

COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING IN OCEANIC ESPORTS

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Abstract

Transformative Service Research (TSR) has emerged over the last few years to focus on factors that create “uplifting changes and improvements” to the well-being of individuals, collectives, and ecosystems. Much of TSR literature has focused on the individual, as opposed to the collective level even though it has been considered “the most pressing area for TSR”. In addition, there has been a lack of investigation of actors beyond the traditional dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities (i.e., service employees, service processes or offerings, organisations). In order to widen the focus to a multi-actor perspective, this research adopts the service ecosystem well-being framework conceptualised by Frow, McColl-Kennedy Janet, Payne, and Govind (2019) and the actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework of Polese, Pels, Tronvoll, Bruni, and Carrubbo (2017). That is, in order to focus on actors within a service ecosystem and investigate the relationship of individual and collective well-being, this research employs the A4A relationship framework which links the enhancement of actors’ well-being with the viability of the ecosystem within which the actors are situated. This research extends this framework to also examine the destruction of actors’ well-being and the effects on the viability of the ecosystem.

The Esports industry in the Oceanic region presents an interesting context within which to examine collective well-being, due to its similarities with sport and the potential to improve well-being of those involved. Within the esports well-being literature, the focus has been heavily placed on the players/athletes where well-being is a reflection of their physical, mental, and social health; however, there has not been any investigation of the well-being of the other actors within the esports ecosystem (e.g., team owners, tournament organisers,

casters, etc). In addition, there also have not been any studies exploring well-being in esports with the industry ecosystem as a unit of analysis.

To answer these theoretical gaps, the research will answer the research question, **“what is collective well-being in the esports industry and how is it co-created or co-destroyed in a service ecosystem?”**. In order to answer the research question, the study will address two research aims. Firstly, the research aims to define collective well-being and its dimensions in esports; secondly, the research aims to understand the resources integrated by various actors within the industry and how these integrated resources can lead to the co-creation and/or co-destruction of collective well-being within an A4A relationship.

This research adopted a qualitative approach, using 30 in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect data from a sample of actors in four crucial roles within the Oceanic Dota 2 esports scene. The purposive sample was composed of twelve semi-professional players, five team owners/managers, seven tournament organisers, and six casters. The participants were aged between 20 and 33 years old and have been in their role for a minimum of four months and a maximum of 8 years. The interviews were transcribed and thematically coded using inductive and deductive coding techniques.

This research makes six theoretical contributions. Firstly, this research contributed to TSR literature by responding to the call for investigation on the collective level. More specifically, this research extends the typical focus on the dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities to a multi-actor perspective by employing Polese’s (2017) A4A relationship framework. In addition, the findings contributed to TSR and service ecosystem well-being literature by examining the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro- well-being levels and between individual and collective well-being. Secondly, this

research contributed to general well-being literature by defining collective well-being and highlighting the importance of the A4A relationship framework and characteristics in enhancing and destroying collective well-being. Thirdly, this research represents the first step in investigating value co-creation and co-destruction in the esports context in addition to examining well-being beyond the current literature's focus on players and athletes. Fourthly, this research is the first to apply the A4A relationship framework and the A4A actor characteristics to TSR. This study also responds to the call from Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) for empirical evidence to support the framework by confirming the characteristics of the A4A relationship and the relationship's correlation with successful and viable service exchanges. Fifthly, this study contributed to business ecosystem literature by examining the 'health' of the esports industry in terms of eudaimonic and hedonic well-being instead of the existing measurement of long-term financial well-being and the long-term strength of network relations. Finally, this research contributes the TSR and TSSR literature by identifying six new resources that impacts individual and collective well-being. In addition, the findings also support existing TSR and TSSR literature by identifying previously established resources such as co-performance, interpersonal misbehaviour, restorative resources and six dimensions of social support. The dimensions of social support include emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support/tangible assistance, informational support, companionship/network support, and strategic.

This research also offers three key managerial contributions that may be of importance for the Oceanic Dota 2 esports industry. Firstly, the findings suggest the need to adopt and focus on a shared intentionality as a community; secondly, create a direct communication channel between actors of the same role; and finally, create a direct communication channel between actors of different roles.

In addition, this research indicates four areas of future research. Firstly, due to the exploratory nature of this study, replication is needed across other major esports titles in the oceanic region and internationally. Secondly, replication of the study is also needed across other industries to ascertain if the definition of collective well-being and the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro- levels of the ecosystem are contextual to the esports ecosystem. Thirdly, future research should widen the perspective to include more actors that are essential in the esports industry such as the game developer/publisher and viewers. Finally, while this study adopted the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin, Dent, and Tam (2017) because it most aligned with the purpose of the research, other value typologies should be employed to compare the suitability and refine the understanding of value dimensions co-created and co-destroyed in esports. Overall, this research provides a holistic perspective of collective well-being of a multi-actor service ecosystem and starts the conversation for more research in this space.

Keywords: Value co-creation, value co-destruction, collective well-being, esports, service ecosystem, business ecosystem

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List of Abbreviations

CIT	Critical Incident Technique
Dota 2	Defense of the Ancients 2
S-D Logic	Service Dominant Logic
T.O	Tournament Organiser
Team Org/s	Team Organisation/s
TSR	Transformative Service Research
TSSR	Transformative Sport Service Research

List of Key Terminology

Actor-for-Actor (A4A) Relationship

The A4A relationship framework highlights the interaction of value co-creation between actors that may both benefit the actors involved and the viability of the system within which they are situated

All-chat

All-chat is an in-game function that allows all player (including opponents) to message each other.

Business Ecosystem

A business ecosystem is complex ecosystem of actors that typically describes the roles and relationship of a company in relation to its networks.

Caster

A caster is an esport commentator who will speak over the gameplay to engage, inform, and entertain the viewers.

Co-performance

Co-performance is a vital resource integrated by athletes characterised by “thrill of competition”, “beating others” and “physical sacrifice”.

Collective Well-being

Collective well-being encompasses the well-being of both meso- and macro-level aggregations of an ecosystem. The meso-level is defined as actors within the same role with well-being referring to how optimally they function together in their role as a community. The macro-level is defined as all actors within an ecosystem with well-being referring to ecosystem well-being, which is the viability of the ecosystem (i.e., the industry).

Community Value

Community value describes the actors’ sense of community, distinctiveness, and belongingness with fellow actors.

Companionship

Companionship, also referred to as network support, describes the access and connection to similar others.

Esteem Support

Esteem support is support that leads to self-improvement.

Emotional Support

Emotional support describes the care and concern shown others.

Emotional Value

Emotional value refers to the various affective states, including both positive and negative.

Epistemic Value

Epistemic value refers to the experience of novelty with or excitement in their activity.

Functional Value

Functional value refers to experiences and interactions with others that improve or hinder the actors' ability to complete their duties and their performance.

Informational Support

Informational support describes support through giving advice and guidance.

Instrumental Support

Instrumental support, also referred to as tangible support, is providing tangible resources to solve problems.

Interpersonal Misbehaviour

Interpersonal misbehaviour describes behaviours such as verbal abuse, physical aggression, and refusal to participate

LAN

LAN (local area network) is when people get together and connect a series of computers to one another to play games on them simultaneously.

Meta

The meta is the characters, team compositions, and items that are more dominant than others in a game.

Resource

Resources go beyond goods and money and includes intangible resources in the form of distinctive knowledge, skills, and competencies. Resources can include mental inputs (e.g., information and cognitive labour); physical inputs (e.g., tangibles and physical effort); and emotional inputs (e.g., [in]appropriate behaviour or emotional labour).

Resource Integration

Resource integration is a multidirectional process where an actor incorporates their resources into the process of other actors in accordance with their expectations, needs and capabilities.

Restorative Resource

Restorative resource describes well-being enhanced through being present in an environment or physical setting.

Service Ecosystem

A service ecosystem is a type of business ecosystem that focuses on the value transactions of the actors and their resources.

Service Entities

Service entities include service employees, service processes or offerings, and organisations.

Social Value

Social value refers to the association with specific social groups.

Strategic Support

Strategic support is a collaborative dynamic in gaming that describes knowledge gathering and sharing, player decision-making, leadership, and failure.

Tier 2 Team

Tier 2 team represents the top 5 – 25 teams in the world.

Toxicity

Toxicity in esports is defined as “behaviour that disrupts morale and team dynamics” such as harassment, throwing (losing on purpose), griefing (e.g., enjoyment by intentionally making other players annoyed), trolling, and cyberbullying.

Value

Value or transformative value is a dimension of value creation “that generates uplifting change for greater well-being among individuals and collectives” and more recently has been conceptualised as well-being.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Transformative Service Research (TSR), which focuses on enhancing well-being, recognises that well-being is important not only at the individual level, but also the collective and societal levels (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). Nonetheless, most TSR focuses on well-being at the individual level (e.g. Friman, Rosenbaum, & Otterbring, 2018; Katz, Mansfield, & Tyler, 2019; Wicker, Dallmeyer, & Breuer, 2020; Wicker & Downward, 2019), with less attention on the impact of service on the collective and societal well-being (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015). In particular, there is a need to conceptualise collective well-being and improve understanding of how collective well-being is enhanced or destroyed (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). Therefore, this research examines collective well-being within the semi-professional Oceanic Defense of the Ancients 2 (Dota 2) esports scene. This chapter provides an overview of the research and outlines the research rationale and problem, objectives, research approach, contributions to theory and practice, and the structure of the thesis.

1.1. Research Rationale and Problem

Transformative Service Research (TSR) has emerged over the last few years to focus on factors that create “uplifting changes and improvements” (L. Anderson et al., 2013, p. 2) to the well-being of individuals, collectives, and ecosystems (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). The esports industry, as an example, represents a complex ecosystem and a collective unit of analysis because the ‘ecosystem’ level within TSR captures the interdependencies between nature and people (L. Anderson et al., 2013). Collective well-being has been a much overlooked area of service research (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015) and there has been a call for the investigation of this level (L. Anderson et al., 2013) with

Ostrom et al. (2010, p. 3) stating that it is “the most pressing area for TSR”. The majority of collective TSR literature currently focuses predominantly on the dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities (i.e., service employees, service processes or offerings, organisations) (e.g. Alkire et al., 2019; Guillemot & Privat, 2019; Nasr & Fisk, 2019; Tuzovic, Kabadayi, & Paluch, 2021). This research will utilise a service ecosystem well-being perspective to extend that focus to multi-actor relationships, which provides a more holistic understanding of collective well-being because actor relationships have transitioned away from a dyad (Polese, Sarno, Troisi, & Grimaldi, 2018). Furthermore, there has been a lack of investigation within collective TSR and service ecosystem well-being literature of the connection between individual and collective well-being. While it is known that individual and collective well-being are interconnected (Gallan et al., 2019; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Hall, Haas, Kimbrough, & Weinhardt, 2014), there has been no in-depth examination of the relationship between these levels of well-being. In order to focus on actors within a service ecosystem and investigate the relationship of individual and collective well-being, this research employs the actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework which links the enhancement and destruction of collective well-being with the viability of the ecosystem within which the actors are situated (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017).

The A4A relationship framework conceptualised by Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) highlights the interaction of value co-creation between actors that may both benefit the actors involved (e.g., individual well-being) and the viability of the system (e.g., collective well-being) within which they are situated. Value co-creation is defined as “benefits realised from integration of resources through activities and interactions” (McCull-Kennedy, Vargo, Dagger, Sweeney, & Kasteren, 2012, p. 370). These resources that are integrated go beyond money and goods and include intangible resources in the form of distinctive knowledge,

skills, and competencies (Mele, Russo Spena, & Colurcio, 2010). Value is a frequently used lens when examining well-being, especially in TSR, since transformative value is the aimed outcome (L. Anderson et al., 2013). Transformative value is defined as dimensions of value creation which “generates uplifting change for greater well-being among individuals and collectives” (Blocker & Barrios, 2015, p. 1). This study used the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) to understand how transformative value is created, where the framework proposes five dimensions of value: function, emotional, social, community, and epistemic. While this framework has been previously used to understand value in marketing, it has not been utilised in relation to the A4A relationship framework since no empirical investigation of the A4A relationship framework has been conducted. Within the conceptual studies of the framework, Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) have called for evidence to support the framework by confirming the characteristics of the relationship and the relationship’s correlation with successful and viable value co-creation. To investigate the outcomes of the A4A relationship that affects both well-being and the viability of the system, this research adopts a value perspective. In addition, when conceptualising service ecosystem well-being (i.e., collective well-being), Frow et al. (2019) mentioned how value co-destruction can negatively impact service ecosystem well-being. Value co-destruction is defined as negative or value destroying outcomes that occur for at least one actor as a result of resource integration (Järvi, Kähkönen, & Torvinen, 2018; Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010). The majority of collective TSR and service ecosystem well-being literature focuses on how consumers and service entities can co-create value and enhance well-being (e.g. Baniya, Shrestha, & Karn, 2018; Chou, Huang, & Mair, 2018; Echeverri, 2021; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Tuzovic et al., 2021). By employing the A4A relationship framework, this research investigates how value co-destruction can negatively impact service ecosystem well-

being and extend the A4A relationship framework to examine value co-destruction as well as value co-creation.

The Esports industry in the Oceanic region presents an interesting context within which to examine collective well-being. Esports is “competitive (pro and amateur) video gaming that is coordinated by different leagues, ladders and tournaments, and where players customarily belong to teams or other “sporting” organisations which are sponsored by various business organisations” (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017, p. 1). That is, despite international growth of the industry (The International, 2020), and initial growth in the Oceanic region (Amos, 2019; Prescott, 2020), recently there has been a decline (Remond, 2019; Walker, 2018) which some suggest could be linked to discontent (player, commentator, and spectator) (Mills, 2020). This research takes the view that the esports industry represents an ecosystem, whereby those within the industry are actors (i.e., players, tournament organisers, team owners, casters) (Pennanen, Raatikainen, Rollins, & Julkunen, 2019; Reitman, Anderson-Coto, Wu, Lee, & Steinkuehler, 2020) that work together cooperatively and competitively to satisfy consumers and push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). This suggests that a co-destruction of value, possibly at level that extends beyond the individual, is taking place, resulting in discontent and dysfunction of the industry. In order to improve understanding of collective well-being within the esports industry, it is important to examine the value co-creation or co-destruction process which underpins it and the resources that were integrated within that process.

The esports context is also particularly relevant to TSR specifically, due to its similarities with sport and the potential to improve well-being of those involved, especially in the field of psychology and sports health (Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Rothwell & Shaffer,

2019). While TSR has not been applied in esports, it has been applied in sports with existing Transformative Sport Service Research (TSSR) literature focusing on spectators, volunteers, and athletes (Inoue, Sato, & Filo, 2020). In addition, the majority of esports well-being literature heavily focuses on the players/athletes where well-being is a reflection of their physical, mental, and social health (Baltezarević & Baltezarević, 2019; Chung, Sum, Chan, Lai, & Cheng, 2019; DiFrancisco-Donoghue, Balentine, Schmidt, & Zwibel, 2019; Formosa, Johnson, Turkey, & Mandryk, 2020; Kocadağ, 2020; Leis & Lautenbach, 2020; Poulus, Coulter, Trotter, & Polman, 2020; Sousa et al., 2020). There have not been any studies exploring well-being in esports with the industry ecosystem as a unit of analysis and focusing on actors other than players/athletes.

1.2. Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of value co-creation and co-destruction on the well-being of actors within the esports industry. The research consequently aims to address the following broad research question, “what is collective well-being in the esports industry and how is it co-created or co-destroyed in a service ecosystem?”.

Consequently, this research seeks to achieve the following research aims in the context of the Oceanic semi-professional Defence Against the Ancients 2 (Dota 2) esports scene:

Research Aim 1: Define collective well-being and the dimensions that represent these values in esports, and

Research Aim 2: Understand the resources integrated by various actors within the industry and how these integrated resources can lead to the co-creation and/or co-destruction of collective well-being within an A4A relationship.

1.3. Research Approach

This research is grounded in a constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm since constructivists believe that reality is socially constructed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Owing to the nascency of TSR in the esports context and the lack of empirical studies using the A4A relationship framework, it is appropriate to adopt an exploratory research design. Exploratory research seeks to identify and give insights into new phenomena and relationships (Bordens, 2018; Hair, 2019; Mayer, 2015). Exploratory research relies heavily on qualitative approaches (Hair, 2019), so qualitative data will be collected from semi-structured in-depth interviews with different actors (i.e. players, team organisation owners, tournament organisers, casters) within the Oceanic esports industry, specifically the semi-professional Dota 2 scene. In-depth interviews are a commonly used data collection method (Hair, 2019) to gain insight into personal information such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, emotions and experiences (Denscombe, 2010; Rowley, 2012). In addition, interviews produce alternative perspectives on the same experiences (Rowley, 2012). By using semi-structured interviews, the main areas of interest will be focused on while also allowing the interviewees to elaborate on important information (Denscombe, 2010; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Hair, 2019). For an easier transcribing and analysis process, the interviews were conducted one-to-one (Denscombe, 2010). This method of data collection was deemed suitable for this research as ‘collective well-being’ will be defined based on the actors’

perceptions of the results from value co-creation and value co-destruction when integrating resources.

1.4. Contributions to Theory and Practice

This research specifically answers the call for TSR to take a collective rather than individualist perspective (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015; L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). Additionally, understanding value co-creation and co-destruction in a complex ecosystem of actors extends TSR beyond the dominant focus on the dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities and contributes to service ecosystem well-being literature by examining the effects of value co-destruction on service ecosystem well-being as mentioned by Frow et al. (2019). Contributing to the esports well-being literature, the study extends the focus beyond players/athletes and places an importance on the well-being of other roles within the industry. Additionally, this study will contribute to business ecosystem literature by examining the ‘health’ of the esports industry in terms of eudaimonic and hedonic well-being instead of the existing measurement of long-term financial well-being and the long-term strength of network relations (den Hartigh, Tol, & Visscher, 2006; Hyrynsalmi & Mäntymäki, 2018). By employing the A4A relationship framework, this research also answers the call for empirical evidence to support the framework and the investigation of the role of the A4A relationship in service ecosystems (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). In addition, this research extends the framework to examine value co-destruction as well as value co-creation in order to gain a fuller and more realistic understanding of value processes (Beirão, Patrício, & Fisk Raymond, 2017). Finally, by employing the A4A relationship framework, the study will contribute to TSR and service ecosystem well-being literature by examining

the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro- well-being levels and between individual and collective well-being, therefore providing a more holistic perspective.

Overall, this research will provide the Oceanic esports industry with a holistic understanding of collective well-being (i.e., service ecosystem well-being) and the impacts of value co-creation and co-destruction which may influence the industry to move towards a more “collaborative design and management with the value network of multiple actors” (Seo, 2013). The managerial implication of the research encompasses how actors within the industry can work together to maximise value co-creation and minimise value co-destruction to positively impact the viability of the industry. Specifically, this research offers a holistic perspective on the relationships of organisations and individuals within the industry, moving from individually motivated practices towards focusing on the collective industry goal. This type of relationship applies to all actors within the industry, even those who are considered competitors to each other. All actors should be aware of their role within the ecosystem, the resources that they offer, and how the integration of those resources affects others and the industry, directly or indirectly.

1.5. Overview of Thesis

This thesis comprises of five chapters: Chapter One outlines the research problem, rationale, objectives, research approach, and the contributions to theory and practice. Chapter Two reviews the literature of Transformative Service Research, the main theoretical lens of the research, followed by a review of literature for the A4A relationship framework, transformative value co-creation and co-destruction, and esports. After reviewing relevant literature and identifying gaps in the understanding, research aims are developed. Chapter Three outlines the research context, paradigm, design, and procedure. The interview

structure, interview guide, data sampling, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations are then discussed. Chapter Four presents the findings identified from the data analysis. Chapter Five concludes the thesis and presents a summary of the findings in relation to the research aims. The theoretical and practical implications are presented, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and future research directions.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the research, which aims define collective well-being within the semi-professional Dota 2 esports scene and the resources integrated to co-create and destroy this value. The key concepts of transformative service research and esports were introduced along with the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) and the A4A relationship framework of Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) and Polese et al. (2018). Two research aims were identified followed by a summary of the methodology justified from a constructivist (interpretivist) perspective. The contribution to theory and practice were discussed, and the research limitations were acknowledged. An overview of the thesis structure and chapters was presented.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Transformative service research (TSR) has emerged over the last few years to focus on factors that create “uplifting changes and improvements” (L. Anderson et al., 2013, p. 2) to the well-being of individuals, collectives (i.e., families and communities) and the broader society (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). More specifically TSR aims to better understand and improve relationships between various actors participating in service ecosystems while simultaneously improve the well-being of these actors (Azzari & Baker, 2020). While there have been studies focusing on collective well-being (e.g., Dean & Indrianti, 2020; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; MacIntosh, Kinoshita, & Sotiriadou, 2020; Tuzovic et al., 2021), it is still considered an overlooked area of service research (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015), especially since very little is known in both TSR and service ecosystem well-being literature about the well-being outcomes of actors who are not consumers nor service entities (i.e., service employees, service processes or offerings, organisations).

The esports industry is described as a complex ecosystem of actors (Pennanen et al., 2019; Reitman et al., 2020) where there is a reliance on the actors working together, cooperatively and competitively, to push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). While previous research has shifted the industry’s focus towards a “collaborative design and management of esports experience with the value network of multiple actors” (Seo, 2013), there have been no studies investigating well-being in esports with the ecosystem as a unit of analysis. In addition, esports well-being has predominantly focused on the well-being of players and athletes. There is a lack of investigation of the well-being of other roles who actively participate within the industry such as team organisation owners, tournament

organisers, and casters. Since the industry is reliant on all of these actors working together, it is important to understand and improve the well-being of everyone within the industry not just players and athletes. Consequently, this research aims to investigate collective well-being within the Oceanic Dota 2 esports scene by examining multiple actors who may not fall under the consumer or service entity role. In order to do so, the study will adopt the actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework to investigate the impact value processes (i.e., value co-creation and co-destruction) on the multi-actor ecosystem.

The literature review examines the following frameworks in this order: TSR and well-being, the A4A relationship framework, the esports industry and well-being, and understanding well-being through a value lens.

2.1. Transformative Service Research and Well-being

As stated before, TSR aims to better understand factors that create “uplifting changes and improvements” (L. Anderson et al., 2013, p. 2) to the well-being of individuals, collectives and the broader society (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010). TSR focuses on two key types of well-being: eudaimonic and hedonic (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Inoue et al., 2020). Eudaimonic well-being emphasises positive psychological functioning and human development achieved by seeking to fulfil one’s potential and functioning at an optimal level (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke, Melchert, & Connor, 2016; Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012). This type of well-being includes health (physical, mental, and social), access, literacy, financial well-being, and decreased disparity among others (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015; L. Anderson et al., 2013). Hedonic well-being focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and happiness (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Huta & Ryan, 2010) as well as life satisfaction, positive affect, and the absence of

negative affect, which is frequently categorised as subjective well-being (L. Anderson et al., 2013).

Within TSR literature, there are three different levels of well-being: individual, collective, and ecosystem. The individual level includes consumers and service employees (L. Anderson et al., 2013). The collective level includes families, communities, organisations, societies, and populations (Ostrom et al., 2010). The ecosystem level captures the natural environment as well as the people who reside within it (L. Anderson et al., 2013). Due to it being a much overlooked area of service research (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015), there has been a call for the investigation of the collective level (L. Anderson et al., 2013) with Ostrom et al. (2010, p. 3) stating that it is “the most pressing area for TSR”. This research will focus on investigating the enhancement and destruction of collective well-being within the esports industry.

It is worth mentioning that even though TSR has not been applied in esports, it has been applied in sports with existing Transformative Sport Service Research (TSSR) literature. While there are many similarities between traditional sport and esports, such as play and competition, skill requirements, and motives for spectator consumption and fandom, there are major differences because components of traditional sport are missing from esports (e.g., high amounts of physicality and institutionalisation) (Cushen, Rife, & Wann, 2019; Jenny, Manning, Keiper, & Olrich, 2017; Pizzo et al., 2018; Skubida, 2016). It is because of these differences that the discussion on whether esports should be considered as sport is still an ongoing debate (e.g., Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Jenny et al., 2017; Kane & Spradley, 2017; Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011; Pizzo et al., 2018). Other than the major differences, studies comparing aspects of esports with sports have found distinctions even within the so-called

similarities which hinder the generalisability of sport studies to the context of esports (Bertschy, Mühlbacher, & Desbordes, 2020). One of these distinctions is how the esports industry has a more complex structure in comparison to sport where one actor can play multiple roles (Chikish, Carrears, & García, 2019). This means that additional research is necessary as esports represents an emerging field separate to sport (Hallmann & Giel, 2018). This section introduced TSR and the different types and levels of well-being along with TSSR. The next section will discuss collective well-being more in-depth as well as service ecosystem well-being.

2.1.1. Collective and Service Ecosystem Well-being

The esports industry is described as a complex ecosystem of actors (Pennanen et al., 2019; Reitman et al., 2020) which fits the definition of a type of business ecosystem (Le & Tarafdar, 2009) called a service ecosystem (Hyrynsalmi & Mäntymäki, 2018). Even though the industry is a service ecosystem, it is still considered a collective unit of analysis because the ‘ecosystem’ level within TSR captures the interdependencies between nature and people (L. Anderson et al., 2013). A business ecosystem typically describes the roles and relationship of a company in relation to its network (e.g., customers, partners, suppliers, competitors) while a service ecosystem focuses on the value transactions of these actors and their resources (Le & Tarafdar, 2009). A service ecosystem is most commonly viewed at three levels of aggregation: micro, meso and macro. They are broadly defined as the following (Beirão et al., 2017; Frow et al., 2019; Taillard, Peters, Pels, & Mele, 2016): the micro-level refers to dyadic interactions between specific actors that may be dominated by self-motivated intentions; the meso-level refers to groups of actors where the influence of practices and institutions on each other may be more balanced; and the macro-level refers to a higher level of aggregation (institutionalised) where interactions are significantly influenced

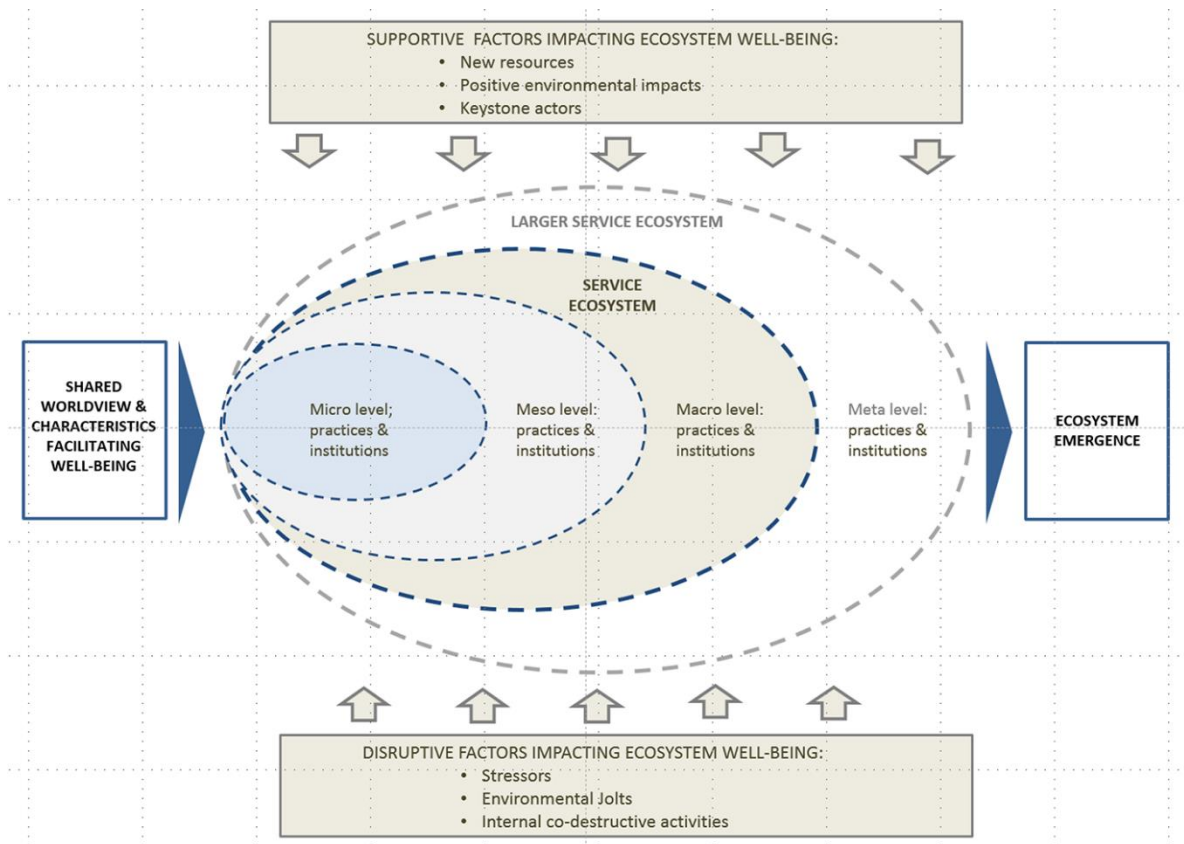
by institutions. However, since a service ecosystem has no defined or fixed boundaries, the specific components of any levels of aggregation are variable (Frow et al., 2019). For this study, the service ecosystem’s levels of aggregation and how it fits with TSR well-being levels is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Service ecosystem levels of aggregation for this study.

TSR	Individual Well-being	Unit of Analysis		Ecosystem Well-being
		Collective Well-being		
Service Ecosystem	Micro-Level	Meso-Level	Macro-Level (Service Ecosystem Well-being)	
	Specific actor	Aggregates of actors of the same role and their interactions with each other.	Aggregates of actors within the same esports scene and their interactions with each other.	

Overall, there has not been much literature exploring the well-being of a service ecosystem. Frow et al. (2019) conceptualised service ecosystem well-being within the field of Service- Dominant (S-D) logic focusing on the context of hospital ecosystems and other healthcare ecosystems. While Frow et al. (2019) builds on the foundations of S-D logic, it is still relevant to this research as TSR utilises, adapts or includes research insights from S-D logic (Kuppelwieser & Finsterwalder, 2016; Polese et al., 2018). Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) confirms this by investigating service ecosystem well-being within the field of TSR focusing on the context of retail ecosystems, specifically on customers, employees, and suppliers. There are four key factors that compose the service ecosystem well-being framework (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptualisation of service ecosystem well-being (Source: Frow et al., 2019)



Firstly, shared worldview is crucial to enhancing the well-being and viability of a service ecosystem as it ensures shared intentionality which allows for easier communication, cooperation, and coordination between actors (Frow et al., 2019). Shared intentionality is explained by Jörg Finsterwalder and Volker G Kuppelwieser (2020) as actions performed by actors in pursuit of a collective goal or in adherence to common rules or practices. Secondly, there are multiple mutually adapting levels and depending on the shared worldview, the service ecosystem establishes a “configurational fit” of resource sharing practices which results in value co-creation across different levels (Frow et al., 2019). Value co-creation is defined as “benefits realised from integration of resources through activities and interactions” (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 370) where resources are both tangible (e.g., money and goods) and intangible (e.g. skills, knowledge, and behaviour) (Mele et al., 2010). Thirdly,

there are supportive and disruptive factors that impact service ecosystem well-being. Supportive factors include new valuable resources which create more opportunities for co-creation, and significant keystone actors. “Keystone actors” are actors who can significantly influence ecosystem well-being with their leadership and direction by, for example, establishing activities that result in positive interactions and therefore, result in value co-creation. Disruptive factors include internal value co-destructive activities which can negatively impact service ecosystem well-being, intentionally or unintentionally (Frow et al., 2019). Finally, when the ecosystem is stable, resilient, and demonstrates potential for further resource integration, ecosystem emergence occurs. Emergence significantly relies on shared worldview so that all actors are aware of the disruptions and can adapt quickly and responsively. While emergence progressively supports well-being, there is not an identifiable best state or optimal condition for an ecosystem as ecosystems must accommodate multiple and varying goals across each level (Frow et al., 2019). It was noted that there are significant challenges in understanding service ecosystem well-being and identifying its key characteristics. These challenges include the complexity with considering multiple factors, goals and levels, and how interactions among actors typically are motivated by individual well-being, not necessarily to improve the collective (Frow et al., 2019).

A review of the collective TSR and TSSR literature (Table 2) show that all studies focused on either consumers or service entities. This does not align with the service ecosystem perspective as service ecosystems go beyond a consumer-service dyad to a multi-actor relationship (Gallan et al., 2021; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Polese, Pels, et al., 2017).

Table 2. Chronological overview of selected collective TSR and TSSR studies

Author(s) (Year)	Service	Focus	Entity Focus	Empirical Evidence
Hall et al. (2014)	n/a	Collective	n/a	
Blocker and Barrios (2015)	Non-profit	Community	Consumer	Y
Sanchez-Barrios, Giraldo, Khalik, and Manjarres (2015)	n/a	BOP	Consumer	Y
Inoue, Funk, Wann, Yoshida, and Nakazawa (2015)	Sport	Community	Consumer	Y
Rahman and Björk (2016)	n/a	Collective	Consumer	
Brüggen, Hogreve, Holmlund, Kabadayi, and Löfgren (2017)	n/a	Collective	n/a	
S. Anderson, Nasr, and Rayburn (2018)	Healthcare	Collective	Consumer	
Baniya et al. (2018)	Tourism	Community	Service/Locals	Y
Chou et al. (2018)	Festival	Community	Consumer/Locals	Y
Hurley, Trischler, and Dietrich (2018)	Education	Community	Consumer	Y
Alkire et al. (2019)	n/a	Collective	Consumer	
Guillemot and Privat (2019)	Non-profit	Community	Service	Y
Nasr and Fisk (2019)	n/a	Community	Consumer	
Gallan et al. (2019)	Healthcare	Community	Consumer	
Trussell (2020)	Sport	Community	Consumer	Y
Dean and Indrianti (2020)	n/a	BOP	Consumer	Y
MacIntosh et al. (2020)	Sport	Collective	Consumer	Y
Tuzovic et al. (2021)	Hospitality	Collective	Consumer	Y
Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021)	Retail	Ecosystem	Consumer/Service	Y
Note: n/a = not applicable due to no specific service category or role focus				

Notably, Tuzovic et al. (2021) and Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) both investigated collective well-being within a service ecosystem. Tuzovic et al. (2021) focused on consumer's perception of well-being in hospitality and identified components that contribute to collective well-being on a macro- (institutions), meso- (restaurant), and micro-level (guests) (as seen in Table 3). The study also defined collective well-being as the sum of the well-being of individuals who belong to a certain community; where individual well-being refers to five dimensions collectively: physical well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, spiritual well-being, and financial well-being (Tuzovic et al., 2021).

Table 3. Well-being domains identified by Tuzovic et al. (2021)

Level	Well-being Domains	Description
Macro	Governance well-being	A system provides well-functioning central regulatory and administrative policies and procedures that enable smooth operations for its actors

Meso	Resource well-being	A system that provides actors with access to resources to fulfil their roles and to perform their day-to-day activities
	Social well-being	A system that provides actors with social connections and a sense of connectedness within the system
Micro	Psychological well-being	Actors within a system perceive being relieved from worries and stress.
	Spatial well-being	A service system that builds and maintains a well-being designed space that reduces any sense of perceived crowding and that provides actors with increased physical distancing with the service environment.
	Physical well-being	Actors within a system perceive being safeguarded from physical harm.
	Collaborative well-being	Well-functioning relationships among actors in a service system

Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) specifically investigated retail ecosystem well-being focusing on how value co-creation affects the micro- and meso-level where ecosystem well-being referred to optimal functioning and experience to maintain its relevancy, survival, resiliency and evolution. The micro-level was defined as individual actors exchanging resources directly and reciprocally as dyads within a retail store (i.e., customers and employees). The meso-level was defined as resource exchanged between a triad of actors who are not all directly connected (i.e., suppliers, customer’s families, employee’s families). The macro-level was defined as multiple and simultaneous direct and indirect broad interactions among actors who have a role in shaping the ecosystem (i.e., the media, regulatory bodies, government agencies) (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021). Although these two studies have different definitions for the micro-, meso-, and macro- level of aggregation, it was found that the micro-level is affected by and affects the meso-level to some degree (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Tuzovic et al., 2021). Specifically, Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021, p. 4) stated that individual well-being “cannot be achieved in the long term by depleting the well-being of the ecosystem that sustains it”.

From the review of collective (Table 3) and service ecosystem literature (Table 4) several major gaps were identified.

Table 4. Chronological overview of service ecosystem well-being studies

Author(s) (Year)	Focus	Role	Empirical Evidence
Frow et al. (2019)	Healthcare	n/a	
Jörg Finsterwalder and Volker G. Kuppelwieser (2020)	n/a	n/a	
Brodie, Ranjan, Verreynne, Jiang, and Previte (2021)	Healthcare	n/a	
Gallan et al. (2021)	Hospitality	All	Y
Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021)	Retail	Consumer/Service	Y
Simmonds and Gazley (2021)	n/a	n/a	
Note: n/a = not applicable due to no specific service category or role focus			

Firstly, there is a lack of investigation focusing on the well-being of actors that are neither a consumer nor service entity but still participate within the service ecosystem. Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) found that actors such as suppliers, competitors, and headquarters are indirectly affected by value co-creation of the micro-level within the retail ecosystem. However, the study did not explore the value co-creation opportunities for these actors even though they are active participants within the ecosystem. Actor relationships have transitioned from a dyad to a multi-layered perspective with multiple actors and relationships (Polese et al., 2018) but there has been no investigation of the impact of this on service ecosystem well-being. This multi-actor relationship is evident in a service ecosystem such as the esports industry where the interacting organisations and individuals, who may not fall under the role of consumer or service entity, all work together cooperatively and competitively to push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). Secondly, there is a lack of investigation focusing on value co-destruction of collective and service ecosystem well-being. When conceptualising service ecosystem well-being, Frow et al. (2019) mentioned how value co-destruction can negatively impact service ecosystem well-being, intentionally or unintentionally. However, the majority of studies focus on how consumer and service entities can co-create value and enhance well-being (e.g. Baniya et al., 2018; Chou et al., 2018; Echeverri, 2021; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Tuzovic et al., 2021). This study will address these two gaps by investigating four key actors from the esports industry (i.e.,

player, tournament organiser, team organisation owners, and casters) and how they co-create and/or co-destroy value that enhances or destroys collective well-being. Thirdly, there is a lack of investigation into the connection between micro-, meso-, and macro-level well-being within a service ecosystem and individual and collective well-being of TSR. Since the conceptualisation of TSR, it was known that well-being is not only relevant on the individual level (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010); in fact, it is found that individual and collective well-being are interconnected (Gallan et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2014) and that value co-creation on the micro-level affects the meso-level of a service ecosystem (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021). However, no literature has examined the relationship between these three levels of well-being in-depth. This research will address this gap by adopting the actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework by Polese, Pels, et al. (2017), which highlights the interaction of value co-creation between actors that may both benefit the actors involved and the viability of the system within which they are situated. Also, this research will extend this framework to examine value co-destruction and how the interaction will destroy well-being for the actors involved and the viability of the system.

2.1.2. Conceptual Framework: A4A Relationship

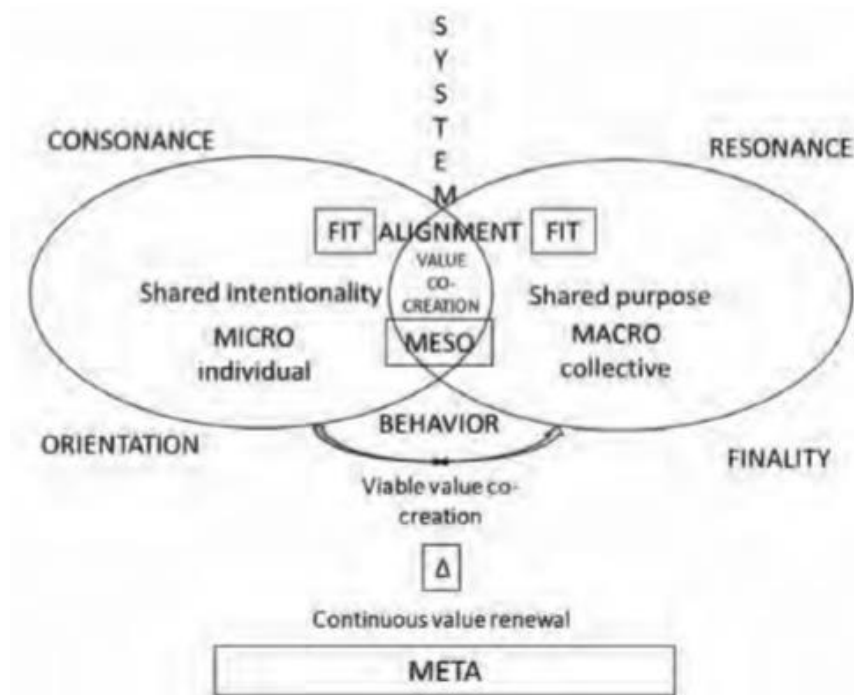
The actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework conceptualised by Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) highlights the interaction of value co-creation between actors that may both benefit the actors involved and the viability of the system within which they are situated. Polese et al. (2018) further elaborated on this viable ecosystem perspective which combined a service dominant logic (S-D logic) ecosystem view and viable systems approach (VSA) meta-model in order to analyse the traditional layout of organisations: micro, meso and macro. This framework uses a multi-stakeholder view to account for the influence of all stakeholders in

value co-creation, including those in the meso- and macro-level perspective (Polese et al., 2018).

The A4A relationship is defined by the characteristics of shared intentionality, resource integration and value co-creation, and awareness of belonging to the whole system. Shared intentionality corresponds with shared worldview from the service ecosystem well-being framework conceptualised by Frow et al. (2019). The actors of the framework are characterised by knowledge management, subjective awareness of the context, adaptability, and willingness to engage (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). Knowledge management refers to actors being aware of how a viable ecosystem has richer capacities than those obtainable by actors' individual efforts. Subjective awareness of the context describes how, due to the different actors and roles, there are multiple perspectives with different interests and needs. Adaptability refers to actors being proactive in adapting their behaviours and tolerating certain changes. Willingness to engage describes actors actively integrating their resources for the shared purpose of system viability instead of utilitarian drivers (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017).

This framework (see Figure 2) suggests that successful viable value co-creation emerges when actors with shared intentionality optimise resource integration and value co-creation to not only mutually benefit the actors involved but also attain the overall macro system's goal (Polese et al., 2018). The viable value co-creation corresponds with an emergent ecosystem as described by Frow et al. (2019), where the actors with shared worldview adapt quickly and responsively to disruptions within the ecosystem resulting in a stable, resilient ecosystem that demonstrates potential for further resource integration which overall supports well-being.

Figure 2. A4A circular process for viable value co-creation A4A framework (Source: Polese et al., 2018)



The main call for research from Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) is to provide empirical evidence to support the framework by confirming the characteristics of the A4A relationship and the relationship's correlation with successful and viable service exchanges. The study also suggested that future research could focus on the role of the A4A relationship in service ecosystems and how the ecosystem's viability is strengthened by the actors' integrating their resources and acting with the intention of not only obtaining value for themselves but for others involved. In addition, Polese et al. (2018) stated that further research is needed to study viable value co-creation and to explore how viability can be obtained through managing co-creation processes. A review of the A4A relationship literature (Table 5) shows that while a majority of studies acknowledge the existence of this A4A relationship or certain elements of it, there is little empirical examination of this domain. This lack of empirical investigation may be due to the difficulties with investigating not only such large numbers of actors within

an ecosystem but also each actor's relationship with other actors, the specific values that they each obtain, and how that contributes to the ecosystem overall.

Table 5. Chronological overview of A4A studies

Author(s) (Year)	Focus	Conceptual	Other*	Empirical
Polese, Pels, et al. (2017)	A4A	Y		
Polese, Mele, and Gummesson (2017)	Editorial		Y	
Perko and Armenia (2018)	Editorial		Y	
Ciasullo, Troisi, and Cosimato (2018)	VCC		Y	
Iandolo, Barile, Armenia, and Carrubbo (2018)	Viable Systems		Y	
Troisi, Santovito, Carrubbo, and Sarno (2018)	S-D Logic		Y	
Gummesson, Mele, and Polese (2018b)	Editorial		Y	
Gummesson, Mele, and Polese (2018a)	Editorial		Y	
Polese et al. (2018)	A4A	Y		
Caputo, Carrubbo, and Sarno (2018)	Consumer-Business Relationship		Y	
Charatsari, Kitsios, Stafyla, Aidonis, and Lioutas (2018)	Short Food Supply Chains		Y	
Barile, Polese, and Sarno (2018)	Grocery Retailing		Y	
Carrubbo, Sarno, Caputo, and Smaldone (2018)	Value Management		Y	
Gaeta, Loia, Sarno, and Carrubbo (2019)	Online Social Network Viability		Y	
Mele and Russo-Spena (2019)	Service Science		Y	
Lim, Kim, Kim, and Kim (2019)	Service Design		Y	
Walletzký, Carrubbo, and Ge (2019)	Smart Cities		Y	
Gervilla, Díaz-Mendez, and Gummesson (2019)	S-D Logic		Y	
Troisi, Ciasullo, Carrubbo, Sarno, and Grimaldi (2019)	Service Ecosystems		Y	
Mele, Polese, and Gummesson (2019)	Editorial		Y	
Busser and Shulga (2019)	VCC		Y	
Lioutas, Charatsari, La Rocca, and De Rosa (2019)	Big Data Farming		Y	
Polese, Sarno, and Vargo (2020)	Conference Proceedings		Y	
Ciasullo, Troisi, Grimaldi, and Leone (2020)	Smart Communities		Y	
Koskela-Huotari and Siltaloppi (2020)	S-D Logic		Y	
Barile, Grimaldi, Loia, and Sirianni (2020)	Service Ecosystems		Y	
Zulfadil, Hendriani, and Machasin (2020)	Management		Y	
*cited Polese et al., (2017) and mentions the A4A framework or an element of the framework.				

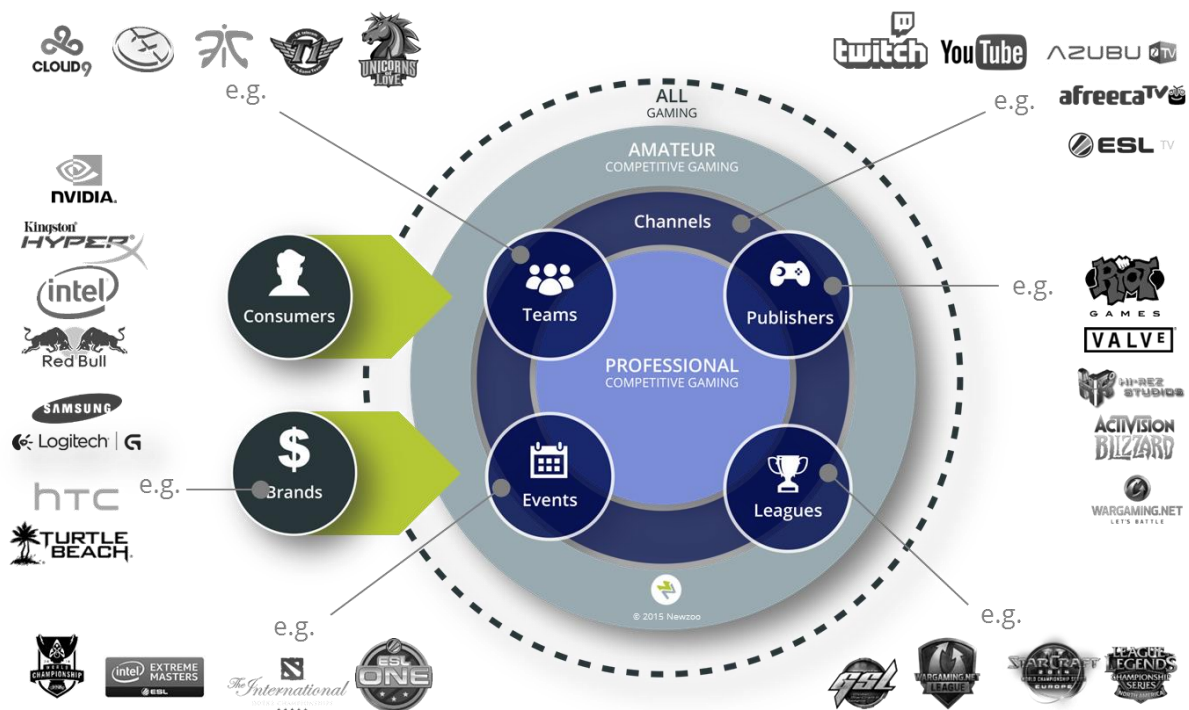
This study will provide empirical evidence that examines the validity of the A4A relationship and explore collective well-being as an outcome of the value co-creation process

in the relationship. In addition, this research will extend this framework to examine the destruction of collective well-being as an outcome of the value co-destruction process in the relationship. This section reviewed the literature of the A4A relationship framework and identified the gaps that this research will address. The next section will introduce the esports industry and discuss existing esports well-being literature.

2.1.3. The Esports Industry and Well-being

The esports industry is defined as a complex ecosystem of actors (Pennanen et al., 2019; Reitman et al., 2020), where interacting organisations and individuals work together cooperatively and competitively to satisfy consumers and push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). Newzoo (2017) created a model of the esports ecosystem, outlining the various key components of professional competitive gaming (Figure 2).

Figure 3. Newzoo's model of esports ecosystem (Source: Newzoo, 2017).



This model reflects Iansiti and Levien's definition of a business ecosystem, as cited by Peltoniemi and Vuori (2004, p. 5), which is characterised by "loosely interconnected participants who depend on each other for their mutual effectiveness and survival". The existing measurement to benchmark the health of a business ecosystem is long-term financial well-being and the long-term strength of network relations (den Hartigh et al., 2006; Hyrynsalmi & Mäntymäki, 2018). However, the business ecosystem literature has not explored business ecosystem health in terms of eudaimonia and hedonic well-being. Due to the features of the business ecosystem such as fragmentation, interconnectedness, cooperation and competition, the individual participants are significantly affected by the health of the ecosystem; if the ecosystem is healthy, the individual will thrive, however, if the ecosystem is unhealthy, the individual will suffer (Peltoniemi & Vuori, 2004). Therefore, it is equally as important to explore both individual and collective well-being and examine the relationship between these two levels of well-being, which this research will address by utilising TSR and service ecosystem well-being.

Well-being is particularly relevant in esports, especially in the field of psychology and sports health, due to its similarities with sport and the potential to improve well-being of those involved (Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Rothwell & Shaffer, 2019). An overview of selected esports well-being literature (Table 6) shows that studies have heavily focused on the players/athletes where well-being is a reflection of their physical, mental, and social health. For casual players, there is a major concern about problematic gaming such as gaming addictions (Chung et al., 2019). Also, there is a concern about injuries such as eye fatigue, or neck, back, wrist and hand pain sustained from overuse (DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al., 2019; Leis & Lautenbach, 2020; Sousa et al., 2020). This focus on injuries is also present for esports athletes in addition to methods of coping with stressors within the competitive environment

(Poulus et al., 2020). Despite these concerns about how well-being can be harmed through esports, there are also studies investigating how esports players' experience positive impacts such as advanced cognitive and social skills that enhances their well-being (Baltezarević & Baltezarević, 2019; Formosa et al., 2020).

Table 6. Chronological overview of selected esports well-being studies.

Author(s) (Year)	Field	Actor/s	Focus
Baltezarević and Baltezarević (2019)	Sport	Players	Emotional well-being
Chung et al. (2019)	Health	Players	Problematic gaming (gaming addiction/disorder)
DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al. (2019)	Sports Health	Athletes	Overuse injuries (eye fatigue, neck, back, wrist and hand pain)
Formosa et al. (2020)	Psychology	Players	Enhanced social skills and improved well-being
Kocadağ (2020)	Psychology	Teenagers	Mental health
Leis and Lautenbach (2020)	Sport Psychology	Players	Psychological and physiological stress
Poulus et al. (2020)	Sport Psychology	Athletes	Stress and coping with stressors
Sousa et al. (2020)	Psychology	Players	Cognitive and physical health

There have not been any studies exploring well-being in esports with the industry ecosystem as a unit of analysis, which is a gap that this research aims to address. This is significant because toxicity is a major and prevalent part of the esports industry on all levels (casual, semi-professional, and professional). For casual gaming, this type of behaviour sometimes does not have consequences, which makes games unenjoyable for other players and deters new players (Adinolf & Turkay, 2018; Baig, 2019; Gwilliam, 2020). Most gaming titles will temporarily suspend or permanently ban offending accounts depending on the severity of the behaviour (Blizzard, 2020; League of Legends, 2020; SMITEGame, 2020). For semi-professional and professional gaming, toxicity can destroy a team through the negative impacts on team morale and productivity (Adinolf & Turkay, 2018; Buffee, 2017). In addition, this negative behaviour can also be conducted by commentators (also referred to as casters) and spectators, creating a culture built on toxicity and an industry that lacks professionalism (Fahey, 2016). This has more significant impact on businesses because it is

damaging for brands and alienates sponsors as they do not want to be associated with unacceptable behaviour and/or speech (Buffee, 2017; Fahey, 2016). Overall, the culture and lack of professionalism hinders the growth of the entire industry.

Another issue that may significantly hinder the growth of the esports industry is the reluctance of some game publishers/developers and league organisers to listen to the community’s opinions and feedback. There has been discontent from the players, commentators, and spectators about different aspects of the international leagues (Akshon Esports, 2020; ESPN Esports, 2020; Rand, 2020). This may be reflected on a semi-professional level but there is a lack of discussion about this potential issue. As a business ecosystem if one major league fails, it will impact the industry as a whole (ESPN Esports, 2020).

While this research is focusing on Dota 2 in the Oceanic region, the findings can also be extended to other esports titles and on an international level, which is significant because due to the nature of a business ecosystem, the success of the industry on the international level will affect the national scene and vice versa. From the top ten all-time esports titles, this is about improving the well-being of close to 38,900 players, their associated organisations and league/tournament organisers (see Table 7) (esportsearnings.com, 2020). This section introduced the esports industry and existing well-being literature within this context, the next section will discuss understanding well-being through a value lens.

Table 7. Top 10 all-time esports titles by prize money (lifetime to date)

Rank	Title	Prize \$ Awarded (\$mns)	Players	Tournaments
1	Dota 2	\$223.9	3678	1379
2	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	\$96.0	12756	4961
3	Fortnite	\$85.2	3283	538
4	League of Legends	\$74.9	6944	2436
5	StarCraft II	\$32.8	2035	5807

6	PLAYERUNKNOWN'S BATTLEGROUNDS	\$21.9	2587	277
7	Overwatch	\$21.7	3483	735
8	Hearthstone	\$21.1	2348	874
9	Heroes of the Storm	\$18.1	1203	457
10	Arena of Valor	\$14.5	536	49

2.2. Understanding Well-being through a Value Lens

Value is a frequently used lens when examining well-being, especially in TSR since transformative value is an aimed outcome (L. Anderson et al., 2013). Transformative value has been defined by Blocker and Barrios (2015, p. 1) as dimensions of value creation “that generates uplifting change for greater well-being among individuals and collectives”. This definition aligns with more recent works that conceptualised value as well-being (Black & Gallan, 2015; Jörg Finsterwalder & Volker G Kuppelwieser, 2020; Hepi, Foote, Finsterwalder, Carswell, & Baker, 2017) where dimensions of co-created value will cumulate to transformative value, therefore, improved well-being (Parkinson, Mulcahy, Schuster, & Taiminen, 2019). Since previous research has followed this consistent definition of transformative value, this research will also utilise this definition. This section introduced understanding well-being through a value lens, the next section will discuss two outcomes that will create or destroy well-being values: value co-creation and value co-destruction.

2.2.1. Value Co-Creation and Value Co-Destruction

Echeverri and Skålén (2011) suggested two possible outcomes of relationships and interactions: value co-creation and value co-destruction. Value co-creation is defined as “benefits realised from integration of resources through activities and interactions” (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 370). Value co-creation has been conceptualised to have two core dimensions: co-production and value-in-use. Co-production consists of actors directly or

indirectly coworking a set of activities while value-in-use is the value gained by the actors as a result of the activities and interactions (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Value-in-use is the actor’s experiential evaluation and is dependent on their “individual motivations, specialised competences, actions, processes, and performances” (Ranjan & Read, 2016, p. 293). There have not been many studies exploring value co-creation within the context of esports. A review of this literature (Table 8) shows that some existing studies focus on how value can be co-created by and for all actors within the esports industry, not just focusing on consumer entities. This further supports Seo (2013, p. 1555) who explained how the esports industry should focus on the “collaborative design and management of esports experience with the value network of multiple marketing actors”, which forms the focus of this research.

Table 8. Chronological overview of value co-creation in esports studies.

Author(s) (Year)	Focus	Actors	Value Dimensions
Seo (2013)	Esports Experiential Value	n/a	4Es
Johansson and Grönström (2020)	Loot Boxes	Players, game developers	Functional / instrumental Experiential / hedonic Symbolic / expressive Cost / Sacrifice
McCauley, Tierney, Holmströmm, and Andersson (2019)	Esports LAN	Attendees, LAN organiser, game developers, brand representatives (i.e. equipment producers, pro players, content creators)	n/a
Jerschl and Ellert (2019)	Sponsorship in Esports	Consumer, Producer	n/a
Ströbel and Germelmann (2020)	Sports Brand Extension	n/a	n/a
McCauley, Tierney, and Tokbaeva (2020)	Esports LAN	Players, local government, esports entrepreneurs, LAN organisers, content creators, esports managers	n/a
Note: n/a = not applicable due to no empirical investigation or no value dimensions identified			

On the other hand, value co-destruction implies that some relationships and interactions may result in negative or value destroying outcomes for at least one actor (Järvi et al., 2018; Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010). There are no studies focusing on value co-

destruction within esports, which is a significant gap that this research aims to address. The importance of understanding negative outcomes from collaboration has been emphasised previously by service experts, and the resulting decline in well-being can be so significant that actors may not want to collaborate with each other in the future (Järvi et al., 2018). Even though it has been explored in sport, value co-destruction is still in its infancy. Stieler, Weismann, and Germelmann (2014) explains value co-destruction as actions that can create value for one actor while destroying value for another. It is further elaborated that the co-creation/co-destruction of value is dependent on the actors' value expectations and their perceptions of the experience and therefore, value is highly individual. Kim, Byon, and Baek (2020) investigated customer-to-customer value co-destruction in sporting events which found that dysfunctional behaviour was negatively associated with emotional value and that behaviours can serve as a double-edged-sword which both co-creates and co-destroys value. This corroborates Mulcahy and Luck (2020) who also found that dysfunctional behaviour from actors (i.e., interpersonal misbehaviour and sport misbehaviour) can co-destroy other actors' social and emotional value, and behaviours (specifically co-performance) can have a "double-edged-sword" effect. This research aims to investigate and provide empirical evidence for value co-destruction of well-being within the A4A relationship framework in the esports context. This section introduced value co-creation and co-destruction; the next section will outline the value dimensions that are a result of those two processes.

2.2.2. Value Dimensions

Value co-creation has two core dimensions, co-production and value-in-use, and this research will utilise the A4A relationship framework to explain the co-production process including the relationship of actors, the activities, and interactions between them where resources will be integrated. Within esports value co-creation literature, Seo (2013) utilised

the 4Es (i.e., escapism, esthetic, educational, entertainment) to understand the consumer's (i.e., players, viewers) experiential value of esports. Johansson and Grönström (2020) on the other hand utilised four types of value to understand the consumer's perceived value of loot boxes: functional/instrumental value, experiential/hedonic value, symbolic/expressive value, and cost/sacrifice value. There has yet to be value dimensions identified in the esports literature suitable in understanding the perceived value of other roles within the industry such as tournament organisers, casters, and team owners. Some previously used frameworks in other contexts include the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) and Holbrook's (2006) typology of consumer value, while Mulcahy, Zainuddin, and Russell-Bennett (2021) employed various value dimensions from literature such as enjoyment, social, knowledge, distraction, and simulation. For value-in-use, this study will adopt the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) which has been previously used by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) to understand both value co-creation and co-destruction in TSSR. This framework proposed five dimensions of value: functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and community. This framework is the most suitable framework to understand well-being as it is a multidimensional approach and includes the community value suitable for the context of esports as there is a prominent fandom culture (Brown, Billings, Murphy, & Puesan, 2017). For this research, each value will be defined in relation to esports.

Functional Value: This value refers to functional, utilitarian, or physical performance outcomes which includes any factors that aid or impede the actors' ability to carry out their activities (Zainuddin et al., 2017). For example, lack of monetary means affects players and teams from travelling to compete in LAN (local area network) tournaments.

Emotional Value: This value refers to the various affective states, including both positive and negative (Zainuddin et al., 2017). An example of this in esports is the players' individual emotional state when competing or practicing.

Epistemic Value: This value refers to the experience of novelty with or excitement in their activity (Zainuddin et al., 2017). For esports, this could include players developing new strategies within the game and team owners exploring new avenues to promote their teams.

Social Value: This value refers to the association with specific social groups (Zainuddin et al., 2017). Mulcahy and Luck (2020) predominantly discusses the creation and improvement of friendships, however within the esports industry it can also include the association with other actors on a professional level and the benefits realised from these associations.

Community Value: This value is created from the participation and interactions within a community (Zainuddin et al., 2017). Just like sport, scholars suggest that participants and spectators benefit from esports fandom and team identification which assists in the feelings of distinctiveness and belongingness (Cushen et al., 2019). An example of this value is game-specific memes amongst the community (Dota 2 Gamepedia, 2020). It is worthwhile to distinguish collective well-being from what would appear to be related concepts like community value. However, community value is the individual's sense of belongingness within the community (Cushen et al., 2019) in comparison to collective well-being which is defined in literature as the sum of the well-being levels of individuals who belong to a certain community (Tuzovic et al., 2021). While community value may seem similar to social value, social value focuses on a dyadic personal or professional relationship between two actors and

the benefits gained from that, while community value focuses on an actor's own perspective of their belongingness within the community.

This section outlined the different value dimensions identified in literature and introduced the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) which will be used in this study. The next section will discuss the resource integration process and the co-creative and/or co-destructive resources identified in the TSR, TSSR and esports literature.

2.2.3. Resource Integration

Resource integration is a multidirectional process where an actor incorporates their resources into the process of other actors in accordance with their expectations, needs and capabilities (Gummesson & Mele, 2010; Mele et al., 2010). These resources go beyond goods and money and include intangible resources in the form of distinctive knowledge, skills, and competencies (Mele et al., 2010). In addition, there is evidence of a broader interpretation of resources in the value literature where Mulcahy and Luck (2020) has included social behaviours such as interpersonal misbehaviour and sports misbehaviour. Greer (2015) defines resources to include mental inputs (e.g., information and cognitive labour); physical inputs (e.g., tangibles and physical effort); and emotional inputs (e.g., [in]appropriate behaviour or emotional labour). It is from this process of integrating resources through activities and interactions that the actors involved realise the benefits to experience value co-creation (McCull-Kennedy et al., 2012; Mele et al., 2010). The core mechanism of creating value from resource integration is several actors integrating resources in accordance with their expectations, needs, and capabilities (Mele et al., 2010). In addition, value co-destruction has emerged to demonstrate that resource integration processes can lead to decreased well-being for all service systems on an individual or organisational level (Laud et al., 2019). Some

resources that enhance and/or destroy well-being on an individual level have already been established in TSR, TSSR, and esports literature.

Co-creative Resources

A review of recent TSR, TSSR and esports literature has established that social support is a resource that enhances well-being in a physical and online setting (Table 9). In addition, literature utilised a multi-dimension approach to social support, suggesting several different dimensions: emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support, informational support, strategic support, and companionship,

Table 9. Chronological review of TSR, TSSR, and Esports literature establishing social support.

Author(s) (Year)	Context	Setting	Dimension/s of Social Support
Freeman and Wohn (2017)	Esport	Physical	Emotional support, Esteem support, Instrumental support, Informational support, Strategic support.
Friman et al. (2018)	Sport	Physical	Emotional support, Companionship.
Katz et al. (2019)	Sport	Physical	Emotional support
Parkinson et al. (2019)	Online Community	Online	Emotional support, Esteem support, Tangible Assistance, Informational support, Network support.
Beatson, Riedel, Chamorro-Koc, Marston, and Stafford (2020)	Vulnerable Consumers	Physical	Emotional support, Informational support, Network support.
Virlée, van Riel, and Hammedi (2020)	Healthcare	Online	Emotional support, Informational support
Mulcahy and Luck (2020)	Sport	Physical	Emotional support, Informational Support, Companionship,

Emotional support describes the care and concern shown others (Beatson et al., 2020; Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Friman et al., 2018; Katz et al., 2019; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlée et al., 2020) and esteem support is support that leads to self-improvement (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2019). Informational support in the context of esports was loosely interpreted as knowledge about game mechanics and discussions about player selection and management for team composition (Freeman & Wohn,

2017) while in other contexts, it is described as giving advice or guidance (Beatson et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlée et al., 2020). Both instrumental support and tangible assistance describes providing tangible resources to solve problems (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2019). For the purpose of this research, tangible assistance will be referred to as instrumental support. Companionship, also referred to as network support, describes the access and connection to similar others (Beatson et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019). Freeman and Wohn (2017) mentioned how collaborative dynamics in gaming can provide a new form of social support identified as strategic support, which is knowledge gathering and sharing, player decision-making, leadership, and failure. For this research, all six dimensions will be explored within the esports context: emotional support, esteem support, informational support, instrumental support, companionship, and strategic support.

A restorative resource has been described within TSSR literature as enhancing well-being through being present in an environment or physical setting (Friman et al., 2018; MacIntosh et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020). As this resource has been established in a sporting context, this research will explore if this is evident and how it can be manifested in an esports environment such as team houses, personal practice spaces, and LANs.

Co-destructive Resources

Mulcahy and Luck (2020) identified two resources that co-destroy transformative value: interpersonal misbehaviour and sports misbehaviour. Interpersonal misbehaviour describes behaviours such as verbal abuse, physical aggression, and refusal to participate. Sport misbehaviour describes “behaviours that violate the accepted norms, rules and processes of the sport” (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020). While these two resources were established within sport,

there are major similarities in an esports context. Interpersonal misbehaviour is the equivalent of what would be described as toxic behaviour, which is a major issue within the esports industry on all levels (casual gaming, semi-professional, and professional) (Adinolf & Turkay, 2018; Overwatch League, 2018; Wright, 2019). Toxicity in esports is defined as “behaviour that disrupts morale and team dynamics” such as harassment, throwing (losing on purpose), griefing (e.g., enjoyment by intentionally making other players annoyed), trolling, and cyberbullying (Adinolf & Turkay, 2018). For the purpose of this research, interpersonal misbehaviour will include toxicity. Sport misbehaviour in esports would describe behaviours such as match fixing (Bräutigam, 2016) and cheating with the use of software such as Aimbot (automated targeting) and Wallhack (makes walled surfaces transparent) (Ashton, 2019). These behaviours from an individual level negatively affect the wider industry especially if the appropriate organisations (such as tournament or team owners) do not enforce consequences (Alford, 2020; Morrow, 2019).

Co-creative and Co-destructive Resources

Mulcahy and Luck (2020) identified co-performance as a resource that both co-creates and co-destroys transformative value. Co-performance was characterised by “thrill of competition”, “beating others” and “physical sacrifice”. While “thrill of competition” and “beating others” often lead to enhancing emotional and social value, “physical sacrifice” had a destructive impact on their well-being (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020). This research will investigate how these existing resources affect well-being on a collective level and establish any new resources within the esports context.

2.3. Summary of Gaps and Research Aims

Five major gaps were identified within the literature:

Gap 1: Much of transformative service research has focused on the individual, as opposed to the collective level (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015). The call to adopt a collective perspective has been considered “the most pressing area for TSR” (Ostrom et al., 2010, p. 3). A review of collective TSR, TSSR and service ecosystem literature shows that all studies have focused on dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities (i.e., service employees, service processes or offerings, organisations) (e.g. Dean & Indrianti, 2020; Guillemot & Privat, 2019; Nasr & Fisk, 2019; Tuzovic et al., 2021). There is a lack of investigation of actors who are neither a consumer nor service entity but still participate in the service ecosystem. Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) found that actors in the meso-level of a retail ecosystem are affected by value co-creation on the micro-level (i.e., consumer and service employee), however, the value co-creation opportunities and the effects of the meso-level actors were not examined. The relationship of actors has transitioned from a dyad to a multi-layered perspective with multiple actors and relationships (Polese et al., 2018). This type of multi-actor relationship can be clearly seen in a service ecosystem such as the esports industry where the interacting organisations and individuals, who may not fall under the role of consumer or service entity, all work together cooperatively and competitively to push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). By investigating actors who participate within the service ecosystem regardless of their role, this research will provide a more holistic perspective of the service ecosystem.

Gap 2: A review of collective TSR, TSSR, and service ecosystem well-being literature also showed that there is a lack of investigation focusing on value co-destruction of collective and service ecosystem well-being. Frow et al. (2019) mentioned how value co-destruction can negatively impact service ecosystem well-being, intentionally or unintentionally, however, a majority of studies focus on value co-creation enhancing the

well-being of consumer and service entities (e.g. Baniya et al., 2018; Chou et al., 2018; Echeverri, 2021; Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021; Tuzovic et al., 2021). Investigating value co-destruction is necessary to have a better and more realistic understanding of value processes (Plé, 2017) since the destruction of value, for at least one actors, is a possible outcome of value co-creation (Järvi et al., 2018). Value co-destruction can have significant implications such as engendering an imbalance of value within an ecosystem (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) or resulting in actors not wanting to collaborate with each other in the future (Järvi et al., 2018); in an industry that relies on collaboration for survival, value co-destruction can be detrimental.

Gap 3: In addition, there has been a lack of investigation into the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro- well-being within a service ecosystem, and the individual and collective well-being of TSR. It has been found that these levels are interconnected (Gallan et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2014; Peltoniemi & Vuori, 2004) and that value co-creation on the micro-level affects the meso-level of a service ecosystem (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021). However, no literature has examined the relationship of these levels and how value processes (i.e., value co-creation and value co-destruction) on one level affects the other levels in-depth. This research will adopt the A4A relationship framework to understand the multi-actor relationships within the service ecosystem.

Gap 4: A review of A4A relationship framework literature shows that there has yet to be empirical evidence to support the framework, which is the main call for research from Polese, Pels, et al. (2017). The characteristics of the A4A relationship and the relationship's correlation with successful and viable service exchange also needs to be confirmed. In addition, a focus should be placed on the role of A4A relationship in service ecosystems and

how the ecosystem's viability is strengthened by the actors exhibiting A4A relationship characteristics (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). By adopting the A4A relationship framework, this research is also extending the framework to examine value co-destruction as a potential result of value co-creation.

Gap 5: Well-being is particularly relevant in esports, especially in the field of psychology and sports health, due to its similarities with sport and the potential to improve well-being of those involved (Hallmann & Giel, 2018; Rothwell & Shaffer, 2019). A review of esports well-being literature shows that all studies have heavily focused on the players/athletes where well-being is a reflection of their physical, mental, and social health; there has not been any investigation into the well-being of the other actors within the esports ecosystem (e.g., team owners, tournament organisers, casters, etc). In addition, there also have not been any studies exploring well-being in esports with the industry ecosystem as a unit of analysis. Since the esports industry is a business ecosystem, specifically a service ecosystem, the industry relies on organisations and individuals to work together cooperatively and competitively to push forward the industry (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018). It is important understand and investigate the relationship between individual and collective well-being (i.e., ecosystem well-being) since they are interconnected (Gallan et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2014; Peltoniemi & Vuori, 2004) and can significantly affect each other, therefore affecting the viability of the industry.

This research aims to address these gaps with the research question: “what is collective well-being in the esports industry and how is it co-created or co-destroyed in a service ecosystem?” and the following research aims:

Research Aim 1: Define collective well-being and the dimensions that represent these values in esports.

Research Aim 2: Understand the resources integrated by various actors within the industry and how these integrated resources can lead to the co-creation and/or co-destruction of collective well-being within an A4A relationship.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the key theories and constructs used for this research, starting with the main theoretical lens, transformative service research. In order to address literature relating to Research Aim One, well-being in transformative service research, transformative sport service research, and esports were reviewed followed by value frameworks that have been previously used to examine well-being. This study will adopt the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) which proposes five different dimensions of value. In order to address literature relating to Research Aim Two, resource integration and the process of value co-creation and co-destruction were reviewed. In addition, the conceptual actor-for-actor (A4A) relationship framework was reviewed which suggested a relationship amongst actors within a service system that leads to optimal value co-creation for not only the actors involved but also for the wider system (Polese et al., 2018). This chapter concluded with a summary of the literature and gaps leading to the formation of the research questions.

The next chapter will outline and justify the research paradigm, the research design, and the methodology for this research. Details of data collection, analysis and ethical considerations will also be outlined.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Paradigm

The aims of this study were to firstly, define collective well-being and its underpinning dimensions in esports. Secondly, understand the resources integrated by various actors within the industry and how these integrated resources can lead to the co-creation and/or co-destruction of collective well-being within an A4A relationship. For this study, the constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm was deemed the most suitable since constructivists believe that reality is socially constructed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Hence, constructivists seek to explore the understanding of a concept within its context, with the emphasis being placed on understanding the subjective meaning of experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Krauss, 2005; Rahi, 2017). This study also adopts an emic perspective where there are multiple realities to consider from the perspectives of the participants (Yin, 2010).

To fully understand and interpret what the participants are thinking or making of the context, face-to-face interaction is the most effective method to fully participate in the mind of the participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Krauss, 2005). Therefore, the study methodology comprises of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key actors of the esports industry (i.e. players, team organisation owners, tournament organisers, casters). Even though the interviews were conducted online, this method replicates features of face-to-face interviews such as the ability to transmit and respond to verbal and nonverbal cues while also providing unique advantages and considerations (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, & Lawless, 2019). The quality of online interviews conducted via video conferencing software did not differ from traditional face-to-face interviews (Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, & Cook, 2020).

3.2. Research Design

Due to the infancy of TSR in the esports context and the lack of empirical studies using the A4A framework and on ecosystem well-being, it is appropriate to adopt an exploratory research design. Exploratory research seeks to identify and give insights into new phenomena and relationships (Bordens, 2018; Hair, 2019; Mayer, 2015). In line with constructivist paradigm, the research aims identify and give insights to social structures and human behaviours from the perspectives of the participants (Bisman & Highfield, 2012). In contrast, descriptive research is used to describe the characteristics and behaviour and identify the associations between variables, and causal research is used to identify cause and effect relationships (Sreejesh, Mohapatra, & Anusree, 2014).

Exploratory research relies heavily on qualitative approaches (Hair, 2019), so qualitative data will be collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with different actors within the Oceanic esports industry, specifically the semi-professional DOTA 2 scene. In-depth interviews is a commonly used data collection method (Hair, 2019) to gain insight into personal information such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, emotions and experiences (Denscombe, 2010; Rowley, 2012). In addition, interviews produce alternative perspectives on the same experiences (Rowley, 2012).

By using semi-structured interviews, the main areas of interest will be focused on while also allowing the interviewees to elaborate on important information (Denscombe, 2010; Gill et al., 2008; Hair, 2019). Focus groups were not employed because of the requirement of homogenous participants within each group (Breen, 2006) and several disadvantages including the risk of conformism to a socially desirable and stereotypical answer (Acocella, 2012) and convergence of opinions towards a point of view shared by the

majority (Acocella, 2012; Breen, 2006). As stated before, while online interviews replicate features of traditional interview methods, the unique advantages, and disadvantages of using Zoom have also been considered (Table 10).

Table 10. Advantages and disadvantages of Zoom for qualitative data collection (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020)

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effective. • Convenience, flexibility, and time effective with access and scheduling. • Ability to record and securely store sessions without recourse to third-party software. • Replicates features of face-to-face interviews (i.e., building rapport through seeing the interviewer and responding to nonverbal cues). • Participants were more comfortable speaking about personal topics in a space of their own choosing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential dropped call or pauses. • Potential poor audio or video quality due to poor internet connection. • Inability to read nonverbal cues due to inconsistent and delayed connectivity. • Distractions or a lack of privacy due to participants choosing their own interview space. • Potential missed opportunities to observe body language responses and emotional cues.

For an easier transcribing and analysis process, the interviews were conducted one-to-one (Denscombe, 2010). Notably while this research examines well-being at the collective level, it does so by the researcher bringing together the different perspectives of different actors provided through the individual interviews since hedonic well-being relies on the participant’s subjective perspective and evaluation (Diener, 2009; Diener & Ryan, 2009). Therefore, this method of data collection is deemed suitable for this research as ‘collective transformative value’ will be defined based on the actors’ perceptions of the results from value co-creation and co-destruction when integrating resources.

3.3. Research Procedure

3.3.1. Sampling

Purposive sampling strategy was utilised as it is deemed the most suitable for this research. The participants were selected based on their role and experience to ensure that the research will utilise data collected from a wide range of perspectives within the ecosystem (Devers & Frankel, 2000). The goal of the sample size is to achieve data saturation and redundancy where interviews no longer generate new information (Dworkin, 2012; Saunders et al., 2018). Boddy Clive (2016) recommended a range of 20-30 interviews to establish data saturation. In addition, due to funding limitations, this research will be limited to a maximum of thirty actors.

The sample comprised thirty participants: twelve semi-professional players, five team owners/managers, seven tournament organiser, and six casters. Table 11 lists the sample profile of the participants interviewed. Interviewees were aged between 20 and 33 years old, with one female and twenty-nine male participants. The lack of diversity within the participants reflects the lack of professional female players at the top level of the industry (Darvin, Vooris, & Mahoney, 2020; Krell, 2019; Liberatore, 2020; Valentine, 2018). The participants have been in their role for a minimum of four months and a maximum of 8 years.

Table 11. Sample profile of interviewed participants.

Participant No.	Age	Gender	Role	Years in Role
1	24	M	Player	6 years
2	24	M	Player	2.5 years
3	24	M	Player	7 years
4	27	M	Tournament Organiser	5 years
5	20	M	Tournament Organiser	2 years
6	30	M	Organisation Owner / Team Manager	3 years
7	23	M	Tournament Organiser	2 years
8	34	M	Tournament Organiser	3 years
9	26	M	Organisation Owner / Team Manager	3 years
10	33	M	Organisation Owner / Team Manager	3+ years

11	29	M	Tournament Organiser	8 months
12	27	M	Caster	5 years
13	24	M	Caster	2.5 years
14	29	M	Caster	8 years
15	27	M	Caster	3 years
16	24	M	Caster	3 years
17	29	M	Caster	3 years
18	23	M	Tournament Organiser	6 months
19	20	M	Player	2 years
20	24	M	Player	4 years
21	29	M	Tournament Organiser	4 months
22	20	M	Player	3 years
23	28	M	Organisation Owner / Team Manager	1 year
24	20	M	Organisation Owner / Team Manager	1.5 years
25	22	M	Player	3 years
26	25	F	Player	5+ years
27	24	M	Player	7 years
28	26	M	Player	6 months
29	28	M	Player	1 year
30	20	M	Player	3 years

3.3.2. Interview Recruitment Procedure

All participants were interviewed following a semi-structured interview guide, with some questions tailored according to the role of the participant. The interviews were designed to discover whether value is created and destroyed from resource integration with other actors in the industry and which value was affected by the process.

After the interview guide was developed and prior to commencement of the in-depth interviews, pilot interviews were conducted to confirm the coverage and relevance of the content, and to identify questions that may need to be refined (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016; Turner III, 2010). The interview guide was tested on a select group of participants who had previously worked within the Oceanic esports industry in various roles,

which is similar to those who will participate in implemented study. The length of the tests ranged from forty-five minutes to an hour and no questions needed to be refined, however more probe questions such as ‘Did this experience have an impact on someone else either positively or negatively?’ were added.

The first few initial participants were recruited through industry connections via Discord and emails, while the rest of the participants were recruited through snowball sampling of interviewed participants. Bernard and Ryan (2010) suggest this type of snowball sampling is appropriate given the target population is uniquely defined and hard to reach. The interviews were first scheduled on Discord or through emails followed up via email Zoom invitation to confirm date and time.

Before the interviews were scheduled, all participants were sent an online consent form that included a participant information sheet at the beginning which briefed them about the purpose of the interviews and informed them that their answers were confidential and that they would remain anonymous (see Appendix A). At the end of the online consent form, the participants were asked to answer some eligibility questions, sign a consent form (which allows the researcher to record the audio of the interviews), and provide a couple of demographic details.

3.3.3. Interview Structure

An interview protocol (see Appendix B) was used for this research to guide the interview while also allowing a degree of freedom and adaptability (Turner III, 2010). The semi-structured guide utilised the critical incident technique (CIT), which outlines several main questions along with some follow up questions/prompts (Kallio et al., 2016) about interaction incidents from the individual’s perspective (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001). Aligning

with the constructivist paradigm and the exploratory research design, CIT is “especially useful as an exploratory method to increase knowledge about a little-known phenomenon” (Gremler, 2004, p. 67) and is often used to make meaning or an interpretation of significant negative and positive experiences as identified by the individual and from their perspective (Bianchi & Drennan, 2012; Edvardsson & Roos, 2001; Gremler, 2004; Sharoff, 2008). The main benefit of using this technique is that it allows participants to identify and clarify feelings and meanings (Sharoff, 2008) which is needed when examining subjective well-being. This technique also allows the participants to describe expectations of relationships with other roles, and the situations and the consequences of when this expectation was met or not (Edvardsson & Strandvik, 2000). Although this method allows critical incidents to be captured in vivid details (Gremler, 2004), there are also limitations that have been taken into consideration. The main limitation is potential undesirable biases such as recall bias, consistency factors, or memory lapses. (Gremler, 2004; Sharoff, 2008). Another limitation mentioned is potential low response rate due to time and effort required to describe situations in sufficient detail (Gremler, 2004).

The interviews began with a briefing (Kvale, 2007), which included a thank you for their participation and confirmation that they had read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form. The participant was then asked if they had any questions or concerns before the interview proceeds (Kvale, 2007). The first couple of questions were broad and asked about the participants’ perspective on the state of the Oceanic esports industry, the community that they belong in, and the major benefits and drawbacks that they have noticed while being a part of this scene, and what can be improved and how. These questions aimed to get the participants thinking about their knowledge and experiences in a holistic perspective and provide insight into the values effected from their involvement within the

industry. Then the interview continues with CIT questions asking the participant to describe a positive and negative experience within their role, and a positive and negative interaction with another person. The rest of the questions were more specific and asked what behaviours that people in their role and the other roles do that the participant disapproves of. A probe question to ask why they disapprove these behaviours and how it affected them was sometimes needed to gain further insight. If the participant did not mention their experience with a specific role, then the questions of “How much do you interact with [role]?” and “How much do they affect your role?” were asked. At the end of the interviews, the participants were the interviewer debriefed the participant and asked if the participant had any questions or concerns they would like to bring up before the interview finished. This debrief occurred after the recorder has been turned off to allow for the participants to be fully comfortable with asking questions or raising concerns (Kvale, 2007). Throughout the interview, the interviewer checked and clarified their interpretation of the participants’ responses which will provide a more secure ground for analysis (Kvale, 2007). Also, probe questions such as “How so?” and “Why do you say that?” were used throughout the interview to gain more details and insight into certain responses. All interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes, except for two which were approximately 38 and 40 minutes.

3.3.4. Data Collection

The in-depth interviews were conducted online via Zoom, a video conference software. The interviews’ audio was recorded and transcribed by the automated transcription software, Trint. The transcriptions were double checked and edited against the recordings to ensure accuracy. There is a risk with recording interviews where the participants may try to present themselves more favourably (Al-Yateem, 2012; Bordens, 2018; Hair, 2019; Mayer, 2015) however, recording provides a basis for reliability and validity (Al-Yateem, 2012; Gill

et al., 2008). Field notes were also to be taken during or immediately after the interview about important observations, thoughts and ideas (Denscombe, 2010; Gill et al., 2008).

3.4. Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis which is a commonly used approach in qualitative research that allows flexibility and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). By incorporating both deductive and inductive approaches, themes that are important to the description of the phenomenon was identified, and categories was developed from these themes (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The two specific approaches are a data driven inductive approach and a deductive approach which utilises a priori template of codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The a priori code that was used included the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017). In addition, integrated resources that are already established in Esports and TSSR literature was considered. The data was coded using Nvivo12, a qualitative data analysis software that allows for efficient coding and analysis. The analytical process is outlined in Table 12.

Table 12. Outline of analytical process

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Attribute coding for all data
Stage 2	Provisional deductive coding using a priori template of consumption value theory framework (Zainuddin et al., 2017)
Stage 3	Provisional deductive coding using a priori template of resources that were identified in the literature review
Stage 4	Structural coding on inductive codes
Stage 5	Axial coding on all codes
Stage 6	Write up

Attribute coding was used for all data as a data management technique, focusing on demographic characteristics of the participants (i.e., gender, age, role) (Saldaña, 2012). The data was then analysed using a priori code of Zainuddin et al. (2017) consumption value

theory framework to understand the values created and/or destroyed by activities and interactions for the participants. Resources that were identified within the literature review were also used as a priori code to understand which established resources were integrated that led to the creation and/or destruction of value. Structural coding was used to identify the unestablished resources that were integrated. Axial coding was used on all codes to explore the relationship between roles, resource integration, and values co-created/destroyed (see Appendix C for sample code book) to understand the difference between individual, collective, and ecosystem well-being; and ultimately define collective well-being. All codes were discussed with supervisory team to minimise potential bias.

3.5. Ethics

The research project received ethical approval from the Queensland University of Technology (Ethics Approval Number 2000000691). The respondents had the opportunity to withdraw from participating at any time. The respondents were provided with an information sheet that clearly explained the project, any risks, benefits, and how the data will be used. Respondents consented by completing an online consent form, which stated that they have read and understood the information provided and agreed to participate. The consent form included permission to allow audio recording. The only people who had access to the audio recordings are those named on the ethics application. All comments and responses were deidentified when the data was transcribed.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter outlined and justified the research paradigm, the research design, the methodology for this research. In summary, the research design is a qualitative, exploratory design using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with thirty key actors of the esports

industry (i.e., players, team organisation owners, tournament organisers, casters). The method of data analysis was described in detail, followed by the ethical considerations that were taken. The next chapter will detail the findings of the data analysis.

Chapter 4. Findings and Discussion

This chapter will present the findings of the analysis. From the data, two levels of well-being were identified: individual and collective. Individual well-being refers to the micro-level of the service ecosystem aggregation focusing on hedonic well-being and the pursuit of pleasure and happiness (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Collective well-being encompasses both the meso- and macro-levels of the service ecosystem aggregation. The meso-level specifically refers to actors of the same role with well-being defined as how optimal these actors' function in their role collectively. The macro-level refers to service ecosystem well-being and includes all actors within the same ecosystem, which in this study is all the actors within the Oceanic Dota 2 scene. Service ecosystem well-being focuses on the viability of the ecosystem (Frow et al., 2019), which was also the shared goal/purpose in this study. Participants discussed the integration of resources (Table 13) that co-created and/or co-destroyed a range of collective well-being values from Zainuddin et al.'s (2017) consumption value theory framework for not only themselves but also for other individuals of the same role, of different roles, and the well-being of the ecosystem.

Table 13. Value co-creating/co-destroying resources identified within the findings.

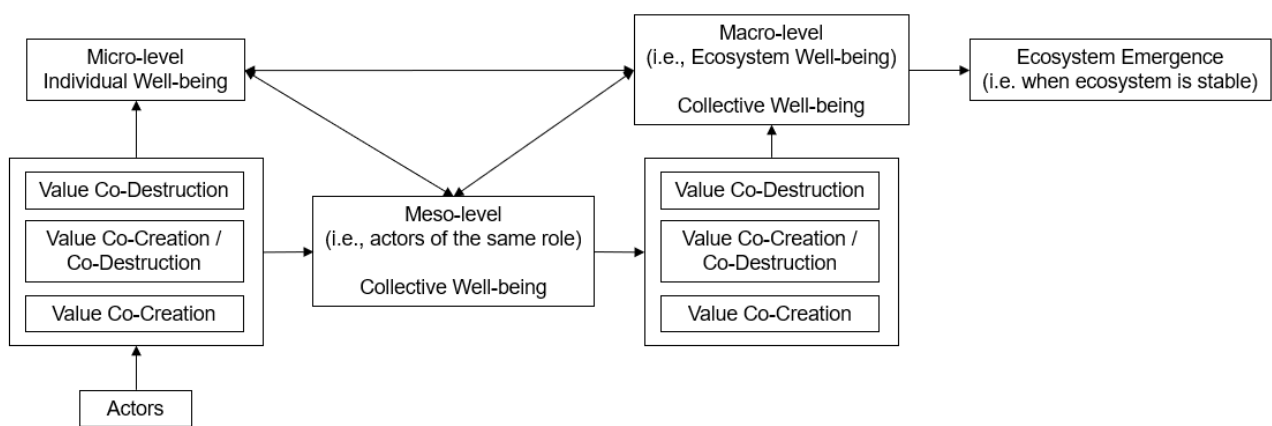
Value Co-Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Synergy (identified within findings) • Team Synergy (identified within findings) • Restorative Resources (Friman et al., 2018; MacIntosh et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020) • Social Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Support (Beatson et al., 2020; Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Friman et al., 2018; Katz et al., 2019; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlee et al., 2020) • Esteem Support (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2019) • Informational Support (Beatson et al., 2020; Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlee et al., 2020) • Instrumental Support/Tangible Support (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2019)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companionship/Network Support (Beatson et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019) • Strategic Support (Freeman & Wohn, 2017)
Value Co-Creation and Co-Destruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-performance (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020) • Co-responsibility (identified within findings)
Value Co-Destruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Misbehaviour (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020) • Misaligned Expectations (identified within findings) • Lack of Consequences (identified within findings) • Foot in the Door (identified within findings)

This means that the micro-, meso-, and macro-level of a service ecosystem are interconnected and the integration of resources that lead to value co-creation and/or co-destruction affect both individual (micro) and collective (meso and macro) well-being. Based on this finding, a conceptual framework was developed (Figure 4). Actors that integrate resources will co-create and/or co-destroy value which enhances or destroys individual (micro-level) well-being for themselves. For example, players integrate co-performance through playing the game heightens their individual (micro-level) well-being but at the same time, make personal sacrifices that destroys their individual (micro-level) well-being. On occasions, actors that integrate resources will also co-create or co-destroy value for all other actors within the same role (e.g., all players), enhancing or destroying collective (meso-level) well-being. For example, when players within a team experience interpersonal misbehaviour, even if it is only two players, the entire team was negatively impacted and ultimately disbanded. The integration of these resources will also positively or negatively affect the well-being of all other actors within the ecosystem, therefore affecting collective (macro-level) well-being (i.e., ecosystem well-being). For example, a culture of short-term teams has been created due to constant interpersonal misbehaviour within teams, this hinders the players from competing in the international scene therefore hindering the growth of the oceanic esports industry. Specifically, it was found that when actors exhibited A4A characteristics, resource integration co-created value for not only themselves, but also for other roles and increased the viability of the ecosystem (Polese et al., 2018). However, when

actors did not exhibit A4A characteristics and were acting on individualistic motivations, value were co-created for themselves but co-destroyed for others and ultimately negatively affected the viability of the ecosystem. For example, players who integrate interpersonal misbehaviour by not attending matches, co-create value for themselves but co-destroy value for other players on the same team, on the opposing team, and for the tournament organiser.

Figure 4. Conceptual framework developed from data.



This chapter will present the findings of the analysis in this order: first, the value dimensions co-created and/or co-destroyed through resource integration will be outlined; then the resources integrated on the micro-level will be discussed; then the relevance of the A4A characteristics on the collective level will be presented; then the resources integrated that co-created and/or co-destroyed value on the collective level (i.e., meso- and macro-level) will be discussed; finally, the interconnected relationship between all three service ecosystem aggregation levels will be discussed.

4.1. Value Dimensions Co-created or Co-destroyed

This research found that five well-being values from Zainuddin et al.'s (2017) consumption value theory framework were co-created and/or co-destroyed through resource integration. These values include function, emotional, community, social, and epistemic.

4.1.1. Functional Value

Functional value was one of the most frequently discussed value where participants' experiences and interactions with others had improved or hindered their ability to complete their duties and their performance, which affected their well-being. This is consistent with previous research which defined functional value to include any factors that aid or impedes the actors' ability to carry out their activities (Zainuddin et al., 2017). The participants discussed how completing their duties (i.e., playing the game or working within the industry) results in a sense of self-satisfaction from doing what they are passionate about and from the appreciation and recognition from other actors, therefore enhancing their well-being.

[I] enjoy the game. It's a passion for me, so if I can do something out of it; playing team environment, maybe make some money, it's a positive for me. The game itself is very competitive, and it really drives me to improve not only as myself but also as my team together... I've been trying to nurture the younger and less experienced players and help them get into the scene as well. (Participant 2. Player)

I'm someone that equates my self-worth to how I'm doing at work, so if I'm doing really well at work, then I find I feel meaning in life. If I'm doing very bad at work, then I don't deserve to live anymore. It's very dramatic, but I'm someone that thinks like that... (Participant 7. Tournament Organiser)

In addition to experiences and interactions that hindered their ability to complete their duties and their performance, participants discussed how partaking within the industry was also a burden on their everyday responsibilities outside of the industry. Especially since the

current state of the industry does not provide actors with sustainable living conditions and negatively affects their well-being.

You'll be getting little in return... And I guess as you get older, that becomes a little bit more your focus of, "OK, and it's time to be a big boy now. Maybe Dota isn't going to be the answer moving forward"... Because the amount of return coming my way, I'm not gonna be able to pay rent, I'm not going to have to pay the bills, and I'm not gonna be able to raise a family. (Participant 12. Caster).

4.1.2. Emotional Value

Emotional value was the other most frequently discussed value which refers to the various affective states, including both positive and negative (Zainuddin et al., 2017).

Participants discussed how simply carrying out their activities along with every interaction with other actors have created or destroyed this value to some extent. For example, emotional value was created when players played the game, whether it was practicing alone or competing in a tournament with their team:

I would just say the ability to test myself on what I have learned...And the competitive aspect is me performing those heroes and match ups... I have an idea on something and I get to take that into a competitive experience where everyone else is also trying really, really hard and seeing if I measure up, just really reaching a level where I'm happy...This is a validation thing... It's like confidence. (Participant 25. Player)

It's always enjoyable from a personal point of view when certain plays are acknowledged by casters, but that's more of an egotistical than a self-gratification thing (Participant 28. Player)

The destruction of emotional value was mostly discussed by participants through experiences that led to an increase of stress, sadness, and lack of motivation. Participant 12 (Caster) recounted when he dealt with negative comments from viewers while he was casting.

While negative comments are common in his profession, it was still difficult for him to process and affected his well-being.

I remember being quite upset with what I was reading after a while. And it just makes me sit there and go, "I can't believe that handful of people would be so committed to hate that they would actually spend their entire four or five hours to insult someone." So that's probably my lowest experience. I've dealt with similar things too but it's quite hard to sit there.
(Participant 12. Caster)

Participant 10 (Team Owner) mentioned how it is difficult for him to complete his duties since he did not have the same amount of resources as the other team organisation owners, which has destroyed emotional value every day.

I don't really have that funding behind me or those other services that other Esports organizations have. It's always a really, really tough fight to hold teams and players and that in itself creates quite a lot of stress and anxiety. (Participant 10. Team Owner)

The destruction of this value can have significant consequences on those involved in the industry and can result in lasting effects on their overall well-being. Especially since the data found that mental health issues were common within the scene, specifically amongst players.

I wasn't able to go to [a tournament] in China, 1.2-million-dollar tournament... and yeah, I felt like my life ended and I was diagnosed with severe depression and PTSD. (Participant 27. Player)

4.1.3. Community Value

Community value, while not one that was frequently discussed, was a crucial value that mainly impacted the actor's sense of community with fellow actors regardless of their roles. Consistent with the literature, participants felt a sense of distinctiveness and

belongingness (Cushen et al., 2019) which assisted in the creation of social value as it was easier to form friendship with those with mutual interests and passions.

It was fun to actually meet people of my age, talk to people of my age with the mutual interest of the game. Travel [for competition] is just interstate so we ended up using the Dota tournament every year as a get-together and a little party where we would all be mates. We were versing each other, but we were having a party when we really should be practicing.
(Participant 27. Player)

The destruction of community value was discussed when participants felt that they were no longer supported by or belonged within the community. While only mentioned a few times, the impact of destroyed community value has caused participants to leave or be prepared to leave the industry altogether.

You're doing a great job and the players love you, but they become entitled and egotistic. And then the moment you make a single decision against them in the fairness of justice and equality, and the rules, they start abusing you... For me, putting my heart and soul into that community, the majority of the players actually said [they] hated me because I just had made one decision against them, and they hated me ever since and it was so stupid but that really hurts. I was just about to quit Esports at that point and I just moved on with my life.
(Participant 5. Tournament Organiser)

4.1.4. Social Value

Social value refers to the association with specific social groups (Zainuddin et al., 2017) and Mulcahy and Luck (2020) predominantly discussed about it in relation to the creation of friendships. While this value was frequently discussed by participants, the data found that the effects were mostly on individual well-being. The creation of social value was closely linked with community value as participants found it easy to form and maintain friendships within the community due to their mutual interest in the game.

It's such a tight knit community... everyone kind of knows each other in the community... as a by-product of that, you would naturally become close friends with each other because the community is so tight and because everyone knows each other. (Participant 7. Tournament Organiser)

The destruction of social value was mainly through the participants' relationships with those outside of the industry. Players also mentioned destroyed social value when talking about disbandment of teams.

Over the years, I have spent a lot of time [playing] where I could have been out with friends, family or like doing something else that's a positive for my life. (Participant 20. Player)

There are just some players within the scene I would prefer not to work with again and I'm playing the team with again. (Participant 2. Player)

Although very similar to community value, social value focuses on the dyadic relationship, personal or professional, between two actors and the benefits gained from the relationship. On the other hand, community value focuses on the actor's own sense of belongingness within the community.

4.1.5. Epistemic Value

Epistemic value refers to the experience of novelty with or excitement in their activity (Zainuddin et al., 2017). This value was the least mentioned and only briefly discussed by the participants. Players discussed how playing the game is kept enjoyable with the constant patches, and how developing new strategies against different teams along with the new patches keeps the competitive scene refreshing and thrilling.

The game itself is just really enjoyable. There's going to be a big patch coming out, in a day or so. Even though we've been on the same patch for months and months and it's kind of becoming more boring every day, it's still somehow enjoyable to play just because there's so many possibilities... and something new will happen [in every game]. So it's still quite

exciting. And all of the strategy involved, it's a fun way to use your time. (Participant 20. Player)

Also, players and casters have mentioned that getting the opportunity to travel nationally and sometimes internationally to LANs increases this value as these experiences are always unique.

We managed to qualify for an offline event in New Zealand... They flew us out of there and they put us in a hotel. And it was a really cool experience. (Participant 1. Player)

Traveling everywhere is insanely cool (Participant 19. Player)

We did this LAN this live event in Australia about two years ago... And it was complete chaos. Overall, I'd say that it was a lot of fun. (Participant 17. Caster)

Some team organisation owners also briefly mentioned how travelling to national and international LANs to support their team was exciting, but it was not a significant value for them. Tournament organisers mentioned how new projects such as new tournaments or moving into a new esports title, kept their role refreshing.

As a T.O, you can't just stick to one title so as I'm doing more stuff, it's always fun to learn more about the community and the people that are involved in it (Participant 11. Tournament Organiser.)

In summary, collective well-being encompasses both meso- and macro-level well-being which refers to the optimal functioning of actors of the same role and the entire ecosystem. Participants discussed that partaking in the esports industry both creates and destroys a range of transformative value dimensions. Functional and emotional value were the dimensions most predominantly created and destroyed. While community value was not frequently discussed, it assisted in the creation of social value and the destruction of community value had significant consequences. Social value was frequently discussed; however, the creation and destruction only affected individual well-being. Epistemic value

was the least discussed and the effect on well-being was minimal compared to the other values.

4.2. Individual Well-being (Micro-level) Well-being

As stated before, the micro-level of the service ecosystem refers to individual well-being in TSR which focus on eudaimonic and hedonic well-being; in which, eudaimonic well-being refers to positive psychological functioning and human development achieved by seeking to fulfil one's potential and functioning at an optimal level (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012) while hedonic well-being refers to the pursuit of pleasure and happiness (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Within the data, two resources were identified that both co-created and co-destroyed value at the same time when integrated by actors: co-performance and co-responsibility. In addition, six dimensions of social support were identified that co-created value and positively affected individual well-being: emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support, companionship, informational support, and strategic support.

4.2.1. Co-performance

Consistent with the literature, co-performance identified by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) for Olympic athletes was also found as an essential resource to integrate for semi-professional players that both enhances and destroys well-being. Competing within the semi-professional scene, characterised as “thrill of competition”, often led to heightened epistemic, social, and emotional value, therefore enhancing the players' well-being. Epistemic value refers to the experience of novelty with or excitement in their activity (Zainuddin et al., 2017). Heightened epistemic value co-created from co-performance stems from the game being regularly updated so there are new heroes yearly and constant power balancing which

ultimately affects the meta (i.e., the characters, team compositions, and items that are more dominant than others in a game). In addition, players are required to develop new strategies for each match due to the team compositions of their team and the opposing team. Social value refers to the association with specific social groups (Zainuddin et al., 2017) and Mulcahy and Luck (2020) predominantly discussed about it in relation to the creation of friendships. Social value is increased from co-performance when players compete with or against their friends in public or competition matches. Many participants who are players have made friends through playing and competing that extended into everyday life. Emotional value refers to the various affective states, including both positive and negative (Zainuddin et al., 2017). For players, emotional value is affected every time they play the game; Participant 1 (Player) describes it as “*high risk, high reward*” where winning and losing matches have a significant positive or negative influence on their emotional state, even more so when it is a tournament or league setting with a prize pool.

Playing the game obviously [is] really fun at a competitive level, it's different to playing the game. I think that there are almost two entirely separate games, so that's very fulfilling. But more importantly, being able to go... [to] offline events, you get to meet a lot of really cool people and that's definitely another different environment than just playing with people online as well, because when you actually get to meet them, it's more of a personal connection and you get to make some good friends. It's a lot of fun. (Participant 1. Player).

However, while competing is often described as ‘fun’, players reflected on the personal sacrifices that they have made and were continuously making, which is another characteristic of co-performance. Some of these sacrifices include time, health, and social relationships, which destroyed functional, social, and emotional value that leads to a decrease in their well-being. Functional value refers to any factors that aid or impedes the actors’ ability to carry out their activities (Zainuddin et al., 2017). Functional value was destroyed in

co-performance as playing Dota 2 and practicing to increase their skills requires a tremendous amount of time that impedes their everyday life. Participant 30 (Player) has stated that it “*consumes your whole life. And the fact that everyone else is improving, you have to play like 16 hours a day. When we were playing in a team house, we were playing like twelve hours a day and then watching replays for like four hours.*” Specifically, players have expressed that the amount of time they spent playing Dota 2 took away time they could have used to exercise, eat healthily, spend with their family and friends. Spending less time with their family and friends destroys social value which further decreases their emotional value.

It's a very, very... unhealthy lifestyle... You might be missing out on social events, you might be not eating right, you might not be exercising, whatever it is, I think you will sacrifice a lot for Dota. (Participant 30. Player.)

Players explained that these sacrifices were vital if they wanted to continue to compete at the semi-professional level due to regular game patches and the fact that there is no skill ceiling. Participant 26 (Player) once took a 3-month break from the game and stated that “*I felt like it was a completely new game. Even though I played it for years, I felt like I had to relearn a lot of things*”. Not only is the integration of co-performance vital for the players, but it also affects the industry as there is a positive correlation between viewership and high skilled player performance (Xiao, 2019). This further affects other roles as the success of the overall industry can affect aspects such as funding and opportunities.

4.2.2. Co-responsibility

Based on co-performance for players, co-responsibility was identified for the other roles (i.e., tournament organisers, team organisation owners, and casters). Co-responsibility was characterised by “thrill of contribution” and “physical sacrifice”. Thrill of contribution,

commonly referred to as ‘passion’ for their job or for the industry, was a dominant theme discussed by participants and an essential resource to integrate within the esports industry. It led to heightened functional, emotional, social, and community value. Functional value was co-created as the sense of contributing to the industry increases the actor’s willingness to work and their enjoyment in their work which also is co-created emotional value. In addition, participants, especially those who are casters, were offered more job opportunities that helped them continue their career. Social value was co-created since it was easier to create connections and form friendships by working with people that share a similar passion and interest. Community value refers to a sense of distinctiveness and belongingness with others (Cushen et al., 2019). Co-responsibility enhanced this sense of belongingness as the actor works with and amongst those who share the same passion as them and they are explicitly appreciated by others for the work they do, which also increases emotional value. Overall, all of these co-created values enhance the actor’s well-being.

It's just nice being able to actually have a job... where you actually feel like you're doing a difference and making progress and helping people achieve their dreams, because I already achieved mine. Now, if I can make Esports great in Australia, I'm going to help... hundreds of players achieve their dreams too. (Participant 5. Tournament Organiser).

I guess that really makes me happy as a T.O because... it makes you feel that that my contribution to Esports is being appreciated. (Participant 11. Tournament Organiser) *T.O refers to tournament organiser.*

It's nice to have people appreciate what you do because... if it's something I'm passionate about and other people are enjoying what I'm passionate about? It's nice... I think the biggest thing I enjoyed was the community aspect of the people I met, the connections I made, the opportunities I was given. And I just had a good time. (Participant 14. Caster)

Due to the current sustainability of the esports industry in the Oceanic region, the thrill of contribution was the participants’ main drive to participate and overcome the

sacrifices they experienced. These sacrifices were described as physical, emotional, and financial which destroyed functional and emotional value. When re-telling the start of his career, Participant 14 (Caster) revealed the physical sacrifices he made, moving to a new city to try and work within the industry as a full-time caster without a steady or sustainable wage. The sacrifices were detrimental to his well-being, specifically his health, to the point where he was admitted to the hospital.

I managed to hospitalize myself by the end of it because I got a flu, and my body was just so run down. I was sitting on like 41-degree temperatures. And I was a mess, absolute physical mess. Just because I wasn't looking after myself. I wasn't eating properly because I was working all the time. I was only sleeping three or four hours a day. (Participant 14. Caster)

Tournament organisers and team owners revealed that they sacrifice their own income from other jobs outside of esports to run tournaments and teams respectively, which causes significant financial stress with no guaranteed profit. Participant 21 (Tournament Organiser) stated that tournament organisers commonly and should expect to run at a loss for at least the first six months. Much like co-performance, not only is the integration of co-responsibility vital for tournament organisers, casters, and team owners, the effects also directly affect players and the industry as well. If these actors are unwilling to sacrifice in order to work within the industry, then there would be no industry.

4.2.3. Social Support

The findings identified six dimensions of social support that co-create value when integrated by actors: emotional support, instrumental support, esteem support, informational support, companionship, and strategic support. Emotional support was integrated when actors care and show concern towards others which corroborates existing literature (Beatson et al., 2020; Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Friman et al., 2018; Katz et al., 2019; Mulcahy & Luck,

2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlée et al., 2020). The integration of emotional support enhances emotional and social value. Emotional value was co-created when actors reached out to one another to show care and concern while social value was co-created as friendship are formed and strengthened. Participant 27 (Player) stated “*a lot of the boys actually ended up helping me out*” when discussing his diagnosis with severe depression and PTSD, and how they are “*now really, really close*”. Participants 15 (Caster) described how his relationship with a fellow caster has extended beyond the professional sense to friendship outside of work, stating that they are “*joined at the hip*”.

Instrumental support, which describes tangible assistance provided to others to solve problems (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Parkinson et al., 2019), was integrated on multiple occasions. For players, Participant 6 (Team Owner) explained that he provided players with equipment, jerseys, food, water, and money for expenses when attending LANs. Participant 1 (Player) added that general management of a team provided by team organisations “*is a huge deal. It’s a huge help*” since players struggle with being professional and organised. This type of support provided increased the players’ functional and emotional value. Functional value was co-created as Participant 3 (Player) described that everything is organised for him and his team; emotional value was co-created as it reduced stress and allowed them to enjoy the experience of competing more.

A lot of the time it's paid for, so you don't even have to stress. Like, you don't have to think about anything. You just turn up. You do what you want to do... You'll have your flights look for you, you'll turn up, they'll tell you where you're going. You just kind of go with the flow and enjoy the time. (Participant 3. Player).

The research also found that instrumental support was also provided in the form of job opportunities for tournament organisers and casters, which increased functional and

emotional value. After a negative experience with players from another esports title which caused the co-destruction of community value, Participant 5 (Tournament Organiser) explained that he felt betrayed and was ready to quit working within the industry. However, another tournament organiser at that time offered him a job position that reignited his passion for the industry and helped him continue his career as a tournament organiser.

While there was evidence of information support, esteem support, companionship, and strategic support, these dimensions were identified in combination with each other and other behavioural resources. For example, strategic support was found to be a combination of companionship, esteem support, and informational support when players described being taught about and introduced to the competitive scene as a casual player by current and former semi-professional players. Informational support, in combination with cooperation, was identified as new resources called business synergy. Even though these four dimensions do co-create value enhancing individual well-being, the effects are more significant on the collective level.

In summary, co-performance and co-responsibility was identified to have a double-edged-sword effect that both co-create and co-destroy value while six dimensions of social support were identified that co-create value. While all dimensions of social support co-create value on the micro-level, the effects of four dimensions are more significant on the collective level in combination with each other or with other aspects such as cooperation. Co-performance, co-responsibility, and social support mainly positively and/or negatively affect the well-being of the actors that integrated the resource. However, there are also indirect effects that affect actors of different roles and the viability of the industry. The next section will discuss collective (meso- and macro-level) well-being.

4.3. Collective Well-being

From the data, collective well-being was identified to encompass the well-being of both meso- and macro-level aggregations. The meso-level is defined as actors within the same role with well-being referring to how optimal they function together in their role as a community. The macro-level is defined as all actors within an ecosystem with well-being referring to ecosystem well-being which is the viability of the ecosystem (i.e the industry) (Frow et al., 2019). The meso- and macro-level are interrelated where the integration of resources on the meso-level have direct effects on the ecosystem's well-being. In addition, it was found that when actors exhibited A4A characteristics, they co-created value for not only themselves, but also for actors of the same role, other roles, and the industry. This section will start by discussing the A4A characteristics that affected the actors' ability to co-create and/or co-destroy value; next, the resources integrated that co-create or co-destroy meso-level well-being will be presented; finally, this section will discuss how the integration of resources affect ecosystem well-being (i.e., macro-level well-being).

4.3.1. A4A Characteristics

This study found that in order for actors of the same role and of different roles to function optimally, the actors need to exhibit A4A characteristics. Without these characteristics, actors in turn destroyed value for themselves and others, or created short term value for themselves but destroyed value for others and negatively impact the ecosystem's well-being. Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) proposed four characteristics that allow actors to relate to others within the ecosystem and result in obtaining value not only for themselves but also for others along with positive effects for the whole ecosystem. These four characteristics are: Knowledge management, subjective awareness of the context, adaptability, and the

willingness to engage (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). It was found that these characteristics are interconnected, and it is difficult for actors to exhibit characteristics such as adaptability if they do not exhibit subjective awareness of the context, and it is difficult for them to be willing to engage if they do not exhibit knowledge management.

Knowledge management refers to actors being aware of how a viable ecosystem have richer capacities than those obtainable by actors' individual efforts. This knowledge then shapes their behaviour towards sharing best practices and collaborative models, and increases their openness to new cultures, new perspectives, and sustainable relationships (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). The findings show that the majority of the actors are aware of the fact that if the industry is successful, they would have more resources such as funding and international opportunities; however, there is a gap in understanding between actors which results in individualistic driven resource integration. For example, Participant 2 (Player) spoke about how he has participated in LANs where he had to pay out of pocket and earn little or no profit unless his team placed first. Competing in the finals of a league should increase their well-being, but instead it increases their financial sacrifice. Some players do not participate in tournament LAN finals if they are required to cover the expenses such as flights and accommodations since the experience of the LAN finals is not enough to justify the financial sacrifice. From the tournament organisers' perspective, Participant 4 (Tournament Organiser) expressed their disappointment in the players who did not attend the finals, thinking the players did not value the opportunity and wanted to easily earn the second-place prize pool instead of attending the LAN and compete for first place. This type of situation also co-destroys tournament organisers' functional value and emotional value. Participant 4 (Tournament Organiser) explained that they had to find replacement content at the last minute which increased stress and decreased the amount of content broadcasted and

engagement from viewers. Another example of a gap in understanding is tournament organisers and team owners needing and wanting players to increase their own marketing on social media. However, Participant 1 (Player) explained that players are only focused on playing the game and increasing their skills, and do not see the benefit of growing their personal brand. Casters build their own personal brand to grow a community, promote their projects, make connections with other actors in the industry and gain opportunities. Both Participant 9 and 23 (Team Organisation Owner) discussed how players can also utilise the same method to build a community, bridge the gap between casual players and the semi-professional scene in terms of viewership, and promote themselves, the team they are signed with, and the tournament they are playing in. Not only does this benefit the players themselves, but it also benefits the tournament organisers and team organisation owners. This gap in understanding directly links to the A4A characteristic of subjective awareness of the context.

Subjective awareness of the context describes how, due to the different actors and roles, there are multiple perspectives with different interests and needs (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). In the context of esports, players, for example, focus predominantly on playing the game and increasing their skill; team owners focus on increasing the marketability of the players; tournament/league organisers focus on increasing the marketability of their production; and casters focus on increasing the entertainment value of themselves and the tournament broadcast. Participant 1 (Player) explicitly discussed this difference in perspectives that commonly cause disputes to occur between players and tournament organisers. In order for actors to exhibit this A4A characteristic, they need to actively make an effort to observe other actors' behaviour and attempt to align their interests and needs with others (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). Currently, actors not exhibiting these characteristics and are

integrating resources driven by personal motivations; Participant 1 (Player) stated that some players “don’t care” or “don’t realise” which means they are not making an effort to observe or to align themselves with others. This lack of understanding of other perspectives decreases the likelihood of actors being adaptable, which is another A4A characteristic that actors should exhibit.

Adaptability refers to actors being proactive in adapting their behaviours and tolerating certain changes (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). Currently the gap in understanding of the differences in interests and needs are decreasing the likelihood of actors being proactive in adapting their behaviour. In addition, some actors understand the difference in perspectives however are reluctant to adapt their behaviour, which is the final A4A characteristic, willingness to engage.

Willingness to engage describes actors actively integrating their resources for the shared purpose of system viability instead of personal drivers (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). Participant 24 (Player) shared how different equipment provided by tournament organisers affect their gameplay. Even though players do give feedback to organisers about issues regarding equipment, sometimes the feedback is not taken seriously. In this experience, the organisers are aware of the interest and needs of players but are not willing to engage and adapt their behaviour.

In summary, while actors within esports exhibit knowledge management, where they are aware of the richer capacities of a viable ecosystem, they are not exhibiting the other three A4A characteristics: subjective awareness of the context, adaptability, and willingness to engage. There is a gap in understanding the different perspectives which decreases the likelihood of actors be proactive in adapting their behaviour to the interest and needs of

others. In addition, while some actors are aware of the different interests and needs of others, they are unwilling to adapt their own behaviour and let go of individualistic drivers.

4.3.2. Meso-level Well-being

From the findings, the meso-level was defined as actors of the same role within a service ecosystem with well-being referring to how optimally these actors function together in their role. The importance of the A4A characteristics was also found as the actors who exhibited these characteristics co-created value through three identified resources: business synergy, strategic support which is a dimension of social support, and team synergy. On the other hand, actors who did not exhibit these characteristics either co-created value for themselves while co-destroying value for others or co-destroying value for themselves and others through one identified resource: interpersonal misbehaviour.

4.3.2.1. Business Synergy

Optimal and suboptimal cooperation between the non-player actors was explored through multiple occasions which was identified to be the resource, business synergy. Business synergy is similar to informational support identified by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) and Parkinson et al. (2019). Informational support is a dimension of social support that describes sharing knowledge, advice, and guidance (Beatson et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlée et al., 2020). In addition to those aspects, business synergy also describes actors cooperating with and compromising for other actors within the industry.

For tournament organisers, there was a lack of business synergy; they reported that they wish to have clearer communication with each other about schedules to avoid clashes. Participant 5 (Tournament Organiser) discussed how this communication can co-create

functional value in addition to creating the stability that the industry needs while Participant 8 (Tournament Organiser) mentioned how the lack of this resource co-destroyed functional value and has proven to be ‘deadly’ for the scene. Functional value was co-destroyed as players would only be able to play one tournament therefore decreasing player participation for other tournaments, and viewers would only watch their favourite players/team, therefore decreasing viewership. In addition, this had a negative flow-on effect to players, decreasing their functional value; since some tournaments’ schedules clashed, it decreases the number of tournaments the players can compete in and the amount of prize pool they can potentially win.

We worked together and made sure that no one had a conflict with each other and that was all good... it's just really trying to get that culture going of stability and...if we end up doing that, we should make massive strides (Participant 5. Tournament Organiser.)

They needed to speak to each other and cut the losses evenly to string it out, at least allow the chance to build. But what happened was actually a competition in which the organizers actually dumped money against each other and made it even worse and made the eventual death happen faster. (Participant 8. Tournament Organiser)

In this incident, the actors exhibited knowledge management and subjective awareness of the context as they understand that working together to create a culture of stability for the industry is beneficial and each tournament organisers have different schedules. However, even if they were willing to engage with others, they did not proactively communicate and adapt, which co-destroyed value for all tournament organisers and players.

For casters, due to the infancy of the industry, they have experienced unethical practices where tournament organisers undercut costs or tried to convince them to work for free. Many casters felt like they could not negotiate in fear of losing the opportunity. Participant 17 (Caster) discussed how these situations have destroyed emotional value,

potentially destroying social value, and decreasing their sense of well-being. Emotional value was destroyed due to feelings of anxiety, anger, and being trapped since they can either not accept the job and forgo the pay which destroys functional value, or they can accept the low pay, potentially undercutting another caster which destroys social value.

You start to feel a lot of anxiety. You do feel very angry as well. You feel very trapped. [It is] either I don't work or I accept their pay rate and I do work, but I'm probably undercutting another caster, which is never going to do you good in the future, especially if they find out you undercut them... you get paid afterwards, but you will feel kind of almost empty, like you won't feel very satisfied because you know that you got ripped off. But you didn't really have a choice if you wish to pay your bills... it can be pretty negative (Participant 17. Caster.)

As a solution, casters have created an unofficial union where they can communicate with each other about opportunities and pay rates to avoid getting undercut by tournament organisers. Participant 17 (Caster) goes on to discuss how this has enhanced their functional, emotional, and community value. Functional value was created by the casters establishing a baseline of pay rates and emotional value was enhanced since they are happy with the pay and having support from fellow casters. Community value was created as they felt an increase of belongingness with other casters since they are no longer undercutting but instead supporting each other.

Everyone's very happy about it. Now that we're all talking and being friendly and offering advice and giving our payrates to each other, we kind of give ourselves an advantage over the tournament organisers now where we all know what each other are charging. So they can't convince you that the budget is not high enough to pay you the same amount... It's very valuable for us to finally have a group where we talk to each other. (Participant 17. Caster)

In this incident, casters exhibited all four A4A characteristics. They were all willing to engage with each other, were proactive in solving this issue and adapting to the interest and needs of all casters. Overall, cooperation between casters in forming this unofficial union

not only co-created value and increases the well-being of the casters involved but also for any future casters. The integration of business synergy for casters also has a positive effect on ecosystem well-being as Participant 16 (Caster) stated that by establishing a baseline of pay rates and not deviating from it when negotiating with tournament organisers, it will set a standard that benefits the industry.

And if everyone stays at that bare minimum [without working for free or accept a lower pay], then it gets to a point where all the organizers and all the people go, “okay, this is the industry standard. This is the baseline we have to pay”. (Participant 16. Caster)

For team organisation owners, they discussed about how they must teach themselves a lot of skills to effectively manage their teams. Participant 10 (Team Owner) outlined some of these skills which include but not limit to finance, budgeting, marketing, website design, and graphic design.

You definitely have to learn to manage your time effectively when a team is playing in more than one tournament... I've had to teach myself about finance, learn more about budgeting, learn about marketing and social media, website design, as well as graphic design. (Participant 10. Team Owner)

Because of this, team organisation owners, especially those starting out or those looking to move into a new esports title, often reach out to existing organisations to ask for advice which would co-create functional value. In addition, team organisation owners also reach out to ask about players they are interested in signing, specifically about their previous behaviour. Learning more about players, their behaviours and their previous performance in an organisation can avoid the integration of resources that co-destroy value such as interpersonal misbehaviour. While some were described as “quite welcoming”, there were

many that saw other organisations as competition and were not willing to help. Participant 10 (Team Owner) believes that if all team organisations cooperated, stronger teams will be formed and reach a professional level.

Getting esports organizations to work together and support one another is very, very difficult. Especially [since] every single one is an individual business and we're just competition to the other person. But I think we need to put our differences aside and we need to actually take a step back and essentially work together. Because I believe with the right guidance and education, we can form stronger teams that eventually reach a professional level. (Participant 10. Team Owner)

We terminated a player because he was just using us as a hopping stone. We found out a lot of negative things that he lied about... [he] lied about his past careers, and his exploits. And when I start talking to the [player's previous] orgs because I knew them, they said "who the hell is this guy? We don't know him". We did some digging. We found he got some bans on some titles... He has used our name to try to get on teams and luckily, those teams knew us. Once they talked to us and we were very straightforward; we said that he has some attitudes that we didn't like and we parted ways. (Participant 23. Team Owner)*orgs refers to team organisations*

Those who were not willing to help others did not exhibit any A4A characteristics; they did not know or did not act on the fact that a successful industry will benefit them more than individualistic efforts; they did not try to understand or adapt their own behaviour towards the interests and needs of others and were not willing to engage with others to co-create value. In summary, when actors exhibit all A4A characteristics, business synergy can be integrated successfully co-creating value for not only the actors themselves and for others but also positively affect the ecosystem's well-being. This was explored in four different occasions for tournament organisers, casters, and team organisation owners.

4.3.2.2. Strategic Support

A collaborative dynamic between gamers (casual and semi-professional) provides a dimension of social support identified by Freeman and Wohn (2017) as strategic support (e.g., knowledge gathering and sharing, player decision-making, leadership, and failure). Strategic support is similar to a combination of informational support, companionship, and esteem support that was identified in the literature (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019), however, strategic support was established for a gaming context. While this resource was previously identified by Freeman and Wohn (2017), it had not been explored further. This resource is present in this study when players reported that playing the game as a casual player is significantly different to competing in the esports scene.

I mean, ranked pub games, they don't really teach you how to play Dota... From the competitive point of view, Dota is a system of five players and pubs just aren't that. Everyone has their own intentions. Everyone has their own objectives. Everyone has their own strategy or thoughts about how the game should be played. But in a competitive environment, everyone has agreed to play a certain way and play as a unit. And you just, frankly, will never get that experience in public matches. It just won't happen. (Participant 28. Player)

In addition to reaching the necessary high rank in the game to play with and against semi-professional players in ranked public games, casual players relied on current or former semi-professional players to teach them the teamwork, communication, and gameplay skills that are necessary for the competitive scene. Participant 26 (Player) discussed about how she only felt like she was improving when high ranked players she met in ranked public games started teaching her. This experience co-creates functional and emotional value as players are improving and happy that they are improving. It also co-creates social value as new friendships may form.

I had no idea that there was such a thing as a pro scene... so the first person that got me into a team, I think set me up... I was not good back then... He taught me how to act, how to think, how to play, how to try to improve. Very basic but he taught me way more knowledge than anything else probably in my entire Dota career. (Participant 3. Player.)

...most of the time I just grind it by myself. I don't think I was really ever improving... I eventually kept queuing into quite high ranked players, and from there on, they taught me how to play, they taught me new roles, they taught me new skill sets, and I felt really good... to be taught by higher [ranked] people. And then eventually got to the point that I was considered a high enough rank and I could actually join tournaments. (Participant 26. Player).

Due to the infancy of the industry, majority of players reported that they were ‘picked up’ by a top end player and brought into the competitive scene. Participant 13 (Caster) who was a former semi-professional player explained that knowing a top end player is vital regarding entering the competitive scene.

I got lucky personally... one person saw potential in me and literally changed me... it comes down to who your contacts are. Most of the top end players... go out of their way to try to help the lower [rank] players because we understand if they get better, we get better. It's a snowball effect, but it depends entirely on who you talk to first. And if they're a positive experience, you'll continue to grow. You probably get picked up by team... But if you don't know anyone, it's pretty much close to impossible. (Participant 13. Caster)

Since casual players rely so heavily on top end players for support in improving and entering the competitive scene, strategic support is crucial for not only the players but also for the ecosystem’s well-being. In order to integrate strategic support, actors need to exhibit the A4A characteristics, so they understand the necessity of this resource and become willing to and proactively reaching out and helping casual players. After entering the competitive scene, strategic support becomes a part of another essential resource integrated by players within the same team called team synergy.

4.3.2.3. Team Synergy

Team synergy was explored between players within the same team where these players have aligned goals and clearly communicated level of commitment that allows for effective strategic support and less interpersonal misbehaviours. This resource enhances functional and emotional value for all the players within the team. Functional value was co-created when the team demonstrates ‘synergy’ due to successful communication and strategic support. Participant 19 (Player) describes this synergy as “*whenever a team is just playing well together... the gameplay flows, the spell uses and everything is just working together*”. Emotional value is co-created as there is decreased chance of interpersonal misbehaviour between players and an increased possibility of winning games. However, a lack of team synergy was explored when players spoke about how a culture of short-term teams was prevalent within the scene. The participants explained that when players within a team experience interpersonal misbehaviour, even if it is only two players, the entire team was negatively impacted and ultimately disbanded. Participant 3 (Player) stated how these experiences are “heartbreaking”, therefore destroying emotional value, and how it feels like the time spent with the team has “gone to waste”, therefore destroying functional value.

I have probably been in over 20 teams and I'm a very positive, try every solution sort of guy, so personally, for me, just constantly being in situations where players can't put up with each other and then because one guy leaves, the entire team disbands, or the entire team just crumbles, and it feels like six months is literally just gone to waste. That stuff is heartbreaking to me. (Participant 3. Player)

Team synergy is an example of how it is not enough for only one or two actors to exhibit A4A characteristics and highlights the importance of all actors involved exhibiting these characteristics. If one player is not willing to engage with others or understand or adapt to the interests and needs of others, the whole team is negatively affected. This resource is

vital for a successful team; the lack of integration has significant consequences for the teams and players who are wanting to become a Tier 2 team (i.e., top 5 to 25 teams in the world) and enter the international scene. Participant 3 (Player) explains that players in the oceanic region can practice and scrim within the South-east Asia (SEA) region and become a Tier 2 team but firstly, they need to form teams and hold them for a decent amount of time, which they have been struggling with.

We could technically practice against the tier two teams, but to get into their practice area, we would have to form teams and hold teams for a decent amount of time. The majority of players struggle with that. It's been tried a few times, but teams generally crumble after a few months, which means we never get to the stage of actually being a tier two team. And a lot of that comes down to players aren't willing to. (Participant 3. Player)

In summary, team synergy is a vital resource that can be successfully integrated if all players within the team exhibit A4A characteristics. This resource has a significant impact on the players' teamwork abilities and their progression as a team into the international competitive scene. In addition, successful integration of team synergy limits the integration of interpersonal misbehaviour within the team which destroys value.

4.3.2.4. Interpersonal Misbehaviour

Interpersonal misbehaviour was identified as the main integrated resource that co-destroyed value and subsequently, the well-being of individuals and the collective. Interpersonal misbehaviour has been conceptualised as behaviours such as verbal abuse and physical aggression (Greer, 2015). This resource was previously identified by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) in professional sport, however, in an esports context, interpersonal misbehaviour is known as toxicity and is prevalent in all levels of gaming (casual, semi-professional, and professional) (Adinolf & Turkay, 2018) .

One example of interpersonal misbehaviour is, as mentioned previously, when players are unwilling to communicate and solve interpersonal issues with other players in the same team which has created a culture of short-term teams. In addition, some players will refuse to play with or be teamed with a player that they believe is of a lower skill level. Both occasions can co-destroy functional, emotional, and social value for all players in the team and ultimately, it can cause the team to disband. Functional value is co-destroyed as these players are unwilling to engage in the integration of value co-creating resources such as strategic support and team synergy. More specifically, Participant 3 (Player) described how players with a “big ego” would not attend matches and practices. When players are unwilling to engage, it can become frustrating which co-destroys emotional value, and result in players falling out with one another, which co-destroys social value.

You'll have a player with a huge ego that will just be like, “nah, you're not good enough for me. I refuse to team with you now” or you'll have players that just disagree on specific things which escalates... They won't turn up to matches, miss practice, things like that. And you have teams completely descending from that. (Participant 3. Player)

Another example of interpersonal misbehaviour is toxic in-game behaviour such as throwing, flaming, and tilting that was discussed by all players interviewed. Player 19 (Player) explained how some players, including themselves, will sometimes stop trying when a game appears to be lost. Participant 1 (Player) revealed that a common bad habit amongst players is blaming losses on one particular player and their skills. These behaviours co-destroyed functional and emotional value as the players are no longer working together and instead blaming others which causes frustration and unhappiness.

In a lost game or a game that appears lost, I and other players will sometimes stop trying. (Participant 19. Player)

One really bad habit that I've noticed is common amongst a lot of players is... they have lost in a game and they will just blame one guy for that loss and say, "this guy is responsible for the loss. If he played better, we would have won". (Participant 1. Player)

As stated before, toxicity is prevalent on levels of gaming; in a competitive setting, Participant 26 (Player) recounted an incident where a toxic player removed her from their team without notifying her which destroyed functional and emotional value. Functional value was destroyed as she could no longer play in the tournament and the incident destroyed emotional value to the point that she did not want to continue playing the season or the next season in fear that the same thing would happen again.

It makes me feel pretty bad. I don't want to play this season or the next upcoming season at all because I just thought, you know, maybe the same thing would happen (Participant 26. Player)

A similar situation happened with Participant 25 and while he was not removed from the team with the help of the tournament organiser, it did change his view on the community as a whole and made him question their shared purpose, therefore destroying community value.

...made me look at the community like "what are you and what are they even trying to accomplish?" ...if the community is going to be this way and some people in the community are doing things purely for satisfaction then they're obviously going to go nowhere. I honestly thought the community would grow not at all. (Participant 25. Player)

Even though these interpersonal misbehaviours are prevalent within the industry, players do not stand up against toxic behaviour. Participant 26 (Player) explained that it is due to fear of being targeted and there is even a level of acceptance since there is a lack of consequences that can be enforced.

During the time that's happening, they just stay quiet and let it happen... Mainly because I think if they call it out and that person's going to turn their attack onto them... they just rather not be involved... [toxic players] are the type of people you can't really change so, you can tell them it's wrong and stuff [but] at the end of the day, they going to stay the same.

(Participant 26. Player)

The lack of consequences for toxic behaviour have not only significantly affected other players within the scene negatively but also other roles and ultimately the ecosystem's well-being. Lack of consequences has caused cliques to form within the community where new players entering the competitive scene will also try to join the clique in fear of being targeted. With such a tight-knit community, rumours of being a bad player or false-accusations easily become widespread, destroying functional, emotional, and community value. Participant 25 (Player) stated that when players are rumoured to be 'bad', "*others would even jump on the bandwagon*", hold a negative view and be more critical about that player. This experience has caused Participant 25 sadness, increased their anxiety during games and made them play overly cautiously or second-guess their actions, which negatively affected his teamwork skills.

It definitely made me sad to where if I made a mistake, it would just compound, and I would just become more anxious not to make more mistakes and it just get worse. (Participant 25. Player)

The co-destruction of community value has significant consequences as the sense of belongingness drives actors to stay within the industry and integrate co-performance or co-responsibility. Participant 29 (Player) recounted a time where he was wrongfully accused and even when the accusation was proven to be false, he ultimately felt like he had to leave the scene and stopped playing the game entirely.

It got posted up on Reddit and... people were very, very upset about something that I had supposedly done, which I didn't actually do. And the organization that I was with at the time provided the evidence that would clear my name... But that had the opposite effect because everyone's like, "oh, it's a conspiracy" ...that was a very souring experience and that was right before I just stopped playing pretty much entirely because I was like, "oh, it's there's no hope". Once a mob has decided that you were guilty of something, it doesn't really matter if you were or weren't. (Participant 29. Player).

Participant 5 (Tournament Organiser) also shared a similar experience of feeling as if the community has betrayed him. While previously working within another esports scene, he made a decision against the players “*in the fairness of justice and equality*” as outlined in the tournament’s rules. As a result, the players hated him, and community value was destroyed to the point where Participant 5 was ready to quit the industry and move on.

For me, putting my heart and soul into that community, the majority of the players actually hated me because I just had made one decision against them... and it was so stupid. But that really hurts. You know, it's like people who your friends turn around and stab you in the back... I was just about to quit Esports at that point and I just moved on with my life. (Participant 5. Tournament Organiser)

Overall, players did not exhibit A4A characteristics which caused the integration of interpersonal misbehaviour. The actors who are displaying toxic behaviour are driven by individualistic motivations and are not aware of or do not care about how their behaviour affects others. They are also not willing to engage with others and adapt their behaviour to others’ interest and needs. This resource is another example of how all actors need to exhibit A4A characteristics. Even if most players are focusing on building the industry, if some players are toxic, it negatively affects the team they play in, wider player community, and actors of other roles.

In summary, business synergy, strategic support, and team synergy were identified to co-create value while interpersonal misbehaviour were identified to co-destroy value. These resources not only affect the actors who integrate them, but also directly affect actors of the same role, of other roles, and the ecosystem's well-being. Therefore, it is critical for all actors to exhibit A4A characteristics. The next section will discuss macro-level well-being.

4.3.3. Macro-level Well-being (Ecosystem Well-being)

The macro-level well-being refers to ecosystem well-being which is the viability of the ecosystem (Frow et al., 2019). In this research, this level of aggregation includes all actors in the Oceanic Dota 2 scene. From the data analysis, the importance of actors exhibiting A4A characteristics was also found as four value co-destroying resources were identified due to the lack of these characteristics. These resources include misaligned expectations, the lack of restorative resources, lack of consequences, and foot in the door. The lack of actors exhibiting A4A characteristics has created a culture of distrust between the different roles which further deters actors from engaging with others and letting go of individualistic motivations.

4.3.3.1. Misaligned Expectations

The data shows that there are misaligned expectations between the different roles caused by a lack of communication. Tournament organisers have discussed past experiences where teams have decided not to attend the LAN semi-finals and finals which destroyed their functional and emotional value. Functional value was destroyed due to the need of reorganising tournament content and finding a replacement team in such a short notice while emotional value was destroyed due to the significant increase of stress.

Almost seven or eight days prior to that grand finals event when we actually found out that unfortunately, even though, it has been organized for the whole season, [a team] who were meant to be going up to these finals and playing live on stage, weren't able to make it. So that was definitely a low for us in terms of having to effectively reorganize our finals and then not actually being able to find a replacement for them... And it ended up even changing our finals to just a two team grand finals, which is definitely not what we wanted. (Participant 4. Tournament Organiser)

In addition, experiences like this also affected the event in terms of viewership and engagement. Participant 4 (Tournament Organiser) stated that they had to include filler content which made their event less engaging for viewers.

But I think at the end of the day, what ended up happening was that because we had slightly less content to put on the stage... our stage was probably a little bit less engaging than what it really should have been for the weekend... And then had to find some kind of filler content for the other day, which means that there's less stuff happening, and I think in general, that area of the event, at least a lot less engaging of an experience. (Participant 4. Tournament Organiser)

However, players have spoken about how LANs were sometimes “not worth” attending since they cannot afford the additional financial sacrifice of paying for flights and accommodation, which would have destroyed functional and emotional value.

It can be sometimes like a third or even half the money you're going to make is lost, just paying for flights and accommodation. (Participant 22. Player).

Some of the tournaments I've been in the past have been a little bit poorly organized, for example, some of them did not provide free plane tickets, so we had to pay out of pocket. And the irony of it is, unless you place first, you're basically making no money. So, we're literally just going there for the experience and paying out of pocket, which isn't always the best thing to come out of it. (Participant 2. Player)

As previously explained, most participants exhibited the A4A characteristic, knowledge management, so they understand that a successful esports industry will provide

more resources. However, in this experience, the actors did not exhibit the A4A characteristic of subjective awareness of the context where actors need to actively seek to understand the perspectives of other actors such as their interests and needs. Some players cannot afford the financial sacrifice of attending the tournament finals while tournament organisers thought that the players did not value the opportunity and were taking the easy method of making money. Even if the actors were willing to engage with each other, if they do not understand other actors' perspectives, it is incredibly difficult for them to exhibit the A4A characteristic adaptability which describes actors proactively adapting their own behaviour and tolerating changes.

For online matches, players have been reported by players and tournament organisers to not show up for scheduled games or reschedule at the last minute, destroying functional and emotional value. For the players who did not attend the game, value was potentially created for them as they are spending time on other commitments. For the other players, functional value was destroyed due to the time wasted waiting and time spent finding a substitute on a short notice, while emotional value was destroyed because it can be annoying and frustrating. For tournament organisers, functional value was destroyed because they will have to organise a replacement team or organise content to delay the start of the broadcast; emotional value was destroyed to increase stress.

People just don't show up. Sometimes it can get really annoying because you end up wasting a lot of time on people. (Participant 22. Player)

It happens once every two weeks. It does happen quite a lot and it does stress me. I'm not going to lie. It does stress me out a lot because when they don't give you enough notice and you only have like say ten minutes to sort it out... I do freak out a little bit. (Participant 7. Tournament Organiser)

Just like the LANs, players not attending matches also affects viewership and engagement which is essential to building the industry. Participant 12 (Caster) and Participant 8 (Tournament Organiser) both explained how changing content (i.e., which teams are competing) on a short notice destroys consistency.

To tell everyone, especially from a consistency standpoint, we're casting these three nights every week and, they're the nights we want our viewers in, we want everyone watching. And then to have someone be like, "I can't". It's like "we told you two weeks ago that this was happening"... where's the responsibility? You shouldn't be like lastminute flaking out on things. I think happens reasonably often in lower semi-professional level, where for some reason people think it's more acceptable. But it's the opposite, if you want to get to that next point, you should never be missing games (Participant 12. Caster).

These matches have been advertised and listed on social media. You can't just not show up because that destroys the consistency of the viewer base. (Participant 8. Tournament Organiser)

In these types of experiences, the players who do not show up to games are not exhibiting A4A characteristics; they are not focusing on how a successful industry will provide them with more resources. Ultimately, they are not aware of or do not care about how their actions affect the other actors and the ecosystem's well-being. This hinders them from being willing to engage with others, understand their perspective and adapt their behaviour accordingly.

Team organisation owners have discussed experiences where players had unrealistic expectations about the support they should receive. These expectations stem from the international scene where players are supported in additional ways than what the current semi-professional scene in the Oceanic region can offer. Participant 6 (Team Owner) had a previous experience where the players expected "*lots of money... almost 25 percent of the [organisation's] annual revenue... as a lump sum*". Participant 7 (Tournament Organiser)

recounted an incident where a team owner was unsatisfied with the support that they had previously agreed to. These experiences co-destroyed functional and emotional value. Functional value was destroyed as team owners and tournament organisers would either have to compromise or find other players/teams. Emotional value was co-destroyed as these experiences are “*very shocking*” and actors may be verbally assaulted when in discussions, which Participant 7 experienced.

There was one instance last year where a team, they were supposed to fly to a LAN, but they didn't agree with how much they had to fund flying to New Zealand. But however, I have told this particular org owner that they've signed the agreement and we can only provide you an X amount of money. They weren't happy with it... They came back to me with a very strongly worded email with calling me names and saying all of that personally, attacking me, saying that I was pathetic and whatnot. It was very weird... It was just very shocking to me
(Participant 7. Tournament Organiser)

In these experiences, those demanding beyond what others can provide did not exhibit any A4A characteristics; they did not focus on working towards the success of the industry, adapt their behaviour to the interest and needs of others, and were not willing to engage with others to come to an agreement.

Another example of misaligned expectations is when both team organisation owners and tournament organisers have said that players are unwilling to sacrifice for anyone other than themselves even if it helped the growth of the ecosystem. Participant 9 (Team Owner) recognises that players constantly make sacrifices, however, they are “*doing it in the wrong way and it's not working and hasn't been working*”. Even those players know they are sacrificing in the wrong way, “*they're not willing to change*” because players feel like they are sacrificing for someone other than themselves. Participant 9 sums up the unwillingness to engage and adapt their behaviour as a result of “*a huge lack of trust within the industry*”

across the board”. Participant 1 (Player) stated that players are solely focused on playing the game, competing and earning prize pool which means they are not exhibiting any A4A characteristics.

But it does really come down to the lack of willingness to sacrifice and push forward in a certain way, like take a certain direction, step out of the box a little bit. [Players] do sacrifice on a constant basis... they're just doing it in the wrong way and they know they're doing it the wrong way because it's not working and hasn't been working. But they're not willing to change... because it's what they know and they're not willing to sacrifice a different way because then they feel like they're sacrificing for someone else... You give them a pathway. You say, “you can sacrifice for this. This is the plan. this is where we're going to go”. And then they go, “Oh, but now I'm sacrificing for you”. And that is a huge lack of trust within in the industry across the board. (Participant 9. Team Owner)

This lack of willingness to sacrifice by players hinders the industry from growing and moving forward; team organisations and tournament organisers are looking towards players to build their own brands as content creators to help market the teams, tournaments, and themselves to the casual player base. Participant 4 (Tournament Organiser) explained that this is the strategy has helped build the scene for other esports titles in the oceanic region and in the international scene. Players can use the same strategy to build the industry for Dota 2.

They [Players] just need to be a little bit more vocal about what they're doing. You look at some of the really top-tier games that are operating in Australia at the moment and the one thing that they all have in common is that they all have influencers. They all have really well-known community figures who have tens of thousands of followers and are based in Australia; and that creates a lot of value throughout the rest of the ecosystem, a lot of value for brands, a lot of value for Tournament organisers, more viewership. And that's at the end of the day, what helps create a sustainable ecosystem for the game... We're really quite lacking in people who are Australian content creators [for this game]. (Participant 4. Tournament Organiser).

In summary, due to the lack of communication between actors within the ecosystem, there are misaligned expectations that co-destroy values and hinder the Dota 2 scene from growing.

4.3.3.2. Restorative Resources

Restorative resources described well-being enhanced through being present in an environment or physical setting (Friman et al., 2018; MacIntosh et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020). It was found that there was a lack of this resource between roles, especially between players and tournament organisers. When competing in LANs, players will bring their personal keyboard and mouse but rely on tournament organisers to provide them with equipment such as pcs, headphones, and monitors. Players have reported multiple experiences where the equipment that was provided significantly impacted their gameplay and teamwork negatively, and therefore destroying functional value:

Some tournaments think it's good to use curved monitors and I know zero players who like curved monitors. They're very bad. They're disorienting because you're not used to it. It's really weird. And monitors are a big deal. These curved monitors gave us headaches... it really throws you off... It's very distracting. (Participant 22. Player)

It's actually a huge deal. You just have this buzzing in your ear and... you miss [hearing] your teammates a lot. There's a lot of times where it's like, "why didn't you do this?" and [it's because] "I actually didn't hear". And aside from the gameplay, it's just so annoying having all this background noise and all the stuff you never would hear normally just in your ear. (Participant 30. Player)

In addition to equipment issues, players have also experienced internet and pc issues which have caused delays of various lengths of time. While some players are not bothered by delays, it can cause other players an increased amount of stress which destroys emotional value. These delays also destroy functional and emotional value for Casters because of their

agreed pay rate. Participant 16 explained that they are not paid for extra hours of delays which can get really annoying.

That's where we start to get really annoyed as well, because we're not getting paid for these extra a couple of hours that we're sitting around and we just want to make sure that everybody else is enjoying it but, unfortunately, those delays are just on my own time. (Participant 16. Caster).

In this experience, tournament organisers did not exhibit the A4A characteristic of subject awareness of the context and adaptability; they did not understand and/or proactively adapt to the interest and needs of others which could have stemmed from their lack of willingness to engage. In summary, a lack of restorative resources was found in the data which co-destroyed value for not only players but also casters.

4.3.3.3. Lack of Consequences

A significantly important theme that emerged from the data described how there is a lack of consequences for misbehaviours conducted by all roles. As mentioned previously, interpersonal misbehaviour by players negatively affected the well-being of other players, however, other forms of toxicity also affect tournament organisers and team organisations. While banter between players is accepted, general toxicity such as all-chatting (i.e., an in-game function that allows all players to message each other) and the use of sexist, racist, and misogynistic language by players directly affect the team organisations that the player is signed with, where they may lose the support of current sponsors and future sponsorship opportunities. This destroys their functional value as team owners and players heavily rely on sponsorship resources which would also destroy emotional value with increased stress and sadness.

If that specific player or team that player was on had some sponsors, they probably wouldn't want to be associated with that player. This is not how you would get sponsored. Sponsors want to stay away from this kind of thing because obviously they don't want to be attached to people saying those kinds of things (Participant 29. Player)

While team organisation owners are responsible for enforcing consequences on their players, but it is difficult for them to do so for players from the other team; this responsibility relies on the other team owner and the tournament organiser.

I can't go and speak to someone from another organization and say, "look, you need to keep your players in line. This is not acceptable." I can't organize that. (Participant 9. Team Owner)

While tournament organisers have rules and regulations in place and enforce consequences on these players, the behaviour continues within the scene.

A couple of players were threatened with straight up bans from the entire and they still did those kind of things. (Participant 29. Player)

Due to the small player pool, players hold a lot of power over the scene as tournament organisers rely on players choosing to participate in their tournament. This makes it difficult for tournament organisers and team organisation owners to enforce serious consequences. Participant 22 (Player) explained how there are players who have participated in the Dota 2 scene for a long time and therefore are so ingrained in the scene that if they decide not to play a tournament, other players will follow which can "kill the tournament pretty fast".

Players have a little bit too much power because there's certain players, they [tournament organisers] know that if they ban them, people are going to be really upset. There's seven or eight players in the scene that are so old and so ingrained in the scene that if they're gone from a tournament probably other people will follow and that can kill your tournament pretty fast. (Participant 22. Player)

The players who have been on the scene for a couple of years are usually the ones picking up new players so tournament organisers can't pick up new players themselves. (Participant 29. Player)

In addition, the consequences vary from different team organisation owners and tournament organisers, and since there is no consistency, the players are unaffected; for example, if they are banned from playing in a tournament, they can play in another.

When the T.Os come in and give them a consequence, they think the T.O is at fault, not them, because the orgs don't care and the other players don't care. Even if a player is being rude to and abusing and being racist, [if he is good] he'll still find a team. There's no actual physical consequences for them except maybe a suspension from a from T.O and there's still more other tournaments he can play on. that he has a plan. The community doesn't hold each other to account and a fair few orgs don't hold their players to account. (Participant 5. Tournament Organiser)

Another example of the lack of consequences within the industry was found within the data when both team organisations and players have reported that the contracts signed with each other are not legally binding so there were no legal consequences for breaking contracts. Players discussed that team organisation owners have promised support for them such as peripherals and new equipment but sometimes never delivered. This destroyed their functional value especially if they needed the equipment that was promised to practice and compete, and their emotional value as it creates a distrust between the two roles.

I've had Orgs that have like promised gear. We've signed contracts that offer us gear, offer us pay off for a set period of time. You hit that period of time and they're just like, "nah, it's not happening". And there's nothing you can do about that because none of us have the money to take it legal. It's not even worth taking it legal. (Participant 3. Player)

Team organisation owners discussed how players would join other organisations without giving them notice. This destroyed their functional value as they have invested time and money into the players or team through paying support such as flights, jerseys, and

equipment; and they will have to find a new team and make these investments again. It also destroys their emotional value as the trust built between these actors was broken.

They don't live up to their contracts. They're very happy to jump teams and just ignore contract and their opinion on it is, "what are you going to do" ... I mean, there's so many different ways that that these contracts haven't been used up to. (Participant 9. Team Owner).

Both casters and players have discussed how they have experienced tournament organisers not paying wages or prize pools. This destroyed functional value as they must spend the time contacting the tournament organiser to chase up the money. More importantly, majority of players and casters rely on this money for everyday life, so it also causes them a lot of stress, therefore destroying emotional value.

So you played six weeks of tournament, you get to the end. There are two, three thousand dollars as a team and they just never pay it... There's almost no way to get your money back from any situation like that. (Participant 3. Player)

While casters are technically employed by the tournament organiser, on some occasions there is no contract involved so no legal actions can be taken.

What do I do? I haven't signed a contract. Or if I have, it's probably just a piece of paper some 20-year-old wrote up that has no legal binding. There's just nothing you can do. A lot of the time these tournaments that pop up, do one and then disappear. (Participant 14. Caster)

In these experiences, actors are driven by personal motivations and not exhibiting any A4A characteristics which co-creates value for themselves but are co-destroying value for others and negatively affecting ecosystem well-being.

4.3.3.4. Foot in the Door

Another theme that significantly affects the ecosystem is “foot in the door” which describes actors who will volunteer or work for the bare minimum in order to get a chance to make a career within the industry. While physical sacrifice is experienced to some extent by all actors, foot in the door describes when organisations take advantage of the current state of industry and the passion people have for the industry. An example of this was previously mentioned in business synergy where many casters have been undercut by tournament organisers and felt trapped because they only had two options: accepting the low pay or not get the opportunity to work at all. This has become widely accepted and destroys functional and emotional for anyone who wishes to work in the industry.

The biggest thing for me is for basically the first year and a half, I was doing things and not getting paid all too much and just being like, “yeah, this is fine” because, you know, I had the same idea, “you're getting in the Esports scene. You just want to do it for the passion. You just want to be there to get your foot in the door”. (Participant 16. Caster)

Functional value was destroyed since the actor is sacrificing a lot of their time and effort and receives little to no payment. Emotional value was destroyed as this increases financial stress, general stress, and makes actors feel like they have no other options to get into the industry. Foot in the door overall decreases ecosystem well-being as “doing it for the passion” without payment has become an industry culture and expecting actors to sacrifice without any gain is detrimental to their well-being.

In summary, misaligned expectations, lack of consequences, foot in the door, and the lack of restorative resources were identified to co-destroy value for various actors within the ecosystem. In addition, the lack of communication and the lack of actors exhibiting A4A

characteristics has caused distrust between different roles which ultimately deters them from engaging with and making sacrifices for others, further negatively affecting ecosystem well-being.

4.4. Relationship between Micro- Meso- and Macro-level

Within the data, it was found that the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of aggregation are interconnected and resource integration on any level can have a direct effect on the other levels. Integration of resources always affects individual well-being of the actors involved and the ecosystem's well-being to some extent; on some occasions, it even affects those who are not involved.

For example, as previously mentioned, there is a culture of short-term teams caused by interpersonal misbehaviour. The integration of interpersonal misbehaviour of two players within the same team would co-destroy functional, emotional, and social value for those two players (i.e., micro-level aggregation). It would also co-destroy functional and emotional value for the other players within the team and ultimately cause the team to disband.

Participant 3 (Player) explained that for *“majority of good teams, if one person leaves, the entire team crashes. The problem is almost never fixed. They almost never just replace that one player”*. Due to the prevalence of this type of situation, it has created a culture within the scene that affects all players (i.e., the meso-level aggregation). This culture also affects tournament organiser, team organisations, and the stability of the ecosystem (i.e., macro-level aggregation). Not only are the players aware of the difficulties of competing on an international level caused by short term teams, but team organisation owners also discussed this issue.

The biggest problem right now is, if we go overseas and we've got a team that hasn't stuck together or hasn't put in the commitment, we can't really compete on an international level. (Participant 9. Team Owner)

For tournament organisers, it is difficult for them to schedule and market leagues because of teams disbanding, which ultimately affected viewership.

But at the end of the day, unfortunately, that's just the realities of trying to continue a league story where, you know, we've been building up a story for the whole season on all of our broadcasts. And if we kind of put a break to long between the last match, the regular season, the finals and. You know, by the time the finals have rolled around, teams have just split up and don't even want to play together in the same space. (Participant 4. Tournament Organiser)

Another example of the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels was also previously mentioned where due to interpersonal misbehaviour, a toxic clique exists within the community where players are described as “very immature” and disrespectful to other actors. While value is co-created for the players integrating interpersonal misbehaviour, value is co-destroyed for actors on the meso-level and macro-level. After experiencing separate interpersonal misbehaviour incidences, Participant 26 (Player) did not want to continue participating in the current or the next season of the league; Participant 29 (Player) left the Dota 2 scene and stopped playing the game entirely; Participant 5 (Tournament Organiser) was ready to quit the industry. Since the esports ecosystem is reliant on actors working together cooperatively and competitively to progress (Vukelic & Jørgensen, 2018), the integration of interpersonal misbehaviour also has significant negative effects on the ecosystem's well-being if it is causing essential actors such as players and tournament organisations are leave the scene. In addition, as previously mentioned, casual players rely heavily on current and former semi-professional players to teach them the skills necessary for and introduce them into the competitive scene. However, toxic players refuse to play with or

be teamed with players they think are of a lower skills level. This means that fewer casual players are introduced to the scene and as more semi-professional players retire, the competitive scene may potentially die out. The negative effects of a small player pool are currently being experienced by the scene. Tournament organisers are incredibly reliant on the current small player pool that they find difficulty punishing toxic players in fear of these players leaving the tournament and “*probably other people will follow*” (Participant 22. Player), consequently “killing” their tournament.

In both examples, the importance of all actors exhibiting A4A characteristics is highlighted. Even if one or two players within a team or a few toxic players within the Oceanic region community are not exhibiting these characteristics, it can affect all the other actors on the meso, and macro-level, and have significant negative impacts on the viability of the industry.

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, two levels of well-being (individual and collective) and three levels of aggregation (micro-, meso, and macro-) were identified within the data. The individual well-being refers to the micro-level of aggregation within a service ecosystem while well-being refers to eudaimonic and hedonic well-being; in which, eudaimonic well-being refers to positive psychological functioning and human development achieved by seeking to fulfil one’s potential and functioning at an optimal level (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012) while hedonic well-being refers to the pursuit of pleasure and happiness (L. Anderson et al., 2013; Cooke et al., 2016; Dodge et al., 2012; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Collective well-being encompasses both the meso- and macro-levels of aggregation within a service ecosystem. The meso-level specifically refers to actors of the same role with

well-being defined as how optimal these actors function together as a community. The macro-level refers to service ecosystem well-being (i.e., viability of the ecosystem) and includes all actors within the same ecosystem. Through the integration of resources, transformative values (i.e. values that enhance or destroy well-being) from Zainuddin et al. (2017) consumption value theory framework were co-created and/or co-destroyed. For micro-level well-being, co-performance and co-responsibility were identified as critical resources that had a doubled-edged-sword effect when integrated, co-creating and co-destroying value at the same time. Social support was also identified on this level that co-creates value, corroborating existing literature (e.g., Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Friman et al., 2018). For collective well-being, resources such as business synergy, strategic support, and team support co-created value while interpersonal misbehaviour co-destroyed value on the meso-level. Resources such as misaligned expectations, lack of restorative resources, lack of consequences and foot in the door co-destroyed value on the macro-level. The importance of actors exhibiting the A4A characteristics conceptualised by Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) were found as those who exhibited these characteristics not only created value for themselves but also for actors of the same role, of different roles, and positively affect ecosystem well-being. On the other hand, actors who did not exhibit these characteristics either created value for the movies while destroying value for others, or co-destroyed value for everyone and negatively impacted the ecosystem's well-being. Finally, due to the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels that was identified, the importance of all actors exhibiting A4A characteristics was highlighted. The next chapter will present the conclusion of the thesis and will discuss the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and areas for future research.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This chapter will summarise the findings that address the research aims developed in Chapter Two, Literature Review, and discuss the theoretical contributions and managerial implications, and present the limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1. Addressing Research Aims

5.1.1. Research Aim One

The first research aims of this study was to define collective well-being and the dimensions that represent these values in esports. The data analysis found that collective well-being incorporated both meso- and macro-level aggregation of the service ecosystem. The meso-level refers to actors of the same role within the ecosystem (e.g., all players) where well-being is the optimal functioning of these actors. The macro-level refers to all actors within the ecosystem where well-being describes service ecosystem well-being conceptualised by Frow et al. (2019). Service ecosystem well-being refers to a viable ecosystem that is stable, resilient, demonstrates potential for further resource integration and progressively supports well-being of the actors (Frow et al., 2019). This corroborates previous literature where Gardiazabal and Bianchi (2021) definition of ecosystem well-being refers to optimal functioning to maintain its relevancy, survival, resiliency and evolution. On the other hand, Tuzovic et al. (2021) defined collective well-being as the sum of the well-being of individuals who belong to a certain community. This definition is valid in the context of hospitality with a consumer focus (Tuzovic et al., 2021) and highlights the interconnectedness of the individual and collective level. However, when examining multiple actors of different roles, the definition forgoes considering the vital aspect of how optimal

those actors within the role (e.g., all players) function together. If actors do not function as their role in the community, then collective well-being is destroyed.

To investigate the value dimensions that represent well-being in esports, this research utilised the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017). Consistent with the framework, five value dimensions were identified from the findings: functional, emotional, community, social, and epistemic.

Functional value was one of the most frequently discussed value where participants' experiences and interactions with others had improved or hindered their ability to complete their duties and their performance (Zainuddin et al., 2017), which affected their well-being. For example, tournament organisers who are recognised and praised for their work by others are more willing to continue working. Emotional value was the other most frequently discussed value which refers to the various affective states, including both positive and negative (Zainuddin et al., 2017). For example, casters who are given the ultimatum from tournament organisers to work for a low pay or not work at all felt anxious, anger, and trapped. Community value, while not one that was frequently discussed, was a crucial value that mainly impacted the actor's sense of community with fellow actors regardless of their roles. For example, casters who have formed an unofficial union felt an increase of belongingness with other casters due to the increase of support amongst them. The destruction of community value has significant effects on well-being as actors felt that they were no longer supported by or belonged within the community which led to actors leaving or being prepared to leave the industry altogether. Social value refers to the association with specific social groups (Zainuddin et al., 2017). While this value was frequently discussed by participants, the data found that the effects were mostly on individual well-being. For

example, the relationship of casters has sometimes extended beyond the professional sense to friendship outside of work. Notably, social value is very similar to community value.

However, while social value focuses on the dyadic relationship, personal or professional, between two actors and the benefits gained from the relationship, community value focuses on the actor's own sense of belongingness within the community. Epistemic value refers to the experience of novelty with or excitement in their activity (Zainuddin et al., 2017). For example, due to frequent game patches, the game remains exciting and refreshing for the players. This value was the least mentioned and only briefly discussed by the participants.

5.1.2. Research Aim Two

Defining collective well-being and the dimensions that represent the value does not shed light on the specific resources that are integrated for co-creation and co-destruction process. The second aim of this research was to understand the resources integrated by various actors within the industry and how these integrated resources can lead to the co-creation and/or co-destruction of collective well-being within an A4A relationship. Eight resources were identified within the findings that co-created or co-destroyed value when integrated: four on the meso-level and four on the macro-level. It was also found that it is crucial for actors to exhibit the A4A characteristics as when they do, value was co-created for those integrating the resources, for others and positively affected the ecosystem well-being. On the other hand, actors who do not exhibit all these characteristics either (1) co-created value for themselves while destroying value for others and negatively affecting the ecosystem well-being or (2) co-destroyed value for themselves, for others, and subsequently negatively affected ecosystem well-being. In addition, consistent with extant literature, data analysis found that the individual and collective level are interconnected where resource integration on any level has a direct effect on the other levels.

5.1.2.1. Resource Integration on the Meso-level

Four resources were identified within the findings that co-created or co-destroyed value when integrated on the meso-level: business synergy, strategic support, team synergy, and interpersonal misbehaviour.

Business synergy is similar to informational support, which is a dimension of social support, identified by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) and Parkinson et al. (2019). However, in some experiences, it also describes actors compromising for other actors in addition to sharing knowledge, advice, and guidance. For tournament organisers, they reported that they wanted clearer communication with each other to avoid clashes in tournament scheduling. Integrating this resource co-creates functional value. For casters, business synergy was integrated in the form of an unofficial union to combat against tournament organisers under cutting casting payments or convincing casters to work for free. This resource enhanced functional, emotional, and community value. For team organisation owners, participants reported that while some team organisation owners are willing to share knowledge, advice and guidance, others are not. Successful integration of business synergy in this experience co-creates functional value.

Successful cooperation between players provided a dimension of social support identified as strategic support. This resource was previously identified by Freeman and Wohn (2017) describing a collaborative dynamic in gaming that provides support in terms of knowledge gathering and sharing, player decision-making, leadership, and failure. However, the resource had not been explored further in both a gaming and esports context. The data analysis found that this resource describes a combination of informational support and companionship support (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019) in a gaming and

esports context that co-creates functional and sometimes emotional value. For example, casual players relied on top-end players to teach them how to play Dota competitively since casual and competitive gameplay are significantly different. Players have stated that they would have never learnt how to play competitive Dota if they were not taught by those already in the scene. Also, casual players also heavily relied on top-end players to introduce them into the semi-professional community. Strategic support was also evident within a team setting where players would analyse gameplay, discuss new strategies, and share losses.

Team synergy co-created value when there is successful cooperation between players within the same team. This resource is a combination of several dimensions of social support: strategic support (Freeman & Wohn, 2017), companionship (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019), and emotional support (Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019). More specifically, this resource describes aligned goals and clearly communicated level of commitment between players that allows for effective strategic support and less interpersonal misbehaviour which enhances functional and emotional value for the whole team. The lack of team synergy was discussed where interpersonal misbehaviour between few team members will affect the entire team, co-destroying functional and emotional value. In addition, the lack of this resource has hindered teams and players from becoming a Tier 2 team and entering the international scene.

Interpersonal misbehaviour was identified as the main integrated resource that co-destroyed value. This resource describes toxic behaviour between players that co-destroy functional, emotional, and community value. Toxic behaviour includes players avoiding other players who they believe are of a lower skill level, kicking players off teams without previous discussion or consent, and bullying (i.e., spreading rumours). This resource has caused teams

to disband, players to stop playing the game and leave the competitive scene. Interpersonal misbehaviour was explored in previous literature by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) which described behaviour such as verbal abuse and physical aggression. This resource not only has significant negative impact on individuals, but also is the cause of several co-destruction resources that impact ecosystem well-being.

5.1.2.2. Resource Integration on the Macro-level

Four resources were identified within the findings that co-created or co-destroyed value on the macro-level, affecting ecosystem well-being: misaligned expectations, restorative resources, lack of consequences, foot in the door.

The data shows that there are misaligned expectations between the different roles caused by a lack of communication. For example, in the event of players not attending LAN semi-finals and finals to avoid financial sacrifice, tournament organisers thought that the players did not value the opportunity and were taking the easy method of making money. In this experience, functional and emotional value was co-destroyed for tournament organisers. In another example, tournament organisers, team organisations and casters described how players are unwilling to sacrifice which hinders the industry from growing and moving forward. Players, on the other hand, are solely focused on playing the game. In these situations, the players are not exhibiting A4A characteristics; they either do not know or care about the interests and needs of other actors, instead focusing on personal motivations.

Restorative resources were previously identified in literature by Mulcahy and Luck (2020) to describe well-being enhanced through being present in an environment or physical setting. Within the data, it was found that there was a lack of this resource especially between players and tournament organisers. Players have reported multiple experiences where the

equipment that was provided significantly impacted their gameplay and teamwork negatively, and therefore destroying functional value. Even though players do provide feedback to tournament organisers about equipment, they sometimes are not taken seriously.

Lack of consequences was identified as a resource that facilitates the integration of interpersonal misbehavior, which not only negatively affects other players but also tournament organizations and team organizations as they may lose current and future sponsorship opportunities. While the industry relies on team organizations and tournament organizers to enforce consequences, the lack of and mostly inconsistent consequences across the scene have minimal effect on toxic players. In addition, lack of consequences extends to a legal context where contracts between team organizations and players are not legally binding the majority of the time so both roles have experienced the other breaking contracts. Also, players and casters also have experienced tournament organizers not paying wages or prize pool with no consequences. These experiences resulted in the co-destruction of functional, social, emotional, and community value.

Foot in the door was a theme identified that significantly affected the ecosystem. This resource describes the industry culture where organizations take advantage of the passion people have for the industry and require or expect them to volunteer or work for the bare minimum to get a chance to make a career within the industry. This culture may co-created value for those organisations however, functional and emotional value were co-destroyed for the other actors that is detrimental to their well-being. Due to the interconnectedness of individual and collective well-being, those organisations may enhance their individual well-being short term, however, individual well-being “cannot be achieved in the long term by

depleting the well-being of the ecosystem that sustains it” (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021, p. 4).

5.1.2.3. Interconnectedness of Individual and Collective Well-being

As identified within existing literature, this study found that individual and collective well-being are interconnected. The integration of resources always affects individual well-being of the actors involved; on some occasions, it affects those who are not involved; and it always affects ecosystem well-being to some extent. Individual and collective well-being are symbiotic and in the long term, individual well-being cannot be supported if it depletes the well-being of the ecosystem. For example, as previously discussed, the industry relies on top-end players to teach and pick up casual players. However, some toxic players were not willing to do so due to personal motivations which will cause the competitive scene to have a small player pool that will limit the growth of the industry in terms of participation in tournaments and team organisations. As players retire from the competitive scene, the scene will eventually die out if no new players are brought in. This interconnectedness between individual and collective well-being highlights the importance of all actors exhibiting A4A characteristics. Even if one actor does not exhibit these characteristics, their integration of resources will negatively affect others and the ecosystem’s well-being.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

This research has made six theoretical contributions: Firstly, this research responds to the call for research investigating the collective level (L. Anderson & Ostrom, 2015; L. Anderson et al., 2013) which was stated to be “the most pressing area for TSR” (Ostrom et al., 2010, p. 3). TSR has typically focused on the dyadic relationship between consumers and service entities, however, due to esports being a multi-actor ecosystem, this research extends

the focus to the well-being of multiple actors by employing Polese's (2017) A4A relationship framework. Ultimately, this research contributed to a more in-depth understanding of the co-creation and co-destruction of collective well-being. In addition, this research contributed to TSR along with service ecosystem well-being literature by examining the relationship between the micro-, meso-, and macro- well-being levels and between individual and collective well-being, therefore providing a more holistic perspective. The findings confirmed that these levels are interconnected and found that value co-creation/co-destruction on one level can affect the other levels.

Secondly, from the findings, a definition for collective well-being was proposed which encapsulates the concept of collective well-being from a more holistic perspective. Collective well-being is defined as "optimal functionality of actors within a community with a shared goal/purpose" since the collective level encompasses both the meso- and macro-levels of aggregation. The level of cooperation between actors in their daily tasks not only impacts the individual well-being of those integrating the resources but also those within the same role (e.g., all players). In addition, if the actor engages the A4A relationship successfully, it will have a positive impact on the wider community, the ecosystem's well-being.

Thirdly, this research represents a first step in investigating value co-creation and co-destruction in the esports context in addition to examining well-being beyond the current literature's focus on players and athletes (Baltezarević & Baltezarević, 2019; Chung et al., 2019; DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al., 2019; Formosa et al., 2020; Kocadağ, 2020; Leis & Lautenbach, 2020; Poulus et al., 2020; Sousa et al., 2020). In addition, this research is the first to explore well-being in esports with the industry ecosystem as a unit of analysis. By

employing the A4A relationship framework, the findings indicated that individual and collective well-being are interconnected and resource integration by actors on one level of aggregation affects the other levels and actors. This highlights the importance of a more holistic understanding of value co-creation and co-destruction of actors beyond players and athletes.

Fourthly, this research is the first to apply the A4A relationship framework (Polese et al., 2018) and the A4A actor characteristics (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017) to TSR. This study also responds to the call for research from Polese, Pels, et al. (2017) to provide empirical evidence to support the framework by confirming the characteristics of the A4A relationship and the relationship's correlation with successful and viable service exchanges. The findings have provided insights into the necessity of actors exhibiting A4A characteristics in relation to successful interaction within the ecosystem that impacts the viability of the ecosystem. The findings also identified the importance of all actors exhibiting these characteristics as the integration of resources by one actor who does not exhibit these characteristics can affect the well-being of others and the ecosystem. In addition, this research extended the framework to examine value co-destruction as well value co-creation in order to gain a fuller and more realistic understanding of value processes (Beirão et al., 2017).

Fifthly, this study contributed to business ecosystem literature by examining the 'health' of the esports industry in terms of eudaimonic and hedonic well-being instead of the existing measurement of long-term financial well-being and the long-term strength of network relations (den Hartigh et al., 2006; Hyrynsalmi & Mäntymäki, 2018). It was found that eudaimonic and hedonic well-being have direct influences on the long-term viability of an ecosystem. Due to the interconnectedness of individual and collective well-being,

individual well-being cannot deplete the well-being of the ecosystem that sustains it and vice versa.

Finally, this research contributes to the TSR and TSSR literature by identifying several new resources that impacts individual and collective well-being. Co-responsibility was identified for actors other than players that also has the double-edged-sword effect. Business synergy and team synergy were identified as resources that co-created value. Short term teams, misaligned expectations, lack of consequences, and foot in the door were identified as resources that co-destroyed value. The findings of this study also supports existing TSR and TSSR literature by identifying previously established resources such as co-performance (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020), interpersonal misbehaviour (Mulcahy & Luck, 2020), restorative resources (Friman et al., 2018; MacIntosh et al., 2020; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020) and six dimensions of social support. The dimensions of social support include emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support/tangible assistance, informational support, companionship/network support, and strategic support (Beatson et al., 2020; Freeman & Wohn, 2017; Friman et al., 2018; Katz et al., 2019; Mulcahy & Luck, 2020; Parkinson et al., 2019; Virlée et al., 2020).

5.3. Managerial Implications

This research offers three key managerial contributions that may be of importance for the Oceanic Dota 2 esports industry. These contributions are firstly, adopt and focus on a shared intentionality as a community; secondly, create a direct communication channel between actors of the same role; and finally, create a direct communication channel between actors of different roles.

5.3.1. Adopt a shared intentionality focus as a community.

This research identified that it is crucial for all actors within the Oceanic Dota 2 esports scene to have shared intentionality and exhibit A4A characteristics: knowledge management, subjective awareness of the context, adaptability, and willingness to engage. This means that actors need to firstly, understand they are a part of a wider industry and that the success of the ecosystem have richer capabilities compare to what they can achieve on their own. Secondly, all actors need to understand that other actors have different interests and needs due to their roles; thirdly, adapt their behaviour and compromise with others; finally, actively integrate resources to co-create value for the shared purpose of ecosystem viability instead of individualistic drivers (Polese, Pels, et al., 2017). These will be discussed in further detail below.

It is important for all actors to have shared intentionality and be driven by ecosystem viability, even those who are considered to be competition to each other. For example, tournament organisers are technically competing with each other for player participation, viewership and sponsorship. However, as explained by the participants, tournament schedules that clash co-destroy functional value and have proven to be ‘deadly’ for the scene. It is better to coordinate and compromise and co-create value for everyone as a viable ecosystem has richer capabilities than those achievable through individual efforts.

Once all actors understand and exhibit those characteristics, they need to educate new actors that enter the ecosystem to ensure that shared intentionality is the constant focus and drive of resource integration. Each actor needs to take on the responsibility of educating those they have direct contact with. For example, team organisations should be responsible for educating new players that they sign while tournament organisers should be responsible for educating players that participate in their tournaments. The finding highlighted the fact that

even if one actor does not exhibit these characteristics, it will negatively affect others and the ecosystem's well-being. In addition, since the Oceanic Dota 2 scene does not have a governing body, like traditional sport, it is important to establish a committee of "keystone actors" who will hold the community accountable. There should be at least one keystone actor from each role who already exhibits the A4A characteristics respected within the industry. More importantly, while these keystone actors should coordinate with each other and lead and direct the community in positive value co-creating activities (Frow et al., 2019), the rest of the community will also need to hold each other accountable if value co-destruction resources are integrated. Integrating resources such as foot in the door has become an industry standard and while sacrifices are experienced to some extent by all actors due to the infancy of the industry, the community needs to eliminate practices that take advantage of actors or expect actors to sacrifice to a significant extent. Actors need to understand that individual well-being "cannot be achieved in the long term by depleting the well-being of the ecosystem that sustains it" and vice versa (Gardiazabal & Bianchi, 2021, p. 4). In order for actors to exhibit and maintain the A4A characteristics, a direct channel of communication needs to be open between actors of the same role and of different roles.

5.3.2. Create a direct communication channel between actors of the same role.

From the findings, some of the value co-destructive resources were caused by a lack of communication between actors. Therefore, a direct communication channel needs to be created between all actors of the same role to aid the integration of value co-creating resources. Casters have already created and benefited from direct communication amongst each other. Not only has it increased their functional, emotional, and community value, but it has also created an industry standard that will co-create these values for future actors within the casting role. Based on this, it can be accomplished and beneficial for all actors to do so as

well. Since actors are positioned all around the oceanic region, online methods need to be utilised such as creating a Discord server or a Facebook group. Team organisation owners can potentially use the communication channel to give and share advice, discuss, and align consequences for interpersonal misbehaviour. Tournament organisers can potentially use it to schedule tournaments, give and share advice, create, and align rules and consequences. Players can potentially use it to share information about opportunities and discuss methods of connecting with the casual player base. This direct channel of communication will aid actors in exhibiting the A4A characteristic by offering a method to proactively learn about and adapt to the interests and needs of others. In addition, it will aid actors in holding each other accountable if there are value co-destroying resource integrated. Not only is it beneficial for actors of the same role to have a direct channel of communication, but it is also beneficial for actors of different roles.

5.3.3. Create a direct communication channel between actors of different roles.

Much like actors of the same role, the data analysis found that actors of different roles also lack communication between each other which has caused misaligned expectations. Due to the large number of actors within each role, it is counter-productive to open a direct communication channel between all actors of all roles. However, a communication channel can be created between those “keystone actors” from each role. These actors who are already leading and directing the community can come together, discuss, and compromise (if necessary) about issues concerning the wider community. This can ensure that actors of different roles understand the interest and needs of others, do not have misaligned expectations, and can plan with shared intentionality of how to push forward the industry.

5.4. Limitations

The key limitation of this research is the contextual nature of the findings given that well-being is defined by the subjective evaluation from the perspective of the respondent relying on their own standards (Diener, 2009; Diener & Ryan, 2009). In addition, this research adopted the constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm which places an emphasis on understanding the subjective meaning of experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Krauss, 2005; Rahi, 2017). To manage this limitation, the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) was employed so that key theoretical insights may be transferable to other contexts. In addition, findings may be transferable to other esports titles depending on the state of the scene and the amount of control the game developers/publishers have over the scene. Recommendations for future research in this area have been detailed in the next section.

Another limitation is that only the perspectives of players, tournament organisers, team organisations, and casters has been analysed. Depending on how established the competitive scene is for different esports titles, there may be many additional roles that contribute to tournament and team organisations such as player manager, social media manager, broadcast team. Another actor/s that have significant impact on the growth of the industry is the game developer/publisher. Recommendations for future research in this area have been detailed in the next section.

This research utilised the snowball sampling technique which may present another limitation. It is to be mentioned that snowball sampling has been previously criticised for not producing samples that meet the criteria of random samples in the statistical sense. In addition, this technique is dependent on a selection bias (Parker, Scott, & Geddes, 2019).

However, due to the narrowly defined sample population, snowballing was deemed an appropriate sampling method.

The final limitation is the researcher bias when interviewing and interpreting the results from the data collection. However, the benefits of the researcher having previous experience within the esports industry and the Oceanic Dota scene outweighs the potential bias. The knowledge gained from a part of the industry and scene assisted with interpreting socially constructed meaning. Potential bias was managed through recording the interviews and through discussion of the codes and data with other researchers.

5.5. Future Research

There are several areas of future research indicated by this research. Firstly, replication of the study across other major esport titles in the oceanic region and internationally is needed due to the exploratory nature of this study. Depending on the state of the esport scene, there may be different resources that are integrated and a different significance in the effects of the value co-created and co-destroyed. In addition, this research provided initial empirical evidence supporting the A4A relationship framework and characteristics; future research should investigate the importance of this framework and characteristics in an esports scene that is more established in the oceanic region and internationally such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive. Secondly, replication of the study across other industries is needed also due to the exploratory nature of this study. In order to ascertain if the definition of collective well-being and the relationship between the three levels of ecosystem aggregation are contextual to the esports ecosystem, investigation should be conducted in other service ecosystems such as retail, healthcare, and sport. In addition, the relevance and importance of the A4A relationship framework and characteristics in another

context should also be investigated. Thirdly, future research should widen the perspective to include more actors that are essential in the esports industry such as the game developer/publisher and viewers. Depending on the esports titles, the game developer/publisher sometimes have significant control over how the scene operates, affecting a range of aspects such as how tournament organisers perform their daily tasks to the amount of job opportunities for casters. In those esports scenes, the game developer/publisher are a “keystone actor” as described in ecosystem well-being conceptualised by Frow et al. (2019) and the effects of this actor’s control should be examined. In addition, viewers, another essential actor of the esports ecosystem, are the end-consumer that the industry is pushing to satisfy, and their satisfaction and degree of consumption directly affects the viability of the industry. The well-being of viewers affected by the esports content that they consume and the effects that the consumption has on the industry’s viability should be investigated. Finally, while the consumption value theory framework of Zainuddin et al. (2017) was most aligned with the purpose of the research, other value typologies should be employed to compare the suitability and refine the understanding of value dimensions co-created and co-destroyed in esports.

5.6. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to define collective well-being and identify how it is co-created or co-destroyed. Chapter One identified the research problem and aims, Chapter Two explored the literature and identified theories used, and Chapter Three presented the research paradigm, design, procedure, before describing the method of data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presented the findings from the data and finally, Chapter Five discussed the findings in relation to previous literature, the theoretical contributions, and

managerial implications, and presented the limitations and suggestions for future research. Overall, this research has contributed to TSR and well-being literature by defining and providing a more holistic perspective of collective well-being of a multi-actor service ecosystem. It highlights the important managerial and theoretical implications in order to further knowledge, understandings and management of value co-creation and co-destruction within the esports industry.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Online participant information sheet and consent form

	PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT – Interview –
Collective Transformative Value Co-Creation and Co-Destruction in the Semi-Professional Australian Esports Ecosystem	
QUT Ethics Approval Number 2000000691	

Research team

Principal Researcher:	Miss Xin Ming (Stephanie) Chen	MPhil student
Associate Researchers:	Dr Edwina Luck	Principal Supervisor
	Dr Lisa Schuster	Associate Supervisor

**School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations, QUT Business School,
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)**

Why is the study being conducted?

This research project is being undertaken as part of Master of Philosophy degree for Stephanie Chen.

The purpose of this project is to examine shared wellbeing within the semi-professional Australian Defense of the Ancients 2 (DotA 2) esports scene and the resources used to support or destroy wellbeing. The aims of this study are firstly to define shared wellbeing, that is, define the shared benefit to everyone of participating in the Australian DotA 2 esports scene. Specifically, the research is focused on how different roles within the industry interact and affect the well-being of each other, and ultimately the wider industry. Second, this research will understand the resources, such as knowledge and technologies, used by the various actors within the industry.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are currently participating or have participated (within the last 12 months) in the Australian semi-professional DOTA 2 esports industry as a player, organisation owner, team manager or tournament/league organiser.

What does participation involve?

Your participation will involve an audio recorded interview via Zoom that will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

Questions will include:

- What do you think are the biggest benefits of being involved in the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- What do you think are the biggest drawbacks of being involved in the in the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- How would you improve the DOTA 2 esports industry?

You will be also asked to answer basic demographic questions including name, age, gender, occupation, and length of time in current position via an online survey hosted on Qualtrics that is expected to take less than five minutes.

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the research project without comment or penalty, although if you withdraw before the end of the interview then you would forfeit the incentive for participating in the study. You can withdraw anytime during the interview. If you withdraw within two weeks after your interview, on request any information already obtained that can be linked to you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

You will be able to request a transcript of your responses after the interview by emailing the principal researcher (xm.chen@hdr.qut.edu.au).

What are the possible benefits for me if I take part?

It is expected that this research project will not benefit you directly. The outcomes of the research, however, may benefit the esports industry as it provides esports actors with insight into practices to improve collective well-being. You can request a copy of the published outcomes resulting from the study by contacting the principal researcher (xm.chen@hdr.qut.edu.au). You may also request an initial summary of the results which will be available by January 2021.

To recognise your contribution should you choose to participate, the research team is offering a \$25 JB HI-FI electronic gift card sent to your nominated email address.

What are the possible risks for me if I take part?

There is a minimal risk associated with your participation in this research project which is experiencing potential discomfort with being interviewed.

QUT provides for limited free psychology, family therapy or counselling services for research participants of QUT research projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please call the Clinic Receptionist on **07 3138 0999** (Monday–Friday only 9am–5pm), QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic, 44 Musk Avenue, Kelvin Grove, and indicate that you are a research participant. Please note, during COVID-19 restrictions, the QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic will offer telehealth only services.

Alternatively, Lifeline provides access to online, phone or face-to-face support, call **13 11 14** for 24 hour telephone crisis support. If you are aged up to 25, you can also call the Kids Helpline on **1800 551 800**.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The data (comments and responses) will be deidentified.

Any personal information that could potentially identify you will be removed or changed before files are shared with other researchers or results are made public. The information that will be removed includes your name and preferred email address.

Audio data collected as part of this research project, which includes personal information about you, will be transcribed by an automated transcription service located outside Australia (TRINT) and permanently removed from their server after one year. This service's security practices are currently aligned with international standards and their data centres are owned and operated by Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Any data collected as part of this research project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of research data policy. Data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years, and can be disclosed if it is to protect you or others from harm, if specifically required by law, or if a regulatory or monitoring body such as the ethics committee requests it.

As the research project involves an audio recording:

- You will have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion.
- The recording will be retained for the minimum retention period of 5 years after the last research activity.
- The recording will not be used for any other purpose.
- Only the named researchers and an AI transcription service will have access to the recording. Transcription data will be stored in Amazon Web Services (AWS) data centers.
- It is not possible to participate in the research project without being recorded.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the data you provide cannot be traced back to you in reports, publications and other forms of presentation. For example, we will only include the relevant part of a quote, we will not use any names, or names will be changed, and/or details such as dates and specific circumstances will be excluded. Nevertheless, while unlikely, it is possible that if you are quoted directly your identity may become known.

How do I give my consent to participate?

Due to the nature of the research project, which involves interviews conducted online, you will be sent a link prior to the interview that contains the information sheet, some basic demographic and eligibility screening questions. You will be asked to read the information sheet, which will take approximately five minutes, click 'yes' if you consent to participating in the interview, and answer some basic demographic and eligibility screening questions.

What if I have questions about the research project?

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact one of the listed researchers:

Stephanie Chen	xm.chen@hdr.qut.edu.au	
Edwina Luck	e.luck@qut.edu.au	+ 61 7 3138 1392
Lisa Schuster	lisa.schuster@qut.edu.au	+ 61 7 3138 2646

What if I have a concern or complaint regarding the conduct of the research project?

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. If you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on (07) 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au.

Thank you for helping with this research project.

**Collective Transformative Value Co-Creation and Co-Destruction in
the Semi-Professional Australian Esports Ecosystem**

QUT Ethics Approval Number 200000691

Research team

Miss Stephanie Chen	xm.chen@hdr.qut.edu.au	
Dr Edwina Luck	e.luck@qut.edu.au	+ 61 7 3138 1392
Dr Lisa Schuster	lisa.schuster@qut.edu.au	+ 61 7 3138 2646

Statement of consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this research project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw without comment or penalty, although if you withdraw before the end of the interview then you would forfeit the incentive for participating in the study.
- Understand that if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Research Ethics Advisory Team on +61 7 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au.
- Understand that the research project will include an audio recording.
- Are over the age of 18.
- Agree to participate in the research project.

Yes

No

Demographic/Eligibility Screening Questions

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you currently participating or have participated (within the past 12 months) in the Australian semi-professional DOTA 2 esports industry?
2. What is/was your occupation in the industry?
3. How long have you been in this position?
4. First Name
5. Last Name
6. Age
7. Gender
8. Preferred Email Address

Appendix B. Interview protocol

Interview Questions

- Can you tell me about your role within the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- What do you think are the biggest benefits of being involved in the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- What do you think are the biggest drawbacks of being involved in the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- How would you improve the DOTA 2 esports industry?
- Now shifting to your experience in the DOTA 2 esports industry. Think about a time in the past 12 months that you had a really good experience in your role within the DOTA 2 esports industry. Can you describe the situation and exactly what happened?
 - Probe: What made it a good experience?
 - Probe: What do you think led to this experience?
 - Probe: How did the experience affect you afterwards?
 - Probe: Did this experience have an impact on someone else either positively or negatively?
- Now, changing gears, think about a time in the past 12 months that you had a really bad experience in your role within the DOTA 2 esports industry. Can you describe the situation and exactly what happened?
 - Probe: What made it a bad experience?
 - Probe: What do you think led to this experience?
 - Probe: How did the experience affect you afterwards?
 - Probe: Did this experience have an impact on someone else either positively or negatively?
- Can you tell me a little about your relationships with other people within the industry?
 - Prompt: Would you say you have mostly good or mostly bad relationships with other people in the industry?
- Now, can you think of an event where you had a particularly positive interaction with another person. Can you describe the situation and exactly what happened?
 - Prompt: What made you feel the interaction was positive?
- Can you think of an event where you had a particularly negative interaction with another person? Can you describe the situation and exactly what happened?
 - Prompt: What made you feel the interaction was negative?
 - Probe: What could have been said/done by the other actor?
- What is the biggest drawback in your role?
 - How have you managed this drawback?
- What advice would you give if someone were struggling in your role?

Appendix C. Sample codebook

Co-Creative/Destructive	Resource		Actors Involved	Actors Affected	Values Affected
Co-Creative & Destructive	Co-Performance	Physical Sacrifice	Player	Players	<p>Time (Destroys Functional & Social Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of time spend into playing dota could be spent somewhere else like study or full-time work. Most players do not have a fallback plan for when Dota doesn't work out (Destroys Functional Value) Amount of time needed to upkeep your skills and/or improve (Creates Functional Value – Ability to Play) Amount of time also affected how much time is spent with family and friends (Destroys Social Value) <p>Mental health (Decrease Emotional – mental health)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressure to upkeep your skills. High risk high rewards. Emotional highs and lows. <p>Health (Destroys Functional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time of competitions causes players to have a bad sleeping schedule. Sitting for an extended period of time. Not eating correctly or exercising.
		Thrill of Competition			<p>Creates Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making friends through playing <p>Creates Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love playing the game, love competing. Playing with players that they looked up to Being picked up by a team org <p>Creates Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gained self-confience <p>Creates Epistemic Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travelling to different countries for LANs
	Co-Responsibility	Physical Sacrifice	Casters	Casters	<p>Financial (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spending money to move for potential positions Working non-paid jobs <p>Health (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working non-stop to make a sustainable living for the experience to grow their career. <p>Mental Health (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No job security causes a lot of financial stress <p>Time (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working non-stop to make a sustainable living or for the experience to grow their career Time could be spent doing something else
					Team Orgs

					<p>Mental Health (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No job security causes a lot of financial stress The amount of tasks, production stuff <p>Time (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working non-stop to make a sustainable living or for the experience to grow their career Time could be spent doing something else
			T.Os	T.Os	<p>Financial (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using own money to run the business without profit Working non-paid jobs <p>Mental Health (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of roles and work <p>Time (Destroys Functional & Emotional Value)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working non-stop to make a sustainable living or for the experience to grow their career Time could be spent doing something else Amount of time also affected how much time is spent with family and friends (Destroys Social Value)
		Thrill of Contribution	Caster Team Org T.O	All Players	<p>Creates Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passion for the job and love for the game Seeing players grow and improve Wanting to create opportunities for others (T.Os only) More motivated when they see their contribution or receive recognition for their work. Praise from players. Seeing results with the number of players. Seeing results with social media following and twitch chat (Casters Only) <p>Creates Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being a part of something with people that have the same passion <p>Creates Social Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making friends through work <p>Creates Functional and Career Progression Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casters play a significant role in brand building and the amount of exposure for players/team orgs. Their ability to cast also significantly affects viewership and brand building for T.Os. They are also responsible for delivering sponsorship segments during broadcast. T.Os and Team Orgs can lend each other credibility <p>Creates Emotional Value for Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players watch VODs to see what casters say about their good plays for an ego boost
	Collaboration	Communication	ALL	ALL	<p>Creates Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce clashes with tournaments and reduce periods of time without tournaments for players (For opposite, refer to lack of communication) Teaching new players about player and business etiquette Communicate the need to reschedule matches in advance (For opposite, refer to 'Not showing up to games')

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T.Os communicate reasoning behind decision making to player so players can understand. For opposite, refer to misaligned perspectives/expectations
	Collaboration	Open to feedback	T.Os	Players T.Os	Creates Functional and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T.Os being open to feedback about the tournaments. Also being open to information about the scene and the players Players feel valued when T.Os take in their feedback
	Collaboration	Team Synergy	Players	Players	Creates Functional and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear communication between team members, having the same goal/level of commitment. Trusting team members with calls during the game. Sharing ideas and being flexible within the team. For opposite, refer to misaligned perspectives/expectations
	Collaboration	Trust	Players Team Orgs	Team Orgs Players Casters	Creates Functional Value Trusting actors to do their job <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trusting players with roster changes Trusting casters to cast without bias or only say things for entertainment value T.Os to not be 'shady'. Clear communication and being transparent can help (Refer to Lack of communication)
Co-Creative	Restorative	Environment/Physical Setting	T.O	Players	Creates Functional Value and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical things like size of desk, type of chair, type of monitors, sound cancelling headphones.
			ALL	Players	Creates Community Value and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being at LANs where like-minded people were able to get together and see each other face to face instead over the Internet. This also motivated some players and "reignites the fire of competitive spirit". Players have said that losing at a LAN doesn't feel like a significantly negative experience because of the environment and people
Co-Creative	Social Support	Companionship	ALL	ALL	Creates Social Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of people have made friends through their role that have gone beyond the industry Easier to make friends because everyone has dota in common Creates Community Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All actors socialise after a LAN Creates Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most interactions with other actors have been positive. Sharing memories with people Creating friendships and being comfortable means that players have an easier time voicing concerns.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Companionship	Casters	Casters	Creates Functional and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-casting relies on good chemistry with the other caster. Can be influenced by casters' emotional state and stress.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Companionship/Emotional Support	Players	Players	Creates Functional and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players in the same team spend a lot of time together and their actions and words towards each other have a significant effect on players' and the team's ability to play and emotions (for opposite, refer to flaming) Players are generally open to helping other players with gameplay and self-improvement.

Co-Creative	Social Support	Management	Player (Captains) Team Org	Players T.Os	Creates Functional Value and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling games and scrimms Mediating interpersonal relationships between team members Support players with personal issues Liase between players and T.O Organise everything for LANs – flights, accommodation, transportation Instrumental Support – Team Orgs fund flights, accommodation, transportation money for food , merch
Co-Creative	Social Support	Instrumental Support	T.O	Casters	Creates Functional Value and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised workspace so casters can show up and cast without needing to be responsible for other tasks like technical difficulties, observations, updating website brackets. Quality of accommodation and catering
Co-Creative	Social Support	Emotional Support	Players Casters	Players Caster	Creates Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to about personal issues such as mental health
Co-Creative	Social Support	Emotional Support	Team Orgs	Team Orgs	Creates Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team orgs share information with each other (Informational Support – Functional Value), encourage each other, and support in little things like help carrying stuff at LANs.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Emotional Support	T.O	Players	Creates Functional Value Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T.O showing that they care about players during times of conflict or toxic behaviour with other teammates Dealing with conflicts fairly and in a timely manner
Co-Creative	Social Support	Informational Support	T.O Players Team Orgs	T.O Team Orgs	Creates Functional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players offering their time and effort into helping T.O with aspects of the tournament/league. (further creates functional value and emotional value for players) Reaffirms and give the T.Os confidence T.Os help and advice other T.Os (refer to unwilling to help for co-destructive resource) Players and Team Orgs give advice and help other Team Orgs. Team Orgs talk to other team orgs about player's past behaviour if they're thinking about picking up the player Creates Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being helped by people who are not paid to help them creates a positive emotion
Co-Creative	Social Support	Informational Support	Players	Players	Creates Functional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional dota is significantly different to casual dota so semi-professional players give advice and teach new competitive players.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Esteem Support / Information Support	Players	Players	Creative Functional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players helped with mentality and non-toxic behaviour (further creates emotional value for other players) Players teach other players how to communicate and mediates with interpersonal issues in the team.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Informational Support	Casters	Casters	Creates Functional Value and Emotional Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss who the T.O has reaches out too, how much they're willing to pay to avoid being undercut by T.Os

Co-Creative	Social Support	Instrumental Support	Players	Players	<p>Creates Career Progression Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual players who want to enter the semi-professional scene were 'scouted' by semi-professional players and invited to a team.
Co-Creative	Social Support	Instrumental Support	ALL	ALL	<p>Creates Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entering the industry and job opportunities are usually found through networking
Co-Creative	Social Support	Instrumental Support	Team Orgs	Players	<p>Creates Functional Value and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds for flights, accommodation, transportation money for food, merch Team orgs can organise equipment sponsorships which means players get new peripherals.
Co-Creative	Tightknit Community		ALL	ALL	<p>Creates Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of players try to help where they can. Everyone tries to make it easier for everyone else Any rumours or criticisms usually gets spread around (for opposite, refer to clique) Bad experiences with players, T.Os are discussed or is known within the community. <p>Creates Emotional and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone knows everyone so players end up always playing games in Pub or tournaments with and against friends Competing against friends is more fun than competing against strangers
Co-Destructive	Disorganisation		T.Os	Players Casters	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long delays are annoying to casters, especially since they may not be paid for it Delays at LANs can cause stress to some players Technical difficulties with PC at LANs cause stress to some players and can affect the player's ability to play Physical setting can significantly affect player's ability to play (for opposite, refer to environment/physical setting) Long delays for no reason annoy players Players sometimes sign up and pay entry fees last minute
Co-Destructive	Lack of Funding		-	ALL	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low wages mean unsustainable living for casters Low production quality for T.Os. Low prizepool for players means that not a lot of players will want to participate. Can't hire the best casters. Low production quality and delays can cost casters good brand building and exposure opportunities (Caused by T.Os) T.Os cannot afford to hire entire production crew which means casters will have to take on multiple roles (Destroys Emotional Value). It's difficult for T.Os and team orgs to reach other to sponsors when viewership is low, teams do not stay together long enough to build up a brand. Team Orgs do not have enough funding to hire support resources for players. T.Os and Team orgs not having enough funds to hire staff. Volunteers may have other commitments or less motivation. <p>Affected by Publisher/Developer Influence. Affects Physical Sacrifice – Money. Affects Lacks of Support Resources.</p>

Co-Destructive	Small Playerpool		Players	ALL	<p>Destroys Functional and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small playerpool means that the best players form a team and win every tournament held. No new players try to compete against them. <p>Destroys Functional Value (For Players)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding new team members is difficult and time consuming. Players are leaving the scene but no new players are entering The game has a steep learning curve and a high skill ceiling which deters new casual players. Casual players need to reach immortal rank to play the same pub games as semi-professional players and in addition, casual players have to essentially get 'picked up' and introduced into the competitive scene. <p>Also affected by Interpersonal Misbehaviour – Toxicity Affects Lack of Consequences</p>
Co-Destructive	Misaligned Perspective/Expectations	Players and T.O	Players T.Os	Players T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players and T.Os have misaligned perspectives and expectations where T.Os want players to focus on building their brands to help build viewership. Players just want to play. Something as simple as tweeting when matches are on is extremely helpful with building viewership for T.Os (Usually managed by team orgs). Players and T.Os also have different opinions on consequences. T.Os also do not really understand the state of the scene as much as players
Co-Destructive	Misaligned Perspective/Expectations	Team Expectations	Players	Players	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams' expectations about competing are not aligned which causes arguments due to different level of commitment to the team.
Co-Destructive	Misaligned Perspective/Expectations	Unwilling to Sacrifice	Players	ALL	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are unwilling to do extra things that focuses on building their brands which could help T.Os and Team Orgs
Co-Destructive	Misaligned Perspective/Expectations	Player's Expectations of Support	Players	Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players expecting a lot of support (monetary or equipment) from team orgs (possibly due to the international scene). Described as 'entitlement'. Players don't know or consider the amount of money and time that goes into organising team orgs and tournaments Players expecting or wanting T.Os to cover business class flights to LANs
Co-Destructive	Misaligned Perspective/Expectations	External	T.Os	Players T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations jumping into Esports due to the international hype without understanding the oceanic scene. They spend a lot of money running a tournament and leave when they do not get the profit/results they expected which adds to the lack of structure. This one-off tournament may clash with existing tournaments cause players to play in the new one that offers a larger prizepool.
Co-Destructive	Predatory Behaviour	Unwilling to Help Others	T.Os	T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some T.Os are unwilling to help other T.Os
Co-Destructive	Predatory Behaviour	Undercutting	T.Os	T.Os Casters Players	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to limited opportunities, it has created a culture where organisations intentionally try to cut cost by undercutting workers/casters. Cutting cost with flights and accommodation of casters and players
Co-Destructive	Predatory Behaviour	Taking Advantage	Team Orgs T.Os	Players Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Team orgs and T.Os taking advantage of the lack of consequences within the esports industry and the lack of knowledge the players have about contracts.

					<p>league and the behaviour occurs during the league. Some team orgs does not care about toxic behaviour so there are no consequences for their players at all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team orgs and T.O might be able to work together to give players consequences.
Co-Destructive	Lack of Consequences	Player Toxicity	T.Os Players Team Orgs	Players T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional Value (For T.Os)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the small playerpool in the semi-pro scene, T.Os fear that giving players consequences for interpersonal misbehaviour will cause the players to step out of the tournament or scene complete. This creates a level of tolerance towards toxicity. This also allows some players to disrespect T.Os. Some players don't understand or do not take the consequences seriously due to the past culture of not having consequences at all. Some T.O will ban players for toxic behaviour/break the rules, but that player will gets to play other tournaments/leagues since T.Os do not ban players for behaviour that occurs outside of their tournament/league. In addition, T.Os do not have a set standard of consequences so players might only get a 3 month ban in one league while a perma ban in another. If T.Os do ban players, it doesn't stop players from abusing T.Os (Destroys Emotional Value) Letting some players getting away with breaking the rules makes all players think that they can get away with it. Players dislike when T.Os shows favouritism and it is a 'league killer'. <p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value (For Players)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players are aware of the toxicity but do not stand up against it even as by-standers (Refer to Clique). Players who are toxic but highly skilled can still find a team or be signed to a team org even after a ban which has created a tolerance for toxicity as long as the player is skilled. Some T.Os show favouritism or look the other way because they are friends with the toxic player
Co-Destructive	Lack of Consequences	Not Paying	T.Os Players	Players Casters Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value (For Players, Casters, and Team Orgs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T.Os not paying out prizepools and/or casters. Increases workload to chase up the T.O for payment, significantly stresses out casters due to lack of job security (limited opportunities) and some players because they do not have another income. Like contracts between players and team orgs, any contracts signed with T.Os and Casters are non-binding or not worth taking legal actions against. Some T.Os only run one tournament so there is no way of chasing up payments <p>Lack of Consequences has caused players to distrust new T.Os</p>
Co-Destructive	Lack of Pathway or Reward		T.Os Publisher/ Developer	Players T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are periods of time where there are no leagues (in this time teams disband) and times where there are two leagues at the same time. There is no structured pathway into the international scene without versing SEA teams on the SEA server Low semi-pro prizepools means unsustainable living for players. Players sometimes have to pay for their own flight to LANs which means it's not worth since the prizepool is small. Larger prizepools for not only first place but top places (top six for example) will encourage more casual players to enter the scene and create an incentive for players to stay in a team and improve.

					<p>Difference in Conditions. Destroys Functional and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versing on SEA server means AUS/NZ players experience ping and are at an disadvantage • Due to this, Tier two and Tier one teams, and pro players from AUS/NZ live international. There is no incentive for pro players to stay in Australia and help grow the scene <p>Overall creates an unprofessional scene which destroys community value</p> <p>Affects unwilling to sacrifice</p>
Co-Destructive	Lack of Social Support		Team Orgs	Players	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players do not have support to deal with mental health issues and times of low emotions (losing). Currently, captains support players, but captains have no support. In the international scene, the team org would provide this support through hiring a psychologist. • Players also do not know how to deal with interpersonal issues. The lack of this support also causes teams to disband • In addition to lack of support, there is also a level of distrust in support resources which means players are less comfortable with talking about issues such as toxicity
Co-Destructive	Short-term Teams		Players	Players Team Orgs T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams do not stay together long-term. This culture means that players are not willing to work through interpersonal issues. • It is difficult for team orgs to build branding and exposure for a team that is short-term • T.Os struggle building a league story for the entire season just for a team to disband. They also struggle to run a league after a lone tournament or qualifiers because majority of the teams would have disbanded. <p>Destroys Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching the team disbanding makes some players sad. <p>Destroys Career Progression Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams struggle to compete with Tier Two teams because they struggle with committing to a long-term team and solving interpersonal issues within the team. The struggle is mostly likely due to the lack of reward.
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Not showing up to games	Players	T.O Players Casters	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value (For T.Os)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players often do not show up to games or needs to reschedule matches right before the game. Some players do not compete because they are in bottom bracket (Bad sportsmanship) or competing is not worth their time or having internal issues. This causes T.Os a lot of stress, increases their workload (they have to find another team or something else to fill the time), and affects viewership/quality of production. (For opposite, refer to Communication) <p>Destroys Functional Value (For Casters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casters have to relay the information to the viewers on broadcast about changes. <p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value (For Players)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players also do not show up to scrims which wastes other players' time. Teams are less likely to organise scrims with teams that have a history of having players not showing up.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players sometimes feel a bit sad because they do not get to play the match or scrim that was organised. Players also becomes annoyed because it wasted everyone's time. <p>Due to the small playerpool, there are no subs or subs are not common.</p>
	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Clique	Players	Players	<p>Destroys Functional, Emotional, and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are cliques of players who have bad mentality. They will not play with players that they do not like. They will spread rumours of players which can cause players to not be selected for teams or leave the scene entirely. • Other members of the community will listen to any rumours without determining if it's true or not. • Combined with public exiling. Player do not stand up to toxic behaviour in fear that they will be exilled. • New players try to enter the Clique which creates a toxic culture
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Disrespect	Players	T.Os Team Orgs Casters	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players don't respect new T.Os, Team Orgs, Casters (maybe caused by a lack of trust). • This level of respect is sometimes linked with the rank of the person. The players will respect someone who is of their rank • Some players will try to pressure T.Os or demand for things. Sense of entitlement • Some players will send abuse (including death threats) to T.Os or Team Orgs if they made a decision they didn't like.
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Flaming	Players	Players	<p>Destroys Functional, Emotional, and Community Value</p>
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Public Exiling	Players	Players T.Os Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Functional, Emotional, and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public exiling where players will not play with certain players or in certain tournaments due to poor behaviour • This culture means that false rumour can also cause people to be exiled • T.Os fear that their consequences will backfire
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	Biased Casting	Casters	Players Team Orgs T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional, Emotional, and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casters have a particular bias against a certain player or team which causes them to target said player or team unfairly throughout the broadcast • Is seen as unprofessional and can cause a decrease in viewership
Co-Destructive	Interpersonal Misbehaviour	General Toxicity Bad Mentality Throwing	Players	Players Team Orgs T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional, Emotional and Community Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexism, Misogyny, Racism. • Includes All Chat which is a function within the game to message all players within the game. • Breaking rules (refer to banning players)' • Toxicity affects all members of the team and whoever the player is ranting to • Flaming - Blaming one player for the loss or focusing on one player's mistakes • T.Os sometimes see that toxicity is arising from banter but they can't do anything about it • Players are afraid to voice their opinions or stand up against toxicity • Players trying to kick other players for no reason and without letting that player know <p>There is a general acceptance of toxicity</p>

					<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some players have been described as egotistic which makes communication very difficult or treats others poorly. Will not play with players who they think are of a lower skill and will not sacrifice time and effort to teach other players. This causes a problem since existing semi-pro players have to 'scout' and teach casual players who wants to enter the scene Don't take responsibility for their actions Unable to receive criticism <p>Can cause players to not show up to games or throwing</p> <p>Destroys Functional and Community Value Intentionally losing games for money or because they don't think its winnable</p> <p>Toxicity is worse for female gamers</p>
Co-Destructive	Esports Misbehaviour	Cheating	Players	T.Os Players	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players and/or team orgs streamsniping, DDoS during tournaments to cheat.
Co-Destructive	Esports Misbehaviour	Match-fixing	T.Os Players	Players	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposely scheduling a match when one of the players cannot play Setting strong teams up against weaker teams to knock them out early
Co-Destructive	Esports Misbehaviour	Smurfing	Players	Players T.Os	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players letting a higher skilled player use their account to compete in tournaments. High skilled players using new accounts to vs against lower ranked players in pubs (which discourages new players)

Co-Creative/Destructive	Resource		Actors Involved	Actors Affected	Values Affected
Co-Creative/Co-Destructive	Normal Processes	Roster Changes	Players	Players	<p>Creates Functional Value & Destroys Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing players due to skill or interpersonal issues
Co-Creative/Co-Destructive		Winning/Losing	Players	Players	<p>Creates and Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winning causes an increase in positive emotions and an increase in motivation Losing causes an increase in negative emotions and a loss in motivation Losing can cause players to flame
Co-Destructive		Negative Online Comments	Viewers	Casters	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative online comments can make casters self-consciousness about how they do their job and also makes them sad.
Co-Creative/Co-Destructive		Banning Players	T.Os Players	T.Os Players Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Player gets banned for misbehaviour so they cannot compete for a set period of time or forever. Teams are missing a player T.Os feel sad when they have to ban players and also causes extra work because they have to investigate and determine the appropriate consequence <p>Creates Functional and Emotional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players don't have to play with the toxic player Tournaments do not have negative exposure or publicity
Co-Destructive	Lack of Viewership			T.Os Team Orgs	<p>Destroys Functional Value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of viewership means it is hard to reach out to and gain sponsors.

					Affected by Esports Misbehaviour, Not showing up to games, Short-term teams
Co-Destructive	Nothing to Offer		Team Orgs Players	Team Orgs Players	Destroys Functional Value Current state of the scene: there is nothing for the players and team orgs to offer each other.
Co-Creative/Co-Destructive	Publisher/Developer Influence		Publisher Developer	ALL	Creates and Destroys All Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for T.Os and by extension higher wages for Casters • Create pathway for players which maybe creates incentive for long-term teams, which then creates buildables for Team Orgs
Co-Destructive	International Experience		Team Orgs	Player	Destroys Functional and Emotional Value. Creates Career Progression Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some players have been scouted by international teams but ended up being lead on or dropped due to poor management. When players have been scouted, the other players in the current team stop putting in effort to commit to the team.