



THE FUTURE OF SPORTS: COEXISTENCE OF FOLK GAMES, TRADITIONAL SPORTS, AND ESPORTS

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ABSTRACT: Games play a crucial role in the development and advancement of individuals. They offer diverse business models and revenue opportunities that contribute to the global economy. The earliest known board games, discovered in Turkey, are approximately 5000 years old. Most of these ancient games involved dice and were designed for two players. Folk games, traditional sports, and e-sports each hold unique cultural and social importance. They embody the values, customs, and beliefs of the communities in which they are played. All these forms of play foster a sense of identity, community, and challenge, whether physical or mental. Although e-sports are still in their early stages and the industry lacks full standardization, there have been efforts to regulate this field. However, these attempts have not achieved the anticipated success for various reasons. Despite the distinct differences among traditional games, folk games, and e-sports, they share numerous similarities. Each category possesses its own strengths and weaknesses, yet they also offer solutions to address these challenges. Keywords: folk games, esports, traditional games.

INTRODUCTION: A fundamental comprehension of 'play' is essential for establishing an accurate definition of games. 'Play' can be characterized as a collection of activities undertaken for enjoyment and pleasure. The driving force behind 'Play' is intrinsic, meaning it is pursued for internal satisfaction rather than external rewards. The notion of 'Play' extends beyond humans, as numerous animals, particularly birds and mammals, also partake in it.

'Play' is often perceived as lacking purpose; however, this is not universally true. When 'Play' is organized within a structured framework, it transforms into a game. A structured framework primarily involves the presence of objectives, rules, and mechanics. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman articulate that "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules that result in a quantifiable outcome."

The motivation to engage in games is not exclusively intrinsic. Games can also be played competitively within an organized context. When games are conducted in this manner, they evolve into Sports. Sports are governed by a specific set of rules, and their outcomes can be influenced by skill, chance, strategy, or a combination of these elements. Sports are inherently entertaining to watch and represent a significant sector within the economy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GAMES: Games hold significant value across various fields.

Regarding Individual Development: Games play a crucial role in the growth and advancement of an individual. It is a common misconception that games are childish and primarily intended for children; however, they are vital at every stage of an individual's development.

In Early Years: Games contribute to the development of numerous attributes in individuals. These characteristics can either support personal growth or enhance the ability to collaborate within a group. Personal development traits include accuracy, strength, balance, and dexterity, while traits that foster group collaboration encompass leadership, teamwork, coordination, and management.

In Middle Age: Games can also serve as a means to strengthen relationships and enjoy quality time with loved ones. Additionally, they are effective for stress relief.

In Later Years: Games that emphasize strategy and tactics can help keep the mind engaged, which is beneficial for memory retention in older age. Typically, games played during this stage are less physically demanding and focus more on mental skills

Grounded in Cultural Relevance: Games also serve as a medium to convey social norms, values, and traditions, particularly folk games that possess a rich and diverse history along with deep philosophical roots. A notable example is the game of Snake and Ladders, which is a contemporary adaptation of the ancient Indian game 'Moksha Patha.' This game imparts lessons to children about the significance of following a virtuous path to attain 'moksha,' illustrating life's unpredictability through the use of dice and the perils of sin through the imagery of snakes.

Furthermore, games play a crucial role in reflecting cultural identity. They can embody the identity of a culture through their themes, rules, restrictions, and mechanics. Additionally, games can represent culture

through the narratives woven within them. The portrayal of characters and cultural elements also serves to reflect cultural identity.

SPORTS AND GAMES FUNCTION AS SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: Sports and games have historically served as significant social institutions and will persist in this role in the future. Numerous historical instances illustrate how sports and games have influenced political and social movements. For instance, during the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, John Carlos and Tommie Smith highlighted the issues of racism and the living conditions of African Americans by raising their fists during the playing of the US national anthem. Their actions garnered widespread attention, particularly because they had secured the gold and silver medals in the 200-meter race. This moment is still referred to as the 'Black Power Salute.' Similarly, Muhammad Ali, regarded as the greatest boxer of all time, refused to comply with the mandatory draft into the US Army during the Vietnam War. His refusal was a protest against participating in a conflict that did not directly affect the American populace. As a consequence, Muhammad Ali faced the revocation of his titles and boxing license.

FROM A FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE: Games and sports offer various business models and revenue sources that contribute to the global economy. Each sport encompasses its own economic sectors, generating significant employment opportunities and additional advantages for a large workforce. Furthermore, companies have the opportunity to engage directly with individuals, making sports an ideal platform for marketing and branding. Businesses leverage sports and games to advertise products, enhance brand identity, and connect with their audience.

Additionally, companies can pursue sponsorships and partnerships to boost their sales and embed themselves in the consumers' consciousness. There are also firms that specialize in talent management, which includes the recruitment, training, and retention of players and other personnel.

THE HISTORY OF GAMES:

- **The Earliest Evidence of Gaming:** Games have existed alongside human civilization for millennia. They are a universal aspect of culture, with evidence of their existence found in nearly every society. The most prominent artifacts are board games, as the materials used to create them have fortuitously survived to the present day. The oldest known board games were discovered in Turkey, dating back approximately 5000 years. These ancient games typically utilized dice and were designed for two

players. The earliest documented board game is 'senet,' which was played in ancient Egypt. This game mirrored the religious beliefs of the Egyptians, with the objective being to advance pieces to the end of the board. It is thought to symbolize the soul's journey through life and into the afterlife. Unfortunately, the specific rules governing the game play have been lost over time.

'The Game of Ur' is recognized as the oldest and most thoroughly documented board game. Numerous descriptions exist that detail the rules and components of the game, which was believed to be popular between 2600 and 2400 BC. While primarily found in Egypt, similar games have also been uncovered in Iran, Sri Lanka, Syria, and other regions. Archaeological findings in the Harappa Valley civilization (circa 2300 BC) reveal a significant presence of cube and oblong dice, suggesting that board games were also common in India. The Rig-Veda (circa 1000 BC) references the use of dice, and ancient texts such as the Mahabharata indicate that board games were favored by kings and nobility. Chess is said to have originated in India and was later popularized globally by the Persians. The modern game of Snakes and Ladders is derived from 'Vaikuntapaali,' 'gyan chaupar,' 'Kailas path,' or 'Mokshapath.' Additionally, the game of carom is believed to have Indian roots and remains widely enjoyed in the Indian subcontinent.

In the East, Japan, China, and Korea have long histories with the board game GO, which is still played today with largely unchanged rules. The game was first mentioned in the 4th century in the historical records of Zuo Zhuan. There are various forms of chess known as xianquii in China, Janggi in Korea, and Shogi in Japan.

Playing cards are thought to have originated in China. The earliest mentions of gaming tiles or domino tiles date back to no later than 900 AD, and these are believed to have been utilized for gambling purposes. Additionally, pre-modern Chinese engaged in games akin to golf and football, known as Cuju and Chuiwan, respectively.

The most prevalent game in Africa is Mancala, which is classified as a 'sowing game.' Numerous variants of Mancala still exist today, and it is believed to have emerged during the 6th and 7th centuries. Dice games were widely enjoyed across South America, with the Mayans and Aztecs known to have played a gambling game called patolli.

Across the globe, there are numerous engravings and descriptions that depict board games, card games, and ball games, illustrating the universal nature of games throughout history.

- **EXAMINING THE EVOLUTION OF GAMES THROUGHOUT HISTORY:** Games can be classified into specific categories through three distinct interventions: rules, structures, and mechanics. These categories help to clarify the game's purpose. For instance, a non-contact competition aims to identify the best participant, while a contact competition relies on teamwork and strategy. Typically, contact competitions are more appealing to spectators, whereas puzzles highlight mental capabilities, among other aspects. The purpose of the game determines its appropriate category. Rules, structures, and mechanics enable these games to distinguish themselves from one another. From this perspective, it becomes relatively straightforward to trace the evolution of games over time.**Folk games** Within a cultural group or community, traditions are transmitted from the older generation to the younger generation. In addition to traditions, games are also handed down. The games that are inherited in this manner are referred to as folk games. Folk games are characterized by their flexible nature regarding rules and structure. Many folk games have various versions that differ based on geographical location. Typically, folk games are straightforward, do not require significant financial investment to set up, and are generally accessible to all. However, there are also folk games that are held in high regard and necessitate considerable effort to participate in. Folk games play a crucial role as they embody the cultural heritage of a community.
- **Traditional sports:** Traditional sports are activities that have been handed down through generations. These sports tend to feature heightened competition, which enhances their appeal to spectators, as the close contests make for more engaging viewing. Traditional sports are characterized by clearly defined rules and structured game designs. Due to the strict nature of these rules, the emergence of various adaptations is limited, regardless of the geographical context in which they are played. Many of the games that are enjoyed and followed worldwide can be classified as traditional sports, as their rigidity contributes to a sense of stability and uniformity, even when played across different nations.
- **E-sports:** E-sports, or Electronic Sports, refer to games that are played competitively within a digital environment. This form of gaming is more structured and competitive, featuring professional teams competing against one another. E-sports primarily depend on hand-eye coordination, endurance, and strategic thinking. The emphasis is more on mental capabilities than on physical prowess. Nevertheless, this does not imply that physical fitness is disregarded; in fact, optimal mental performance necessitates proper physical conditioning.

Due to their inherent characteristics, E-sports are significantly more accessible to a diverse audience. They transcend geographical, physical, and gender limitations, thanks to technological advancements. While it has been noted that traditional folk games possess a rich and diverse cultural heritage, E-sports foster a cultural identity that unites individuals across kinship, age, gender, and geographical boundaries.

AN ANALYSIS OF GAMES: Folk games, traditional sports, and e-sports each possess unique cultural and social importance. They embody the values, customs, and beliefs prevalent in the regions where they are played. All these forms of play foster a sense of identity, community, and challenge, whether physical or mental. Examining these archetypes allows us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the games that belong to them. This understanding can assist future game developers in creating more resilient games by drawing inspiration to enhance various strengths while mitigating weaknesses. A more robust game will consequently lead to a healthier industry, benefiting the entire economy, including companies that utilize this space for marketing their products or enhancing their brand image, as well as partners and sponsors aiming to ensure profitable management.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF GAME DESIGN IN RELATION TO ITS EVOLUTION: The evolution of game design is a fundamental aspect of the gaming industry. Game design serves as the foundational element of any game. With a common framework established, even minor modifications can lead to significant transformations in the game.

- **Rules:** The rules are intended to delineate the boundaries of the game, establishing a framework that facilitates player interaction. They also ensure that the game remains balanced and free from exploitable loopholes. Even the most minor adjustments to the rules can result in substantial evolution of the game.
- **Structure:** The structure of a game encompasses its objectives and mechanics. It defines the manner in which players engage with one another, thus playing a crucial role in the game's evolution. While the structure can encourage certain strategies or play styles, it cannot entirely dictate how the game is played, as human creativity and innovation are inherently unpredictable.
- **Tools used:** The tools utilized in a game may consist of physical components (such as balls, cards, or boards) or software that creates the game and servers that run the program. These tools are instrumental in the evolution of the game. Additionally, the availability and accessibility of these

tools significantly influence a game's popularity and the number of players who can afford to participate.

THE EVOLUTION OF GAMES IN RELATION TO GEOGRAPHY: Games that lack rigid structures and clearly defined rules often adapt according to geographical factors, primarily due to convenience. The tools required for gameplay may be plentiful in one area while being limited in another. Rather than abandoning the game entirely, modifying certain components becomes a more practical solution. Consequently, numerous local variations of games emerge across different geographical regions.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in folk games. Many folk games exhibit variations in rules, names, structures, and the tools utilized, all influenced by the specific physical location in which they are played. The same principle applies to electronic games. Even when the initial premise of a game remains constant, different servers accommodating players from various locations develop distinct strategies and counter-strategies, resulting in diverse gameplay experiences.

Furthermore, the political and religious contexts of different regions also influence the evolution of games, as games often reflect the social values and norms of the communities in which they are played. For instance, chess, which originated in India with less abstract pieces, underwent transformation in Persia, where the pieces became more abstract to align with Islamic beliefs regarding idol worship.

THE EVOLUTION OF GENDER ROLES AND IDENTITIES: The progression of games is significantly influenced by their intended purpose. One key factor that shapes this purpose is the gender of the prospective players. The design and rules of games are tailored to accommodate individuals in society based on the gender of those who will engage with them. This phenomenon is particularly evident in traditional folk games. Games designed for males often reward aggression and emphasize physical strength, while those designed for females tend to reward coordination and prioritize management skills.

THE EVOLUTION OF GAMES IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS: Not all games are accessible to everyone, nor are they played uniformly by all participants. The socio-economic status of players significantly influences the way a game is played, its evolution, and the behaviors exhibited during gameplay. Historically, games favored by individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds have emphasized mental acuity and strategic thinking, in contrast to local adaptations of the same games in

various regions. As these games ascend the socio-economic hierarchy, new rules are introduced to enhance complexity, fostering the development of strategies and tactics.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY CONCERNING EVOLUTIONARY CHANGES: The evolution of technology has a significant impact on various systems, including gaming. Technological advancements frequently lead to modifications within these systems. Games have similarly undergone transformations due to advancements in technology. One of the most prominent changes brought about by technological progress is the evolution of the objects utilized in games. As games become more structured and governed by rules, the objects within them are refined to better serve their intended functions. For instance, while a cricket ball and a tennis ball may appear similar, they are designed to fulfill specific roles within their respective games.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN FOLK GAMES, TRADITIONAL GAMES, AND E-SPORTS: The primary elements that characterize traditional sports include physical activity, stringent rules and regulations, and a primary emphasis on health and wellness. Traditional sports prioritize physical skill and endurance. In contrast, folk games are defined by community involvement and cultural significance. E-sports, on the other hand, are characterized by their digital platforms, virtual environments, and a focus on strategy and mental agility.

Despite the clear distinctions in focus among these categories, they share numerous similarities. All these games have developed from a common foundation and have built upon it. The traditional sports we recognize today were once folk games in specific geographical areas that evolved and became standardized.

Although e-sports may appear to be the most distinct from the other two categories, they still exhibit commonalities. E-sports offer accessibility, creating a level playing field for most participants and helping to eliminate barriers related to age, gender, or geographical location. This has fostered the emergence of a new social community for players, audiences, and managers of e-sports—a community with its own culture and identity. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to assert that e-sports also possess their own cultural and social significance.

The connection between traditional sports and e-sports may not be immediately evident, as the majority of e-sports' focus lies on the mental aspect, in contrast to the physical emphasis of traditional sports.

Moreover, technological advancements do not always have a direct influence on gameplay. The emergence of mass printing, for example, revolutionized the perception of games on a broader scale. This innovation placed greater importance on accurately recording scores and disseminating results to a wider audience through printed materials. Mass media facilitated companies in promoting their brands and products more effectively. Additionally, the internet has made gaming accessible to a vast audience, overcoming physical and geographical limitations. There are, however, games that integrate physical skills within the realm of e-sports. Titles like Wii Connect and Beat Saber are electronic games that blend physical abilities into their gameplay. E-sports and traditional sports share comparable business models, albeit with minor variations in their operational methods.

CONCLUSION: In spite of the numerous distinctions among traditional games, folk games, and e-sports, they share significant commonalities. Each category possesses its unique advantages and disadvantages, yet they also offer solutions to address these challenges. Games are essential regardless of the era, with both contemporary and historical games evolving along the most accessible paths. However, future games are likely to be synthesized. If such synthesized games are developed with meticulous attention to detail and incorporate the values that made earlier and current games effective, they are expected to be more resilient. A resilient game contributes to the establishment of a sustainable and robust system for all stakeholders involved, whether it aims to educate future generations, foster a meaningful social and cultural identity, or ensure financial viability through effective business models and revenue generation.

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