

Is a cyberathlete an athlete? Brazilian athlete perspectives ¿Un ciberatleta es un atleta? Perspectivas de atletas brasileños

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Abstract. Considering the significance that esports as professional sport and entertainment has attained recently, discussion about the legitimacy of esports as part of traditional sport has risen. This issue becomes more pronounced because esports will start in the Olympic Games program. The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics and similarities between Brazilian Olympic athletes and esports athletes. Ten Brazilian athletes were interviewed. Dedication, discipline, and competitiveness were found as components of the narratives of the athletes. Similar to Olympic athletes, cyberathletes have workout routines to improve techniques, exercises, and diets to provide opportunities for optimal performances in competitions. The results showed that although the virtual environment differs from an Olympic sport environment, common characteristics are present relative to the understanding of competition as in the elements of athlete identity.

Keywords: cyberathletes; Olympic athletes; esports; Olympic Games; Olympism

Resumen. Teniendo en cuenta la importancia que han adquirido recientemente los deportes electrónicos como deporte profesional y entretenimiento, ha surgido un debate sobre la legitimidad de los deportes electrónicos como parte del deporte tradicional. Este problema se vuelve más pronunciado porque los deportes electrónicos comenzarán en el programa de los Juegos Olímpicos. El objetivo de este estudio fue determinar las características y similitudes entre los atletas olímpicos brasileños y los atletas de Esport. Diez atletas brasileños fueron entrevistados. La dedicación, la disciplina y la competitividad se encontraron como componentes de las narrativas de los atletas. Al igual que los atletas olímpicos, los ciberatleta tienen rutinas de entrenamiento para mejorar las técnicas, los ejercicios y las dietas para brindar oportunidades para un desempeño óptimo en las competencias. Los resultados mostraron que, aunque el ambiente virtual difiere de un ambiente deportivo olímpico, se presentan características comunes relativas a la comprensión de la competencia como en los elementos de identidad del atleta.

Palabras clave: ciberatleta; atletas olímpicos; deportes electrónicos; Juegos olímpicos; olimpismo

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 19th Century, sports were cultural productions organized and scheduled as practice and conducted within schools where young people were educated to be future leaders in the colonized world. From child's play, sports were converted into one of the major cultural phenomena on the planet, and the Olympic Games are one of their highest manifestations, with the athlete as its main expression in search of perfection and excellence. It has been observed during the 20th Century that sports and, specifically, the Olympic Games, have closely followed the moves of society, adjusting their rules, and adopting necessary measures to comply with the public demands of spectators. Such changes have had a significant impact on the lives of children and young people, who continue to be inspired to pursue sport careers.

A similar process happened to esports. Electronic games were considered a form of play and entertainment, without any social or cultural value, however within a few decades has also become a worldwide phenomenon capable of captivating millions of practitioners around the planet. Newman (2012) points out some reasons for this change: the dimension of the game industry, the popularity they have, and that they are the best example of human-computer interaction. Practiced mainly by young people, the same as with the Olympic games, esports use technology and digital media that are characteristic of the 21st

Century. In this context, the debate is currently on the categorization of esports as a traditional sport and, therefore, warrant inclusion as an Olympic sport (Hutchins, 2008; Jonasson and Thiborg, 2010).

Authors such as Guttmann (2004), Brohm (1976), Bourdieu (1993), and Hargreaves (1986) conceptualized sport as a competitive activity involving vigorous physical strength or the use of relatively complex motor skills performed by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with the motto *citius, altius, fortius* legitimating physical skills.

According to Wagner (2006, p. 5), "Esport is an area of sport activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies". Jenny et al. (2017) understand esports as sport, as the electronic games present seven features common to the Olympic Games: play, organized competition, skill, physicality, fine motor versus gross motor skills, and energy expenditure. Scholars assert that esports is now becoming more accepted as sport, and gamers are being identified as athletes within society today. esports, being characterized as highly competitive, well organized, and claimed to display intellectual and physical abilities of the players, can logically be classified as sport (Amor et al., 2022). Similarly, the notion of competition and challenge is what gives dynamism to both esports and traditional sports. Holt (2016) understands that esports cannot be classified as sport if the difference in application is significant and of principle, and if the virtu-

al/real distinction is real instead of virtual.

Electronic games began receiving attention from sport researchers upon gained more and more power of cultural and economic impact on our society, indicating to the Olympic Movement that their inclusion in the Olympic Games should be discussed. Thus, a question must be answered. Are these players athletes?

In the case of Brazil, the desire to become an Olympic athlete has been held by many who have specific skills. Along in the 1980's, a professionalization recognition movement began. The profession of professional athlete was only recognized in 1998 through Federal Law No. 9615. From the publication of this law, it was established that it was necessary for sports entities to carry out a formal employment contract with the athlete, who started to have his guaranteed rights. Although longevity does not follow the same path as in other professions. Even during such a short period, the athlete enjoys visibility, recognition, and in some cases, wealth accumulation during very successful careers.

The term, cyberathlete, is representative of players in esports. Its origin appeared in the Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL) in 1997 so that they could gain recognition alongside traditional sport athletes, such as basketball or baseball (Welch, 2002; Taylor, 2012). For Jenny et al. (2017), regardless of the term used, the fact is that esports athletes are being more and more societally recognized in the present day.

If in traditional sports competition the presence of the athlete is essential. In esports, this is also a basic premise. Even though, athletes of both forms of games prepare themselves for the competition both physically, mentally, and emotionally.

The rise of the cyberathletes has alerted the International Olympic Committee to explore the possibility of including esports in future Olympic Games. Considering that esports is a sporting activity and the players involved can be comparable to traditional sports athletes, the purpose of this study is to point out the characteristics and similarities between Brazilian Olympic athletes and esports athletes.

Olympic sport and esports: movements throughout history

If during the amateur phase (from the beginning of the Olympic competitions in 1896 up to the end of the 1980) the role of the athlete was restricted to a perfect performance of his skills, such function has suffered some radical transformations with the passage to the professionalism in the 1980, when besides of a performer, the athlete has become also a representative for brands and commercial interests in a globalized world (Rubio, 2010). To identify with the new generations, the contemporary athlete moves in a world dominated by communication and social media. It contributes to that scenario the temporal dimension of the sportive life that does not follow the calendar ruling other professionals, once the competitive seasons

last some months, and their productive life does not surpass 40 years of age (Giulianotti, 2015).

It is possible to observe the history of the Olympic Games the repulsion movements and later acceptance of both athletes and modalities. This happened with the constraint to women in 1896, for a later acceptance from 1900 on in the golf and tennis competitions, considered esthetically beautiful and of minimum risk of physical contact (Davis and Tuggle, 2012; Mitchell, 1977), with the workers in the 1920 (Ahde, 1984; Pope, 1997; Riordan, 2002), and with professional athletes from the end of the 1980 on (Mitchell, 1977; MacAloon, 1991). Those advancements point out an attention to what happens in the society concerning the sports and the need to review what is in the present regulation. Professionalization of the athletes has also continued between advancements and setbacks (Horne and Manzenreiter; 2006; Magdalinski and Nauright, 2012). Denied along 1980, professionalism was inevitable, and it posed a radical changing in the logic of the Olympic sports. Receiving financial gains was incompatible to the spirit and Olympic values, but such scenario has changed radically facing the need to make the sportive spectacle professional, and therefore, its key-players.

The same happened to esports, which in its origin was entertainment for children and young people and has seen a fast professionalization due to the huge feature of the competitions. This is because esports depend directly on the communication means both to the transmission of the competitions and to the interaction of the public with athletes, one of the conditions both to popularize competitions and to consume the games (Hutchins, 2008; 23 Huhh, 2009; Witkowski, 2012). For example, the League of Legends attained a peak of 14,7 million of viewers during the 2016 world championship¹, when compared 2017 NBA finals with 20 million during the peak of the audience².

The professionalization possibility in an activity that is directly linked to the entertainment makes many young people to be dedicated to the esports aiming a professional future. It is observed in several teams that usually the training routines has become extremely exhaustive, and cyberathlete ceased playing by fun a long time ago. Cyberathlete use their free time to play other electronic games with a different logic from those played professionally. Part of a cyberathlete routine involves playing to improve the mechanics of the game, to develop strategies, to engage the members of the team, to perform offline discussions to analyze and discuss their own replays and other teams. It is common in the present days the cyber athletes living in 'gaming houses'³.

Neto (2001) mentions the virtualization of the sport,

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/518126/league-of-legends-championship-viewers/> Available: 08-18-2018

² http://www.espn.com/nba/story/_/id/19652006/2017-nba-finals-showcased-league-international-reach Available: 08-18-2018.

³ Real place that offer ideal conditions for practice of the esports, with high quality computer equipment, comfortable computer posts, accommodation and appropriate diet.

with the appearance of new categories in function of the technology and the consequent popularity acquired through the disclosure, the telespectacle is supported by the communication means to reach big audiences with no physical presence, challenging the physical limits of men. The author highlights the major influence of the technology involved for the communication, sharing, and disclosure of the experiences, and he discusses the 'digitalization' concept of the sports by the media, thus bringing sports close to the condition of spectacle. This means that with the development of the technology, the media has increased the market of the sport, making it an entertainment and consumption product. In such sense, the technology not only creates a new field for the sport-spectacle, but it also helps to make it popular, same as it happened with the skate and BMX.

Method

The purpose of this study is to point out the characteristics that bring Brazilian Olympic athletes close to e-sport athletes. For this, five Olympic medal winner athletes and five e-sports athletes who compete in the League of Legends game were interviewed. The interviews were driven to the histories of life from biographic narratives (Bosi, 1994; Rubio, 2015) having as secondary aim the routine of life of athletes.

Biographical narratives are a facet of life stories that, in turn, belong to the universe of oral history. Civilization has developed around events narrated by people and transmitted from generation to generation. Unlike the chronological history, which we agreed to detail through the time represented by the calendar or the clock, oral history refers to narratives that go beyond the minutiae of the clock and construct an understanding structure that is independent of time.

Life stories are a particular form of oral history. An instrument to capture and organize the memory that interests the researcher by apprehending values that transcend the individual character of what is transmitted and that is inserted in the culture of the social group to which the subject that narrates belongs. The narrative brings what the narrator considers important in his trajectory, giving an idea of what his life was and what it is at that moment. Thus, more than searching in memory, as a file where the facts are kept, we integrate with the context in which this occurred, bringing to light a vast repertoire of meanings (Meihy, 1994). This reflexive attitude allows the re-experimentation of past situations, not only from viewpoint of the events course, but by the re-signification of episodes striking to the narrator, that allowed to reverse (or subvert) the narrative obeying a chronology of the affectivity implied in the occurred event, giving to your text a context (Queiroz, 1988; Rubio, 2015).

The context that we invariably put as a cluster of memories, which Halbwachs (2020) called Collective Memory, a collective identity of the memories and imagi-

naries stored and shared by a social group. For Halbwachs, there is no analysis and the location of memories if we do not take into account the social contexts that act in support of the work of reconstructing memory.

As Halbwachs (2020, p. 31), points out, "A remembrance is gained not merely by reconstituting the image of a past event a piece at a time. That reconstruction must start from shared data or conceptions. These are present in our mind as well as theirs because they are continually being passed back and forth. This process occurs only because all have been and still are members of the same group".

It is understood that in describing the social substance of memory, it is evident the way of remembering is individual as well as social: the transmitter group retains and reinforces memories. Bosi (1994) affirms that all personal memory is also social, family and group, and therefore, in recovering it, it is possible to capture the ways of being of the individual and of his culture.

To tell others about ourselves is not so simple. First, it requires us to know who we are and then know what our place in the world. Through narratives, we can build our identity, in the expression of words we can say who we are and who we want to be. For Ricoeur (2000), the narrative builds the durable character of a person, which can be called narrative identity. The knowledge of oneself is an interpretation and finds in the narrative a privileged mediation. If you not possible direct knowledge of ourselves, nothing prevents an interpretative mediation through the use of a narrative language.

In this perspective, the biographical narratives are constituted of a textual framework that arises from a meeting between the people. We must understand what is narrated, who is the narrator and as the narrative was built at the exact moment of the encounter between researcher and subject. People's life experiences are, *a priori*, a reflection of the social and cultural context of where they live and form their personal as well as collective identities. Thus, rebuild what has been experienced and the extent to which it is a constituent of your present life referenced by their actions is the process of narrative analysis.

Participants and interviews

Ten athletes were selected for the interviews, five Olympic medalists and five esports professionals (Table 1). The interviews were scheduled in a place of agreement with the interviewee, presenting the proposal of this work. They were recorded on video and then transcribed. Before the recording, it was explained to the athlete that the objective that to tell his life story. According to Caldas (1999) and Rubio (2015), access to the athlete's memory is facilitated because there is freedom of narration, and the interviewee selects his memories and experiences that he deems relevant, organizing his narrative logic. These experiences are articulated with traditions and a worldview, which translated into an appreciation of the global way of conceiving reality in each interviewee (Rubio, 2016).

Table 1.

List of the participants

Name	Modality	Major achievements
Cesar Cielo	Swimming	OG 2008 (Gold - Bronze) - 2012 (Bronze)
Flávio Canto	Judo	OG 1996-2004 (Bronze)
Hélia Rogério de Souza Pinto "Fofão"	Volleyball	OG 1992 - 1996 (Bronze) - 2000 (Bronze) - 2004 - 2008 (Gold)
Sergio Dutra dos Santos	Volleyball	OG 2004 (Gold) - 2008 (Silver) - 2012 (Silver) - 2016 (Gold)
Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima	Athletics	OG 1996 - 2000 - 2004 (Bronze) and Pierre de Coubertin Medal
Eidi "Esa" Yanagimachi	Esports (LOL)	MVP 2016
Felipe "Yang" Ca Yeg Zhao	Esports (LOL)	MVP 2014
Gustavo "Minerva" Alves	Esports (LOL)	Brazilian Champion in 2014
Lucas "Luskka" Rentechen	Esports (LOL)	
Murilo "Takeshi" Alves	Esports (LOL)	Brazilian Vice-champion 2013-2014 Champion of the CBLol All-Stars 2015

OG – Olympic Games; LOL – League of Legends; MVP - Most Valuable Player; CBLol - League of Legends Brazilian Championship

Results and Discussion

This research sought to find similarities between Olympic sports and esports, based on the athletes' life stories. In the athletes' narratives, similarities were identified in four specific topics: initiation and professionalization process, dedication, discipline, and competitiveness.

Initiation and professionalization process

The initiation process for both cyberathletes and Olympic athletes starts during childhood, as a recreational sport activity, and later, it occurs the specialization of such activity by training and participation in competitions. Factors that contribute to an athlete specializing in a sport include: enjoyment of the sport, career aspirations, and coach/teacher influence (Popkin et. al., 2019; Jung, 2022). All of them started their competitive practice during adolescence, thus confirming the proposal by Bompa (2015) and Weineck (2019) aiming for an age range between 12 and 14 years as the most appropriate for young people to start participating in the training of a given modality, moment when there is also maturity to participate in competitive events. In the narratives of the cyberathletes, we identified that their trajectory is similar to that of the Olympic athletes.

"For real, I started playing at age of 9, it was my passion. I like playing any kind of game". (Yang)

"I was more or less 12 years old when I started playing an online game". (Takeshi)

"I was 13 years old, and I already used to play with the folks". (Esa)

"In front of our house, there was a Lan House. I was caught by the game. I was 13 years old". (Luskka)

"My father bought a computer for me when I was 13 years old". (Minerva)

"The teacher used to ask me to run, and I excelled ... I was 16 years old when I participated in the school games" (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

"I started fighting judo when I was 13 years old. It was also my first competition". (Flávio Canto)

"I used to play at the school, during the physical education classes. At the age of 15, I started training regularly". (Fofão)

"I started playing volleyball when I was 12 years old at a sports center... At the age of 16, I played in the youth

team and integrated the adult team" (Serginho)

"I started swimming when I was a kid, and at the age of 12, I participated in my first competition. I won and I enjoy it... when I was 14 years old, I was the record holder and won 2 gold medals in the Brazilian, and I was sure I would be an Olympic champion" (César Cielo)

By the narratives, it is observed that when athletes from the Olympic sports and esports are outstanding and specialized in their modalities, they start being submitted to long-term training processes to reach the major competitions. The step denominated high-performance training is a stabilization phase to coordinate the skills which the main characteristic is dominating motor actions with accuracy and economy, attaining its peak from the age of 17-18 years (Balyi, Way and Higgs, 2013; Jung, 2022). Popkin et al. (2019) corroborates that sport participation offers multiple benefits, however there is concern that early sport specialization may lead to adverse health and social effects, mostly overuse injuries and burnout, in a perception that developing athletes can reach their peak performance and gain a competitive advantage.

"I started playing professionally at the age of 18". (Yang)

"When I was 15 years old, I was playing professionally in some championships" (Esa)

"I play professionally since 2012 (18 years old). I am from the first crop of players in Brazil of the League of Legends". (Takeshi)

"When I became professional, I was 18 years old" (Luskka)

"At the time I was 17 years old. I just finished high school and went to a professional team" (Minerva)

"I did not have yet a perspective to my future. Whether having or not to work. I played a good championship for a small team. I received a proposal from a large team. And I talked: now I won't drop this opportunity anymore" (Serginho)

"I started as a professional volleyball player at the age of 15, I renounced many things. Sports demand this". (Fofão)

"At the beginning of my career, I was working along the day and practicing at night. I started to highlight. I received an invitation to training in São Paulo and became a professional when I started receiving a wage." (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

“I have always thought about being a professional athlete. I am very competitive. And this strengthens me” (Cesar Cielo)

Specifically, esports are cultural productions that are designed, from their conception, to circulate in the dominant communication infrastructures of the current times, internet and television; and professionalization was a condition and result of this mediatization, as well as the need for esports leagues to adopt standardized equipment and rules (Taylor, 2021).

There is a difference in the regulation for the official esports championship. Professional leagues of the League of Legends, for instance, have a minimum age restriction in official tournaments of 17 years old. Such condition was imposed precisely to preclude the early professionalization. However, the Counter-Strike ESL sets in its regulation that the minimum age to record an account is 16 years old, the younger player participating in a professional league was 13 years old in his debut.

The age imposition follows approximately the dynamics occurred in the artistic gymnastics in 1990, when the girls arrived at the Olympic Games younger and younger, thus causing several issues due to the early specialization. The influence of iconic sports figures such as Nadia Comaneci and Lindsey Vonn popularized the notion of sports specialization in young athletes (Hayano et al., 2020). Such a scenario has taken the International Gymnastics Federation (IGF) to set a minimum age 16 years old to participate in the Olympic Games (Paul, 2009; Parry, 2012; Carbinatto et al., 2016).

Participating in training provides the sport experience that athletes desire, helping to maintain the athlete's enjoyment and autonomy for the sport, in addition to the benefits of hard work and dedication.

Dedication

To achieve specialization that leads to professionalization, a high dose of dedication is required to every duty involving the technical improvement. This implies in abdicating from a social and even school life, making the athlete to be differentiated from other young people from the same age group (Ramadas et al., 2013; Schneider, 2015; Costa et al., 2021). In this way, dedication is a gesture related to the fulfillment of a goal involving the willingness to act and discipline for its achievement, thus generating adhesion to the principles guiding such action.

The training routine for Olympic athlete keeps a major similarity to the esports players. According to Helsen et al. (1998), Balyi (2003) and Harwell and Southwick (2021), Olympic level athletes need at least 10 years or 10,000 hours of intense training before being highlighted in international events. Breivik (2010) comments that athletes that achieved such performance level, “[...] set high-performance standards, and they are motivated by being successful, to do their best and to attain pleasure from the efforts in pursuing their goals (p. 103)”. On the other hand, Hayano et al. (2020) argue that sports practice

should be distinguished between deliberate practice and recreational practice. Hours of deliberate practice may be associated with increased rates of burnout, while recreational practice offers potential benefits through diversification of movement in a pleasurable and enjoyable environment, leading to the prevention of overuse injuries or burnout.

“I started late in judo. Therefore, I had to train more than others did. I was training even after everyone else was gone. Sometimes, some training partner stayed with me; otherwise, I was alone” (Flavio Canto)

“In sports, there is no other way, you must train. The training ends and I go on. It is the commitment to the work, even more, when you work in a team. 10% of the training is for me, 90% I must dedicate to the team” (Serginho)

“In the Olympic cycle, you work 4 years. 4 years of dedication, you change your daily life, your thoughts. The aim is the Olympic Games, there are several difficulties, and overcoming such difficulties strengthens yourself” (Fofão)

“Marathon is a proof of overcoming. You want to finish the proof regardless of the final result” (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

The result from the confrontation of long hours of hard work and practice is rewarded by conquering a position in the national team, in the victory or even by the conquest of an Olympic medal. In the Olympic athlete, it is observed several multipliers features whether technical, as for instance, strength, ability, or speed or character, such as teamwork and excellence. The title of Olympian is obtained through extraordinary dedication and sacrifice, identification that athletes use for the rest of their lives. This identity is predominant in the lives of Olympic athletes and is directly related to sport, having a strong correlation with the successful outcome of their athletic performance (Milton-Smith, 2002; Perez, 2018).

By their turn, Brazilian cyberathletes have developed dedication strategies that surpass the renounce to a social and family life, such as living in the ‘gaming houses’, sharing not only the physical professional space but the personal as well, thus renouncing to their privacy.

“I wake up early, I like going to the academy in the morning, then I have lunch and train from 1 pm to 5 pm. I take a 30 minute to 1-hour break and come back to the next training between 6 pm and 9 pm. Afterward, my time is free, but we continue playing for a long time”. (Esa)

“I train for 10, 11 hours, and the free time I use to play”. (Yang)

“I dedicate at least 8 to 10 hours daily” (Takeshi)

“In the morning, after the breakfast, we train a little of ranking. At 1 pm, we talk to the coach, and from there, we train in 3-hour blocks with 30 minutes interval to rest up to 8-9pm” (Luskka)

“After the training blocks, our time is free, but I use to play individually. It is not mandatory, but as everyone

wants to be the best, our whole day is turned to the game” (Minerva)

This ‘gaming house’ model produces constant emotional tension between teammates and coaches by sharing the same space 24 hours a day (Ismael, 2019; Pedraza-Ramirez, 2019). Thus, strategies must be developed in terms of forming healthy habits, values and performance goals, in addition to a set of basic coexistence rules, established by common agreement, during training and competitions.

Discipline

Discipline is considered one of the basics to form elite athletes, once the path towards high performance demands the exhaustive repetition of a technical gesture - an activity close to the alienation, the abdication of the social living and a permanent focus on the goals to be attained (Shogan, 2001; Denison, 2007). Under such condition, the sport is no more a pleasant and educational activity to become as disposing of as any other professional activity where a person loses the sense of his continuity.

Duckworth (2016) suggested it to be a malleable trait that can be developed as individuals maintain interest, practice in their daily improvement, discover a purpose and sustain it through challenges.

The Olympic athlete understands discipline as a need in his life, orderly by external conditions such commitments and competitive responsibilities. Added to this, there are the cares with his own body, his working tool. For this, his daily routine involves sleeping, eating, training, resting in two or three periods, with little space remaining for other activities. Discipline is the trail where such train runs in the search for a purpose.

“I lived on one side of the city and trained on the other side. They offered me to live in a house with other athletes from other modalities. I gave up. They did not have there the same discipline of the individual athlete. Sometimes we did not have time to sleep”. (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

“I am a person who needs an athletic routine, training at right times, with a good nutrition and to rest. When this does not happen, I cannot concentrate” (Cesar Cielo)

“When I am at the training center of the selection, I can watch females training. I learn with them. Male volleyball is a lot of strength and potency. The female’s game is about defense, is a more cadenced game” (Serginho)

“When I am in the selection, it is like a second family. I live 24 hours with other athletes. I have a roommate for 10 years. Besides the discipline in the training, we have our living discipline”. (Fofão)

In the event of the cyberathletes, such a routine is the same, with the specificities imposed by esports. The first competitive teams were fully dedicated to the game, disregarding the cares with the body. The consequences of that behavior were obesity, visual problems, and repetitive-motion injuries. The professionalization has generated a movement of care with the body aiming not to disregard

the physical limit, which would cause damage to the team and the career of the cyberathlete. In the so-called mental games, such as in some Olympic modalities such as the shooting sport, the physical strength is little observable; nevertheless, elements such as memory, agility, and concentration are highly activated and not easily observable by the public.

“I must keep the body active in order to get the best performance and to solve the problem with my back. Now, I am a little more cautious to be able to play any longer”. (Takeshi)

“To be the best, it is required a lot of discipline, dedication, and the most important is to enjoy what you are doing. Love, dedication, and discipline are basic in any sports” (Minerva)

“I believe that I am an athlete due to my training routine. We train mentally and physically for 8, 12 hours. Such an effort, the passion is like any other athlete”. (Yang)

“Electronic sports are a sport in which one must train a lot; it is required to be mentally well in order to get a good output. It is required to be focused; one must have determination” (Luskka)

Competitiveness

Closely connected to sport is the competition that has its etymology in the competitive Latin – com – ‘together’, petio – ‘aim at, seek’, thus resulting in ‘strive or contend for (something)’. It is about a joint strength in which all the participants try to reach a level of excellence that also depends on the relationship set with the opponent, which means, the competition does not occur without the competitiveness with others. For Hyland (1978), in the sportive competition here is a non-casual approximation that clearly produces compatibility between the participants. The preference by the competition is one of the elite athlete’s brands, whether he is an Olympic or cyberathlete (Bourdieu, 1978; Douglas and Carless, 2006), whether by the emotion, by the social recognition, or by the visibility triggered overcoming the limits, competitiveness serves to stimulate the performance. Being endowed of ability for the game is not enough to play well. Athletes want to win, and mainly, they want to be better than their opponents are. The competition is a joint effort towards excellence, as far as it satisfies the best of our possibilities (Pereira et al., 2023).

“I am very competitive. To become a professional, one must want to win from another person” (Esa)

“Competition made me dedicate a lot more. I realized that I wanted to make it for much longer, if possible”. (Takeshi)

“Competition brings me happiness. It is the purpose of my life, something I like to do” (Luskka)

“Competing is the best; being focused is having a strength, a desire to be the best” (Minerva)

“Training, training. My aim was the next competition, and then the next” (Flávio Canto)

“Every competition our team was participating I had to prove anything, being always the best” (Fofão)

“In 1992, I participated in an international São Silvestre race; I was in the fourth place, and that ended up opening some doors for me” (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

“The Olympic Games do not have just that spirit of competition. It is the whole world gathered in just one place, thousands of athletes, several languages, traditions, and cultures. And being in the first place, being the best in a competition is magic” (Serginho)

“I wanted to be the first in the world someday in my life. It did not care if it would be a World Game, the Olympic Games or any other competition. My purpose was someday to be at the front” (Cesar Cielo)

Competition and the search for the best output are inherent characteristics of the sports. In the event of esports, the desire to win another player is bigger than playing against the computer, that performs programmed instructions. Such confrontation of the cyberathlete who is in front of a screen is a motivation in the search for excellence. Whalen (2013) and Beilock and Gray (2007) studying the challenges associated with the performance in front of spectators and concluded that the added presence of public in video game tournaments would create a competitive experience similar to that of the athletes in traditional sports.

“Playing against the machine is something where everyone is able to succeed, but you are playing against a person who is thinking competitively”. (Yang)

“When you are winning, you feel that excitement and the fans that seem to be pushing you. So, you get the strength you miss” (Vanderlei Cordeiro de Lima)

Conclusion

There is no doubt that esports have been converted into a major societal phenomenon, and it is also a powerful entertainment market, capable to awake the interest from the Olympic Movement that starts discussing the possibility to include it in the Olympic program. A sportive modality is supported by its practitioners, today spread all over the world and connected in real time utilizing different electronic equipment.

It is possible to assert before the evidence collected with Olympic medal winner athletes and Brazilian cyberathletes, that there are many similarities between them both related to the training, dedication to the competitions, in the search for the excellence.

If in the beginning, the Olympic athlete performed his achievements in real time in environments occupied by spectators, in the contemporary days, he has his performance projected by the communication means, making him a planetary recognition being. By its turn, cyberathletes were born and developed in a game environment where the mental and motor skills are presented as inseparable.

Before this, it is expected that the sports being pre-

sented to the future involve physical and mental skills pointing for a new dimension of the assertive to the motto *citius, altius, fortius*.

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