, which includes the pursuit of novelty within anime culture as a core element.

Similarly, in traditional sports, novelty has been identified as a key motivation for spectators, acting as a driver of sports consumption. Trail and James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), identifying novelty as one of the ten motivations that underpin sports consumption behaviors. Moreover, James et al (2002) demonstrated that novelty positively influences ticket purchases when a new team is introduced at a new venue. This suggests that emerging events, such as eSports in traditional sports mega-events, may similarly positively influence attitudes and behavioral outcomes. The novelty of eSports players and teams has also been shown to directly predict online consumption of eSports content (Sjöblom et al., 2020). Raphael and Heng (2021) further demonstrated that novelty encompasses dimensions that strongly motivate individuals to engage with eSports viewership. Additionally, qualitative research indicates that eSports spectators are motivated by the novelty of watching eSports events (Pu et al., 2022).

Drawing from existing literature, eSports is emerging as a novel paradigm within the domains of sport and tourism, characterized by the uniqueness of its players, teams, environments, and media (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Jang et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2021). Despite a growing understanding of the factors influencing media consumption in eSports mega-events, novelty-seeking has yet to be independently examined as a predictor of media engagement within this context. Introducing novelty-seeking as an independent predictor enhances the explanatory capacity of the MGB and provides a more comprehensive framework that integrates novelty-seeking with the MGB's constructs, including attitudes, emotions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—all of which collectively shape media consumption behaviors. Building on prior studies that indicate the unique experiential qualities of eSports are crucial for understanding the novelty-seeking behaviors of event audiences, media consumption behaviors associated with hosting eSports mega-events may be largely driven by novelty-seeking. Consequently, when audiences perceive eSports as a novel experience—marked by increased interest, deeper engagement, and a willingness to explore unfamiliar experiences—novelty-seeking may act as a precursor to the desire to view and the intention to engage with eSports media.

The Relationship Between Desires and Media Consumption Intention

The concept of desire plays a crucial role in understanding consumer behavior, particularly

within the framework of the MGB. Desire is defined as a motivational state that drives individuals towards achieving specific goals, influenced by both cognitive and emotional factors (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Several studies have highlighted the importance of desire in predicting behavioral intentions and actual behaviors. For instance, Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) demonstrated that desire mediates the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on one hand, and behavioral intentions on the other. This mediation effect underscores the central role of desire in the decision-making process, making it a critical component in models of consumer behavior.

In the realm of sport and tourism, desire has been shown to significantly influence consumption behaviors. Meng and Choi (2016) found that desire was a strong predictor of tourists' intentions to revisit destinations, suggesting that the emotional and motivational aspects encapsulated in desire are pivotal in shaping consumer decisions. Similarly, in the context of sport consumption, Yim and Byon (2020a) identified desire as a key determinant of fans' intentions to attend sporting events, further underscoring its relevance in the sports domain. Han and Sa (2022) confirmed that desire is positively influenced by both positive and negative anticipated emotions, which, in turn, significantly impact decisions related to the purchase of golf apparel.

In the context of eSports, several studies have identified key motivational factors associated with eSports fans' desire to achieve specific goals or gain desirable outcomes in different contexts, including eSports participation (Jang & Byon, 2020), live event attendance at eSports venues (Pizzo et al., 2018), and online viewership of eSports matches (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Among the antecedents of behavioral outcomes, such as eSports media consumption, desire represents the audience's intrinsic motivation to engage with esports content, driven by factors such as novelty seeking, perceived behavioral control, and anticipated emotions. The application of the MGB in eSports research has also emphasized the role of desire. For example, Choe et al. (2020) applied the MGB to understand spectators' intentions to attend eSports events and found that desire significantly influenced these intentions. This finding aligns with the broader literature, suggesting that desire is a robust predictor of media consumption intentions across various contexts, including eSports.

According to the MGB, desire can be predicted by several factors, including attitudes, positive and negative anticipated emotions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. However, previous studies employing the MGB have yielded varied findings regarding predictors of desire. For instance, Yim and Byon(2020a) found that subjective norms did not influence attendance at sporting events or online viewership but had a positive association with TV viewership. Additionally, perceived behavioral control was a positive predictor of TV viewership for sporting events. While positive emotions significantly predicted desire, negative spectator emotions showed no significant relationship with attendance, TV viewership, or online viewership of sporting events. Cauteruccio and Kou (2023) explored the emotional aspect of eSports spectatorship, underscoring the importance of emotions in the eSports viewing experience, where fans interact within social groups, express emotions during eSports spectating, and identify with eSports teams. Generally, attitude, positive emotion, and subjective norms are positive predictors of sport consumption, while negative emotion is a negative predictor (e.g., Han & Sa, 2022; Yim & Byon, 2020b). However, media consumption behaviors within the context of eSports mega-events remain unexplored. Consequently, this study aims to examine and identify the relationships between attitudes, positive and negative anticipated emotions, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and desire within the MGB framework in the context of eSports.

The Relationships between Novelty Seeking and Desires.

The relationship between novelty seeking and desire has been explored in several studies. Novelty seeking, defined as the tendency to seek out

new and stimulating experiences, has been shown to enhance desire by providing consumers with unique and engaging experiences (Assaker et al., 2011; Li & Su, 2022). In tourism, Mishra et al. (2022) identified that active sport tourists are primarily driven by travel-related factors, such as a desire for novelty, new experiences, exploration, social interaction, and stress relief, rather than by motives related to exercise or sport participation, like physical fitness and self-enhancement. Additionally, the pursuit of novel information and unique experiences is recognized as a key motivator for tourists (Skavronskaya et al., 2020).

Consistent with findings in tourism, novelty-seeking within the context of eSports may act as a stimulus that elicits the desire to watch eSports events. Previous research indicates that eSports viewers exhibit a strong desire to gain knowledge on game strategies, tactics, and the skills of elite players (Qian et al., 2019; Raphael & Heng, 2021). Furthermore, the novelty inherent in eSports events, participants, and technological innovations may further drive desire, subsequently enhancing media consumption intentions (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Although prior studies have not empirically examined the relationship between novelty-seeking and desire, a positive association is expected. This study aims to empirically investigate this relationship within the context of eSports mega-events.

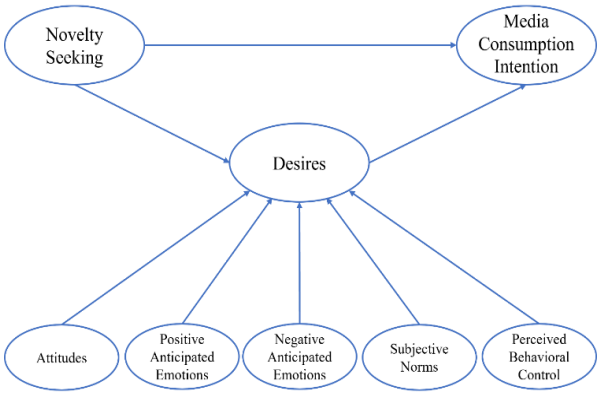
3. Methodology

A structural model was developed to investigate novelty seeking as an antecedent to desire and media consumption intention within the specific context of the MGB framework. This model incorporates five preexisting variables—attitudes, positive anticipated emotions, negative anticipated emotions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—while introducing novelty seeking as an independent variable. The proposed research model is depicted in Figure 1.

Procedures

Quantitative data were gathered via an online survey, targeting respondents who had watched at least one round of eSports during the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games. The survey aimed to assess participants' novel experiences with eSports, featured as a main event of the Asian Games. Data collection was facilitated by SoJump (sojump.com), a well-regarded survey platform in China, known for its high-quality data collection and extensive geographical coverage during the event (Del Ponte et al., 2024). During the initial process, respondents were introduced to the research context, which focused on their experiences with eSports media consumption, including television and internet streaming, during the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games. Participation was voluntary, with each participant receiving a $1 incentive. After initial screening questions, respondents completed the main survey items followed by demographic questions.

Figure 1
Proposed research model



Given that the study was conducted in China, all participants were native Chinese speakers. The original survey items, developed in English, were translated into Chinese to ensure cultural and linguistic accuracy. The translation process followed the procedure outlined by Brislin (1970, 1986). Initially, the survey was translated into Chinese by a bilingual researcher proficient in both languages. A second bilingual researcher, who was unaware of the original English version, back-translated the Chinese version into English. This resulted in two English versions of the survey. A third researcher then compared the original English version with the back-translated version and determined that

the two were conceptually equivalent. No significant discrepancies were found, confirming that the translated items accurately conveyed the intended meaning.

Participants

A total of 486 respondents were initially recruited for the survey through a convenience sampling method on the online platform So Jump (sojump.com). Following data cleaning, 53 responses were excluded due to incomplete information, including omitted answers or uncompleted surveys (12 responses), failure to pass the screening question related to previously viewed teams, 'Please provide the names of two teams you have previously watched' (23 responses), and lack of relevant eSports experience, specifically from those who reported no prior experience watching eSports matches (18 responses). Ultimately, 89.1% (N = 433) of the responses were retained for data analysis, providing a representative Sample of individuals who have engaged in viewing eSports matches during the 2022 Asian Games.

Among the research participants, 67% were male (n = 290) and 33% were female (n = 143). The majority of participants were aged 18–39, with 43% between 18–29 years (n = 186) and 48% between 30–39 years (n = 208). In terms of education, 82.9% had attained a university degree (n = 359). Occupations varied, with participants primarily working in business (n = 148, 34.2%), freelancing (n = 100, 23.1%), or government (n = 56, 12.9%), with students (n = 80, 18.5%) and others (n = 49, 11.3%) also represented. The majority of respondents consumed eSports content via mobile phones (n = 231, 53.3%), followed by tablet PCs (n = 92, 21.3%), desktop computers (n = 46, 10.6%), and laptops (n = 34, 7.9%). Most participants watched live streaming (n = 332, 76.7%), while a smaller portion viewed re-aired content (n = 101, 23.3%). In terms of engagement, participants reported watching between 1 and 6 rounds of eSports, with the highest proportion watching 3 rounds (n = 132, 30.5%). The detailed demographic characteristics of sample are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents

		N	%
Gender	Male	290	67.0
	Female	143	33.0
Age	18 - 29	186	43.0
	30 - 39	208	48.0
	40 - 49	32	7.4
	Above 50	7	1.6
Education	High school diploma	50	11.6
	University	359	82.9
	Graduate school	24	5.5
Occupation	Government employee	56	12.9
	Business	148	34.2
	Student	80	18.5
	Freelancer	100	23.1
	Others	49	11.3
Types of media	TV	26	6.0
	Mobile phone	231	53.3
	Tablet PC	92	21.3
	Desktop computer	46	10.6
	Laptop	34	7.9
	Others	4	0.9
Types of streaming	Live streaming	332	76.7
	Re-air	101	23.3
Number of views	1 round	43	9.9
	2 rounds	89	20.6
	3 rounds	132	30.5
	4 rounds	71	16.4
	5 rounds	40	9.2
	6 rounds	58	13.4
	Total	433	100

Measures

The primary measurement items were adapted from established scales (e.g., Kim et al., 2011; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001) that have been tested and validated in prior research. A total of 31 items, covering 8 research variables, were presented in randomized order and rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items were based on previous studies utilizing the MGB framework, with a primary focus on the novelty-seeking variable

for the present study. All items were modified to align with the research context, specifically assessing eSports viewers' consumption experiences and their subsequent media consumption intentions.

To assess novelty seeking, items were adapted from previous studies, initially developed by Jeong and Park (1997) and subsequently validated through a series of studies by Chang et al. (2006) and Ariffin (2007). Specifically, four measurement items were derived from Ariffin's (2007) scale (e.g., the item "the destination offers a different meeting experience to the participants" was modified to "eSports offers an unusual experience") to align with the current research context. All four novelty-seeking items were revised and applied in this study based on the robustness of the original scale.

Additionally, items for the Model of Goal-Directed Behavior (MGB) were adapted from the foundational work of Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) and have been validated in various sectors, including tourism behavior (e.g., Meng & Choi, 2016; Meng & Han, 2016) and sport consumer behavior (e.g., Chiu et al., 2017; Yim & Byon, 2020a, 2020b). The MGB framework provides universal items, with only slight variations required based on specific research contexts, ensuring consistency in item operationalization, measurement, and selection. For example, the item measuring "attitude" in Chiu et al.'s (2017) study, "I think that purchasing sporting goods online is beneficial," was adapted to "I think that watching eSports is beneficial." Similarly, for perceived behavioral control, the item "Whether or not I purchase sporting goods online is completely up to me" was revised to "Whether or not I watch eSports is completely up to me." Thus, items for attitudes (4 items), positive anticipated emotions (4 items), negative anticipated emotions (4 items), subjective norms (4 items), perceived behavioral control (4 items), and desires (4 items) were adapted and used in this study.

For measuring media consumption intention, three items were adapted from Kim et al. (2011), who validated media consumption scales based on prior work by Fink et al. (2002) and Trail et al. (2005). Kim et al.'s (2011) items measuring media consumption intention for sports viewership were adapted to assess media consumption intention for eSports mega-events. For example, the item "I will track the news on the (Team Name) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, etc.)" was revised to "I will watch (eSports) through the media (e.g., TV, internet, and mobile devices) in the upcoming mega-events." Overall, all items utilized in this study to measure novelty seeking, MGB constructs, and media consumption intention were based on previously validated scales.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS 29.0 to establish the basic demographic profile of participants. To compare the initial model (excluding the novelty-seeking variable) with an alternative model incorporating it, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and two structural equation models (SEM) were conducted using AMOS 29. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommended two-step approach, the analysis began with CFA employing the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method. Model fit for the research constructs and factor structures was assessed using key indices to validate the measurement model. Construct reliability was evaluated through composite reliability (CR) to ensure internal consistency of the items. Factor loadings (λ) were analyzed to establish convergent validity, while correlations among variables and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed to confirm discriminant validity. Subsequently, two SEM path models were employed to test the relationships among research constructs and to compare the models, one excluding and one including novelty-seeking as an independent variable.

4. Results

Measurement Model Analysis

For the assessment of model fit, the study adopted recommended index thresholds as follows: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > .90, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > .90, and Root Mean Square Error of

Approximation (RMSEA) < .08, as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999); Normed Fit Index (NFI) > .90, per Bentler and Bonnet (1980); and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) < .08, as recommended by Browne and Cudeck (1992). Based on these criteria, the confirmatory factor analysis results indicated a good fit for the measurement model, with the following indices: χ^2/df = 883.158/406 = 2.175, NFI = .93, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, SRMR = .027, and RMSEA = .052.

The reliability of the scale was confirmed, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients values ranging from .86 to .91 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 2 provided evidence of discriminant validity, showing that the squared correlation coefficients were less than the AVE of each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded the thresholds of .70 and .50, respectively (McDonald, 1999) (see Table 3). Consequently, the CFA results indicated an acceptable model fit for further analysis.

Structural Model Analysis

To enhance the credibility of incorporating novelty seeking into the initial MGB model, a comparison was conducted between the initial MGB model (excluding novelty seeking) and the proposed MGB model (including novelty seeking). Chi-square tests revealed a statistically significant difference between the initial and proposed models, $\Delta\chi^2$ (103) = 184.541, $p < .001$ (see difference between the initial and proposed models, $\Delta\chi^2$ (103) = 184.541, $p < .001$ (see Table 4). Additionally, the R^2 for media consumption intentions in the proposed MGB model with novelty seeking increased from .830 to .848, indicating a slight improvement. Although the difference between the models was modest, the proposed model offered a more comprehensive explanation of media consumption intentions among eSports mega- event audiences, particularly within the context of the 2022 Asian Games. Thus, incorporating novelty seeking into the MGB model is beneficial for path analyses in understanding eSports media consumption intentions.

Table 2

Comparison of squared correlations (r^2) and average variance extracted

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. NS	.68							
2. AT	.576 (.331)	.70						
3. PAE	.592 (.350)	.719 (.516)	.69					
4. NAE	.656 (.430)	.438 (.191)	.413 (.170)	.67				
5. SN	.598 (.357)	.704 (.495)	.778 (.605)	.462 (.213)	.70			
6. PBC	.540 (.291)	.558 (.311)	.522 (.272)	.688 (.473)	.559 (.312)	.65		
7. DE	.668 (.446)	.635 (.403)	.661 (.436)	.623 (.388)	.688 (.473)	.661 (.436)	.66	
8. MCI	.717 (.514)	.722 (.521)	.602 (.362)	.549 (.301)	.584 (.341)	.517 (.267)	.617 (.380)	.65

Note. **1. NS** = Novelty Seeking, **2. AT** = Attitudes, **3. PAE** = Positive Anticipated Emotions, **4. NAE** = Negative Anticipated Emotions, **5. SN** = Subjective Norms, **6. PBC** = Perceived Behavioral Control, **7. DE** = Desires, **8. MCI** = Media Consumption Intention.

Table 3
Measurement model statistics

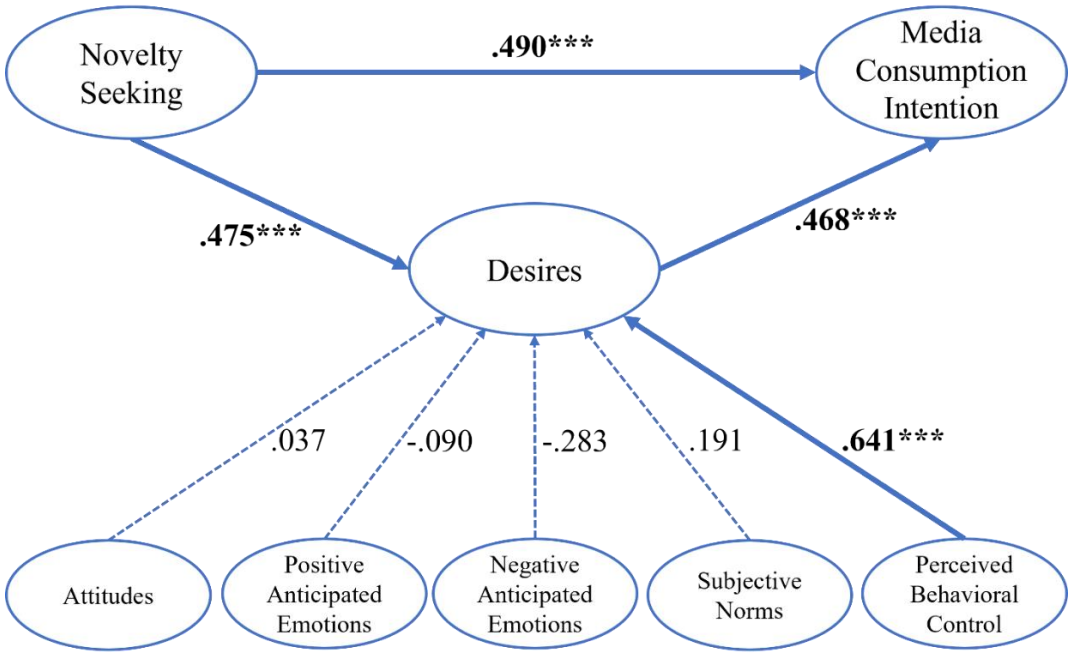
	λ	CR	AVE	α
Novelty seeking (eSports…)		.89	.68	.90
offers an unusual experience	.82			
offers new discoveries	.88			
offers new experience	.84			
is new for me	.84			
Attitudes (I think that watching…)		.90	.70	.91
eSports is positive	.86			
eSports is beneficial	.85			
eSports is attractive	.87			
eSports is enjoyable	.83			
Positive anticipated emotions (If I watch eSports, I will be…)		.89	.69	.91
excited	.84			
glad	.85			
satisfied	.87			
happy	.84			
Negative anticipated emotions (If I can't watch eSports, I will be…)		.89	.67	.89
frustrated	.83			
disappointed	.84			
sad	.81			
worried	.82			
Subjective norms (Most people who are important to me…)		.89	.70	.90
agree with that I watch eSports	.84			
understand that I watch eSports	.87			
support that I watch eSports	.82			
recommend that I watch eSports	.85			
Perceived behavioral control		.88	.65	.89
Whether or not I watch eSports is completely up to me	.81			
I am confident that If I want, I can watch eSports	.81			
I am capable of watching eSports	.82			
I have enough resources, time, and opportunities to watch eSports	.83			
Desires		.88	.66	.89
I wish to watch eSports in the following mega-events	.84			
I want to watch eSports in the following mega-events	.83			
I hope to watch eSports in the following mega-events	.85			
I am eager to watch eSports in the following mega-events	.80			
Media consumption intention		.85	.65	.86
I will watch (eSports) through the media (e.g., TV, internet, and mobile devices) in the following mega-events	.83			
I will support (eSports) by watching eSports through the media (e.g., TV, internet, and mobile devices) in the following mega events	.85			
I will track the news on the (eSports) through the media (e.g., TV, internet, and mobile devices) in the following mega-events	.79			

Table 4
Comparisons of structural equation model analyses

	x^2/df	NFI	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	R^2 for DE	R^2 for MCE
Initial MGB	727.219/308 = 2.361	.93	.96	.95	.030	.033	.837	.830
Final MGB	911.760/411 = 2.218	.93	.96	.95	.029	.053	.838	.848
Criteria	< 3.0	> .90	> .90	> .90	< .10	< .08		

Note. **DE** = Desire, **MCE** = Media Consumption Intention

Figure 2
Results of structural equation model



Regarding the model fit of the proposed model, it demonstrated a good fit with the following indices: χ^2/df = 911.760/411 = 2.218, NFI = .93, CFI= .96, TLI = .95, SRMR = .029, and RMSEA =.053. The results of the proposed paths indicated that perceived behavioral control was positively associated with desires (β =.641, t = 3.398, p < .001), which in turn led to media consumption intention (β = .468, t = 6.628, p < .001). Additionally, novelty seeking was found to positively influence desires (β= .475, t = 3.749, p <001) and media consumption intention (β= .490, t = 6.904, p < .001). The detailed results of the path model are presented in Figure 2.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the influence of novelty seeking and desire on eSports media consumption intentions during the 2022 Asian Games, utilizing the MGB. Structural model analysis results offer empirical evidence of the novel experience associated with eSports as a mega-event. Findings from this study indicate that novel. experiences serve as a precursor, stimulating audience desire and reinforcing behavioral intentions. This supports the notion that novelty seeking influences both motivational attitudes and med consumption intentions in the eSports con-

text, consistent with previous studies (e.g., Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017; Raphael & Heng, 2021; Sjöblom et al., 2020). While the distinctive aspects of eSports media consumption—such as competition format, specialized media channels, visual and entertainment features, and unique experiential elements suggest that traditional sports motivations may not fully apply (Tang et al., 2024), novelty seeking in this study highlights that eSports consumers demonstrate a propensity for exploring new experiences and unfamiliar sources of stimulation (Li & Su, 2022). This aligns with prior research findings in contexts such as anime tourism (Liu et al., 2020) and eSports viewership (Raphael of a sports mega-event. Consequently, this study & Heng, 2021; Sjöblom et al., 2020), where novelty seeking is identified as a key driver influencing desire and subsequent behavior. This study introduces a novel perspective, suggesting that novelty seeking be considered an independent variable in predicting desire and behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, the results of the MGB indicated that perceived behavioral control positively influences desire, which, in turn, affects media consumption intentions. This suggests that audiences possessed sufficient resources and were presented with numerous opportunities to engage with eSports during the event, thereby reinforcing their desire and intention to consume media, consistent with previous studies (Li & Su, 2022; Yim & Byon, 2020b). Desire emerged as the most significant determinant of intentions within the MGB framework, a relationship well supported by research in sport and tourism (Meng & Choi, 2016; Chiu et al., 2018) as well as sport fan studies that utilized the MGB to predict attendance at sporting events and media consumption intentions through television and online platforms (Yim & Byon, 2020b).

Interestingly, other independent variables in the MGB were not statistically significant. In Yim and Byon's (2020a) study on sport consumption among Millennial fans, attitudes toward sports had a positive and significant impact on the desire for TV and online viewership, which contrasts with the findings of the current study. However, consistent with this research, positive and negative emotions, as well as subjective norms, did not significantly predict the desire to watch games online or on television. This may suggest that eSports matches evoke less favorable attitudes compared to traditional sports events. Additionally, Kim et al. (2020) explored outdoor sports behavioral intentions among Beijing citizens, and their results differed from the current study, showing that both positive and negative anticipated emotions positively influenced desire. Similarly, Han and Sa (2022) examined golf apparel purchase intentions among Korean golfers, finding that both positive and negative anticipated emotions significantly impacted desire to purchase. These contrasting findings suggest that the novelty of eSport matches within megaevents may contribute to unfamiliar emotional responses, as viewers have not previously encountered such experiences. It may be interpreted that anticipated negative emotions associated with missing an eSports match or positive emotions tied to watching may be less defined. Moreover, eSports viewers may not yet hold strong positive attitudes or loyalty toward eSports matches. Further research is therefore warranted to explore eSports viewership in the context of future mega-events featuring a broader range of eSports games.

Theoretical Implications

Previous studies have examined the motivations behind eSports viewership through various theoretical frameworks. For instance, Tang et al. (2024) employed self-determination theory, concluding that intrinsic motivation is the primary driver for eSports viewership. Jang et al. (2024) applied an extended theory of planned behavior to identify factors influencing the intention to watch eSports live streams. Zang et al. (2023) used push-pull theory to explain offline attendance motivations at eSports events, and Meng-Lewis et al. (2024) explored eSports viewers' motivations using uses and gratifications theory. While these studies attempted to explain eSports consumer behavior using different models or

theories, each framework demonstrated limited explanatory power, indicating a need for more robust models to capture the complexities of eSports consumption behavior adequately.

The current study further contributes to literature by establishing novelty seeking as a key motivational factor that enhances the desire to engage in specific behaviors among audiences, particularly during sports mega-events. Unlike prior research where novelty was considered one of many motivations predicting behavior (e.g., Trail & James, 2001; Santos et al., 2021), this study treated novelty seeking as an independent variable, focusing specifically on its role during the live broadcasting of eSports within the context provides empirical evidence supporting the role of novelty seeking in predicting media consumption intentions. In addition, this study excluded the frequency and recency of past behaviors from the MGB framework, as the inclusion of eSports in the Asian Games represents a novel sport mega-event, making past behavior or prior experience less applicable. From the perspective of eSports media consumers, the event's inclusion in the Asian Games became a unique and unprecedented occurrence, necessitating a revised MGB model that incorporates novelty seeking while excluding frequency and recency variables from the traditional MGB framework.

Moreover, this study effectively demonstrated rigorous validity and reliability, establishing the proposed MGB as a robust tool for future research by comparing models with and without the novelty-seeking variable. It further advanced the theoretical integration between the MGB and novelty-seeking in the context of eSports media consumption by constructing and evaluating models that incorporate various motivational factors within the MGB framework. By clarifying the core significance of motivational constructs that predict desire—such as attitudes, positive and negative anticipated emotions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—the study enhances the theoretical framework for understanding eSports media consumption intentions in the context of major eSports events.

Practical Implications

The current study results provide empirical evidence on the role of novelty seeking in shaping media consumption intentions within the eSports context. Given that the findings of this study emphasize the significance of novelty-seeking tendencies in driving eSports media consumption intention, eSports organizations and event marketers can leverage this insight to better tailor their offerings to meet the varied needs of their audience. For example, enhancements such as advanced 3D graphics and immersive virtual content in eSports matches, along with unique pre- and post-event experiences—such as music concert collaborations, fan meetings, and engagement opportunities via social media or dedicated fan platforms—could be introduced as novel elements to enrich the eSports experience. This approach has the potential to enhance viewers' desire to watch eSports and improve the overall media consumption experience for eSports fans. This underscores the importance of creating novel and engaging experiences to attract and retain eSports audiences.

Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of perceived behavioral control, indicating that when audiences feel they have the resources and opportunities to engage with eSports content, their desire and subsequent media consumption intentions are strengthened. To further stimulate the desire to watch eSports, eSports marketers and organizations should provide increased access to broadcasts, advertisements, and free fan interaction channels. For example, expanding eSports content exposure through dedicated platforms like Twitch, YouTube, and social media channels, as well as offering Over-The-Top (OTT) content showcasing behind-the-scenes stories, training moments, and insights into players' lives, may pique fans' curiosity and strengthen their desire to engage with eSports matches during mega-events.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has certain limitations that should serve as a basis for future research. First, novelty

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seeking was assessed as a unidimensional construct. Future research could consider multiple avenues to further examine the influence of novelty seeking on media consumption intentions in eSports. For example, future studies might adopt a multidimensional approach to measuring novelty seeking by incorporating factors such as service quality and technological innovation. Specifically, constructs like the acceptance of novel experiences in eSports through Virtual Reality or the pursuit of gamified competition in conjunction with traditional sports could offer a more comprehensive understanding of novel experiences in eSports. Additionally, comparative studies across various emerging sports, including breaking, skateboarding, and sport climbing, could provide valuable insights into the unique dimensions of novelty seeing across different contexts. Furthermore, as suggested by Chang et al. (2006), novelty-seeking motivations may encompass four sub-factors: thrill, deviation from routine, boredom alleviation, and surprise. Therefore, a multidimensional approach utilizing these segmented sub-variables of novelty seeking could yield deeper insights. Moreover, the effect of novelty seeking on media consumption intentions for recurring eSports mega-events, such as the Asian Games or World Championships, may attenuate over time. Accordingly, future studies could employ longitudinal designs to investigate the diminishing effects of novelty-seeking motivations across successive instances of the same eSports mega-event, offering valuable insights into the evolving motivations of eSports audiences.

Second, this study examined eSports media consumption intentions within the context of a sports mega-event hosted in China. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to all eSports consumers globally and serve as foundational knowledge for this specific context. Future research should examine the generalizability of these findings by applying the proposed MGB model to different eSports contexts, including novel events and competitions such as the League of Legends World Championships. Additional research could explore varying scales and levels of eSports events, from local and national to international, as well as amateur and professional competitions. Expanding this research across diverse geographical regions, such as the rapidly growing Asian and European markets, would further enhance understanding. Replicating and extending these findings in settings with greater diversity across factors such as gender, culture, and levels of involvement in eSports would provide a more comprehensive understanding of eSports media consumption intentions. Broadening the sample to include international audiences would enhance the generalizability of the findings and offer a more global perspective on eSports consumption behaviors.

Finally, integrating original concepts from the MGB, such as the frequency and recency of past behavior, could enhance the model’s comprehensiveness and predictive power in media consumption intentions. In this study, individuals' motivations, desire, novelty seeking, and media consumption intentions related to eSports matches during the Asian Games were measured. As eSports events become annual mega-events, individuals will likely engage more frequently with such matches, making it feasible to measure the frequency and recency of past behaviors. Consequently, an original or expanded MGB model that incorporates variables such as behavioral outcomes, venue attendance, positive word of mouth, or revisit intentions could further improve the model's explanatory power. Alongside these theoretical contributions, the findings offer practical insights for government bodies, officials, and event managers in developing new strategies for hosting mega-events.

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