

Livestreaming: an analysis of the motivations for subscribing to channels on the Twitch platform in Brazil

Streaming ao vivo: uma análise das motivações para inscrição em canais da plataforma Twitch

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ABSTRACT

We explored the phenomenon of subscription to channels on the Twitch platform in Brazil. The objective of this study was to conduct an exploratory analysis of a new form of digital entertainment that is present in contemporary times, livestreams. Using data gathered with a focus group, it proposes a classification of motivations for that consumption decision. Finally, the results obtained give rise to a reflection on how the consumption of such entertainment services are influenced by the identification of gamers with content creators and the sense of community that outcomes from such interaction, both of which are strongly associated with the growth of new media and its uses in contemporary times.

Keywords: Twitch. Livestreaming. Identity. Sense of Community. Gamer culture.

RESUMO

Este trabalho analisa o fenômeno das inscrições em canais da plataforma Twitch no Brasil. Toma-se o caso de participantes de um grupo de foco para suscitar a classificação de motivações de tal decisão de consumo. O objetivo do trabalho consiste em apresentar uma análise exploratória sobre uma nova forma de entretenimento digital que se faz presente na contemporaneidade, as live streams. Por fim, os resultados obtidos ensejam uma reflexão a respeito de como o consumo de tais serviços de entretenimento é influenciado pela identificação dos gamers com os criadores de conteúdo e pelo senso de comunidade que advém de tal interação, ambos fortemente associados ao crescimento das novas mídias e a seus usos na contemporaneidade.

Palavras-chave: Twitch. Streaming ao vivo. Identidade. Senso de comunidade. Cultura gamer.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME AND PROBLEM OF THE STUDY AND ITS CONTEXTUALIZATION

In the early 2010s, a new form of entertainment became popular: livestreaming, a phenomenon that today attracts the attention of millions of viewers daily (WISE, 2022). Among the pioneers of the movement is the Twitch platform, which has an average of 30 million viewers per day (WISE, 2022). Much of the revenue generated on streaming platforms comes from ads, but other means of generating revenue from the viewer have also been created.

Twitch, the focus of this work, has developed a business model based on monthly subscriptions or monthly fees. The platform has millions of content developers, which are made available in channels, and some of these, selected by the site itself, can become partners and receive subscriptions from users. These subscriptions cost between 7.90 and 40 BRL per month depending on the level chosen and provide a series of benefits to the viewer, such as: subscriber badge, personalized emotes (an emote is a special Twitch emoticon), ad-free viewing and access to the chat restricted to subscribers. Revenue generated through these subscriptions is then split between the content developer and Twitch itself. Using this model, Twitch enabled the platform to grow, attracting millions of streamers who were interested in this new career (MURPHY, 2022; WISE, 2022).

It is worth mentioning here the important connection that Twitch has with the video game culture. The platform was born with a focus on streaming game content and has developed a loyal user base on the site for gameplay viewing (the game itself being played). Games have been associated with a social, leisure activity. The broadcast format carried out by Twitch allows the content creator and his audience to interact in real time, bringing closer and socializing a relationship that is traditionally distant. The gamer culture is present in many elements of the site, from the layout to the use of emotes in the platform's chat.

Many of the channels (content creators) have loyal audiences that develop specific languages and references, thus cultivating a sense of community among the users themselves, in short, a culture of its own. This sense of community and the benefits offered by the site itself, for example, the absence of advertisements in the transmission, would be some of the motivating factors for a viewer to subscribe to a given channel.

Thus, our study investigated the motivational factors acting in the decision to purchase a subscription, since it is possible to watch the content of the platform for free. It then proceeds with the following research questions: What are the reasons that people subscribe to channels on the Twitch platform? What is the influence of each one in this purchase decision process?

LIVESTREAM

Livestreams can be given meaning in two different ways: technology and product or service. In this research, the service concept was used. Even so, it is interesting to expose the technological aspect.

Streaming technology is nothing more than the exchange of information through a computer network. More specifically, in computing terms, streaming is how this data exchange happens (GOMES; LOURENÇO, 2012; SILVA, 2019). In the words of Gomes and Lourenço (2012); streaming is a technology that sends multimedia information by transferring data over computer networks. Users view a multimedia file over the internet. The big differences between streaming and downloading are the type of servers and the protocols used. On the other hand, the displayed file is not saved or stored in a folder, as in a download.

Over time, these same platforms also included livestreaming in their scope of action, allowing these transmissions to occur in real time. Rodriguez-Gil et al. (2018) illustrate the live feature: livestreaming usually designates the stream transmission of videos that are broadcast live, while they are recorded with a delay of a few seconds (RODRIGUEZ-GIL et al., 2018).

Even before it was called Twitch, Justin Kan, founder of justin.tv, created the site in 2005 as a big brother-style project. The entrepreneur filmed and shared videos of his own life with a webcam attached to his head. This unusual action attracted an audience to the site that showed interest in the way the technology was being used. The presence of a chat allowed this audience to interact with Justin and with each other in real time (COOK, 2014).

In 2007, justin.tv released access so that any user of the website could make their own broadcast. This change significantly increased the number of users on the platform, who began to transmit different types of content. The most popular of these new themes was content focused on electronic games, more commonly called games. Realizing such popularity, platform executives adopted this niche as the main focus of the business, so that in February 2014 there was a rebranding of justin.tv, which was renamed Twitch, more focused on games (POPPER, 2014). In October of the same year, Twitch was purchased by the giant Amazon, for US\$ 970 million (COOK, 2014).

It is important to highlight the connection between the growth of the eSports segment and the growth of Twitch itself. For many spectators, the platform was the gateway to this competitive type of games. Tournaments began to be broadcast on the platform, and the number of viewers of the main events was already in the millions of viewers, among different means of transmission (CONFEDERAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE E-SPORTS, 2017; CARVALHO, 2020). Chart 1 highlights this growth.

The platform is still predominantly focused on games, but in 2020, largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic, non-gaming content (which does not involve

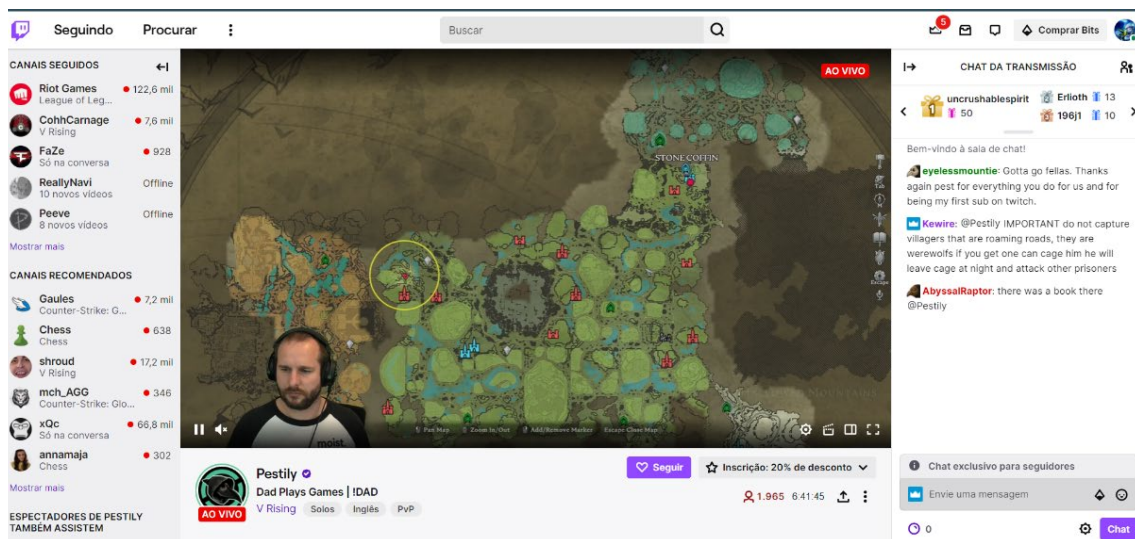
Chart 1. Growth of worldwide views in millions.

Year	eSports	Event	Views
2013	DOTA 2	The International	4.5
2016	League of Legends	World Championship	43
2017	League of Legends	World Championship	80
2018	League of Legends	World Championship	99.6

Source: adapted from Carvalho (2020).

electronic games) grew considerably in popularity (MICHAEL, 2021). Nowadays, categories that were left out during Twitch's rebranding are already highlighted, such as: "Only in conversation", "Sports", "Music" and several others.

Twitch transmissions specifically from the gamer category follow a conventional pattern, in which the streamer makes an audiovisual transmission showing the game he is playing at that moment (gameplay) and, in most cases, its physical image through a webcam. We point out that gameplay is not always shown in lives, as the creator often interacts with his viewers outside of a game. Associated with every broadcast is a real-time chat where viewers can dialogue with each other or with the streamer. This, in turn, usually interacts with the public through a microphone (HAMILTON; GARRETSON; KERNE, 2014). This typical stream model is shown in Figure 1.



Source: available at: <https://www.twitch.tv/pestily>. Accessed in: May 2022.

Figure 1. Example of streaming on Twitch platform.

There are basically two ways to generate revenue on Twitch: through advertisers or by selling digital products and services to viewers on the platform, including subscriptions. Part of the revenue is shared with the platform's partners, streamers who have become eligible to receive the benefits of the partner program by meeting certain criteria established by the site. As partners, content creators can receive submissions from viewers. Subscribing is one of the ways to support a streamer. By acquiring it, the viewer receives a series of benefits that also include the absence of ads when watching that channel, exclusive emotes, a subscriber badge and access to the restricted chat. Additionally, there may be other incentives subject to the discretion of each content creator, who has the means to establish their own rewards model. Examples of these incentives are exclusive access to the channel's community on other social networks, points programs and sweepstakes, and even a personal thank you spoken aloud during the stream.

There are three ways to obtain an application: one is by paying cash; the second, receiving a monthly fee as a gift from another user; and finally, members of

Amazon Prime are entitled to one subscription per month at no additional cost (MURPHY, 2022). This study focused on the first means of obtaining an application, as this is how you can be sure that the buyer sees value in the application itself. That said, some of the interviewees had registrations obtained by different means, but always having obtained at least one of them through specific payment.

This system in which the content creator receives a slice of the revenue generated, either through advertisements or subscriptions, has attracted many gamers in search of a new career. Livestreaming is increasingly seen as transforming the games industry itself, because it has generated a space for criticizing games and also, therefore, a form of advertising for developers and advertisers. In this context, advertisers are an important source of revenue for professional players, for presenters and for platforms (KAYTOUE et al., 2012). This movement has also been opening up space for independent developers to reach an audience and funding (JOHNSON; WOODCOCK, 2019b), since streamers are in this ecosystem with unprecedented influence, which helps to attract companies.

Another industry transformation vector pointed out by Johnson and Woodcock (2019b) is the effect of Twitch on the useful life of many products and on the way games are planned, demonstrating the survival or reemergence of older games, by bringing together the community of its fans on the Twitch platform. Finally, the authors argue that the platform has also been acting as a disseminator of knowledge behind product development.

CONSUMER IDENTITY

The element of identity in consumer use features prominently in studies of urban cultures, also supported by notions and literature from other scientific fields. Considering that the interaction and the abstract values and perceptions of individuals in the social dimension affect them as consumers reinforces the discussion in the areas of psychology and sociology over the last decades.

Woodward (2000) and Giddens (2002) provide perspectives on the cultural studies sphere and on modernity. It emerges that regarding individual daily decisions, less and less "incorporated norms" based on tradition fall, leading to the construction of new perceptions about themselves and about the different relationship groups. These are changes that lead to more reflective decisions and that shape innovative conduct. Each person's biography is a non-standard project, the result of individual choices and preferences (GIDDENS, 2002; BENAZZI, 2016).

In the modernity observed in Giddens (2002), the concept of lifestyle impacts the images constructed about oneself and about the subjects' group affiliations and belongings. This is the context in which the constitution of the subject and its forms of expression and relationship are subjected, not only in the affective and interactive dimensions, but also in the consumption one (BENAZZI, 2016). It is important to see that, at the origin of the concept of identity, the abstract factor is present when based on the differentiation that Castells (1999, p. 82) applies: "Identity, because of its character of self-definition, organizes meanings, while roles organize functions".

A greater effort to delimit the notion of identity adopted here also leads to the approach of Bauman (2005). The central question of identity operates around the definition of who one is, in a classificatory way. Individuals, thus, follow perceptions by joining communities of belonging, which function as reference points for identification. Communities explain identities when safeguarding the condition of choice. This is because communities differ, for the author, between those based on choice and those based on birth. National, ethnic and family groups, for example, have an absolute connection, "of life and destiny", while professional, affection, neighborhood groups and many others would be communities of individuals who believe and, therefore, constituted solely of a variety of ideas or principles. The differentiation becomes important when identifying the core of Bauman's (2005) reading, that is, the negotiable, transitory, revocable element of the individual's identity.

Such signs are not solidly fixed in time, let alone for life. It is not a matter of accepting sedimented values as a mechanism to help in life decisions (BENAZZI, 2016), but of focusing on the difference in terms of stability and commitment from the old style to contemporary life. High modernity, contemporaneity, is post-traditional. Therefore, it becomes possible to associate aspects of liquid modernity by Bauman (2005) and the formation and reflective constitution of self by Giddens (2002). Identity emptied of its rigid and innate aspect is understood as the set of meanings to be invented and not discovered, being in permanent negotiation and dispute (BENAZZI, 2016).

Reading Hall (2003) makes it possible to complement, for methodological purposes, the liquidity and negotiation movement of identity affiliations and their influences by distancing themselves from notions commonly associated with class categories, based on essentialist-economic analysis. We adopt here a criticism of the view that social class, emulating income level, is the central category or determinant of affiliations.

Thus, it was intended to observe in this study, as suggested by Solomon and Bamossy (2006), the relationship between consumption decisions on the Twitch platform and the social identity of its users. The possible types of self-classification that Twitch channel content consumers have are an applicable measure of the theoretical frameworks of Castells (1999), Giddens (2002) and Bauman (2005). Classifying self-perception as a reflection of the concept of identity can come from both the individual's lifestyle (in terms of consumption habits) and the sense of community.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sense of community is the concept addressed in this section, mainly using of understanding McMillan and Chavis (1986), since this social dimension is part of every transmission on the Twitch platform and can be the greatest motivating basis for channel subscriptions.

Unique content in a specific broadcast and the pleasure of interacting with and participating in the community of a broadcast were previously identified as reasons for engagement in streams (HAMILTON; GARRETSON; KERNE, 2014). In this

way, it is quite likely that this sense of community is also a motivator for subscription on the Twitch platform, as this offers benefits that directly affect belonging to the site's communities. A sense of community is a sense of belonging that members have, a feeling that members matter to each other and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met by their commitment to being together. The sense of community is then composed of four elements: affiliation, influence, reinforcement and shared emotional connection (MCMILLAN; CHAVIS, 1986).

The affiliation element represents this feeling of belonging, of knowing that one is part of the group and the community. This happens through a system of shared symbols that can include languages, rites of passage or clothing. Some of the most tangible benefits of channel subscriptions on the Twitch website are directly related to the membership element. An example is the acquisition of a subscriber badge that shows in the chat who is subscribed to that channel and for how long, as shown in Figure 2. Another important perk of subscriptions is obtaining personalized emotes in a specific channel, which further helps to build a unique language in the community.

< Subscriber Badges

Current Badges



Keep going! Your next badge slot will unlock on November 27, 2024

Source: available at: https://help.twitch.tv/s/article/subscriber-badge-guide?language=pt_BR.

Accessed in: May 2022.

Figure 2. Example of subscriber badge and its evolution.

Influence is a two-way street, because in a community each member must feel that he has the possibility to influence the group, at the same time that the group influences all its members. On Twitch, subscribers exert more influence on the chat of some channels that restrict the chat itself to subscribers only. In this way, only those who are actually part of the community participate. Also, many of the communities formed on Twitch streams expand to other media outlets to extend and maintain communication. These means include social networks such as Facebook and Reddit, as well as voice and instant messaging platforms such as Discord. Through these other means, community members can have even more influence.

Reinforcement, also described as integration and satisfaction of needs, is present in communities through the feeling, on the part of its members, that the group brings them some benefit. Strong communities understand that coming together will benefit everyone. These needs satisfied in a community can be functional or hedonistic.

It is possible to establish a parallel between these types of need, in the terms of Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005), and what McMillan and Chavis (1986) point out in the reinforcement of communities. People are attracted to others who have skills or competencies that benefit them in some way. For example, the satisfaction of this attraction or need may be purely functional, such as a search for information among members. Hedonistic needs are also present in reinforcement, and one of them demonstrated in the sense of community is the status of being a member. Sharing and wanting to be with people who share the same set of values are also two of the rewards of reinforcement, which can be extended to people who share the same lifestyle. Through the Twitch platform, for example, individuals can realize and reinforce the gamer lifestyle by participating in a community that shares the same lifestyle and spending time and money with it.

The final element is the shared emotional connection, which weighs heavily on the strength of a community. This emotional connection between members is developed in large part by continuous participation in a way that forms a historical background shared by members. A strong community demonstrates a willingness to continue sharing stories. The clip function on the Twitch platform allows viewers to create short videos of what just happened in a stream. In this way, it is easier to record and share unique moments that can compose this story and respective emotional connection shared in communities.

It is important to note that the Twitch platform, despite offering the option to register, is free, allowing you to be part of a community on the site even without being registered. Signing up is just a booster of belonging to these communities, with greater or lesser importance depending on the channel. Some streamers do not limit their chats to subscribers only at any time, for example, despite having that option. Overall, on the Twitch platform, the figure of the content creator (the streamer) is the point of convergence for these communities. As such, they are both a central symbol and the most influential figures in the communities formed in their channels.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In this research, there was a stage of data collection in the field carried out through a focus group mediated by technology, because of the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, with typical characteristics of an exploratory research. According to Malhotra (2006, p. 157), focus groups “with less than eight participants hardly generate the momentum and group dynamics necessary for a successful session”; however, the author states that mini-groups with a moderator and four or five interviewees are adequate when “the problems at hand require more extensive investigation than would be possible to carry out in a standard group” (MALHOTRA, 2006, p. 162), which was the case of this data collection. Thus, the focus group was composed of six male Brazilians who had not had prior access to the questions. The information they had when entering the Zoom room was that of a

conversation about subscriptions on the Twitch platform. Thus, priority was given to the spontaneity of responses.

For a sequence consistent with the objectives of a focus group, a moderation was established, carried out by the researcher themselves. This method obeys a qualitative research formula established in the field of marketing and other social sciences, in line with the considerations provided in Révillion (2001). Accordingly, a way is sought to achieve the following: to introduce the discussion from the desired angle and keep it alive; not to intuit right or wrong answers, leaving room for interviewees (IERVOLINO; PELICONI, 2001); to encourage participation and distribute the speaking time equally as much as possible, to eliminate biases (COPELAND, 1924); to build relationships with informants to deepen comments and answers considered relevant by the group or by the researcher; and to observe, as much as possible, the non-verbal communication and the rhythm of the participants in the planned time (FERNANDES; ANGELO; MARTINS, 2016).

The debate, which was divided into periods – referring to questions – evolved according to the moderator's convenience, in the sense of seeking a conceptual sequence of the work, as well as communicative fluidity. No time was previously determined for each question or subject, so that following a sequence of more general themes towards more specific ones, they naturally did not consume the same amount of time between them. The question/subsequent period was introduced when there was an exhaustion of elements considered relevant in the previous subject or when an idea emerged that was very similar to a planned subsequent questioning. Following this logic, for the benefit of communicative dynamics, it was decided to invert the order of questions previously imagined on two occasions during the 90 minutes. The data produced were transcribed, plus notes and reflections made by the observer.

It should also be noted that throughout the study the ethical principles of research were safeguarded, namely the right to self-determination, the right to privacy, the right to anonymity and the right to confidentiality. Finally, a systematic analysis focused on the study's topic of interest was carried out, during which categories of interest emerged.

An interpretative, systematic baseline analysis focused on the study's topic of interest was carried out, throughout which categories of interest emerged through content analysis of the informants' talks (BARDIN, 2009). Additionally, the intensity of what was observed in the participants' interaction was classified into three levels: strong, medium and weak. When all or almost all showed relevance to a category in their responses, the intensity was classified as strong. When about half expressed relevance of the category, it was classified as medium, and the rest classified as weak.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

To start the conversation in the focus group, there was a brief moment of greeting and thanks for the presence of all participants. Their names have been omitted to preserve their personal privacy, which was also informed to them at the

beginning of the communication. Gifts will therefore be represented by a single letter. Then, a brief presentation by each participant was requested. Their data are displayed in Chart 2.

Chart 2. Profile of focus group participants.

Interviewee	Age	City	Topics of interest	Level of knowledge
X.	30	Rio de Janeiro (RJ)	Games, sports	High
N.	23	Fortaleza (CE)	Games	High
V.	29	Rio de Janeiro (RJ)	Games	Medium
T.	26	Rio de Janeiro (RJ)	Games, sports	Very high
P.	20	Brasília (DF)	Games	Medium
J.	28	Rio de Janeiro (RJ)	Games, cooking	High

Initially, the central question of the research problem was posed: What were the reasons for you to subscribe to Twitch channels? The result of this question is displayed in Chart 3, which encompasses aggregated interpretations of all data collection and approximates the general conclusions of this study. The concepts of reasons for purchase according to Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005) were associated, additionally performing a classification by type (personal or social), in addition to indicating its intensity (as already briefly described in this text).

Chart 3. Ranking of reasons for subscribing to Twitch.

Reason	Type	Intensity
Support the creator	Personal	Strong
No ads	Personal	Strong
Help personal friends	Personal	Medium
Access to community	Social	Medium
Compatible schedule	Personal	Medium
Get news or knowledge	Personal	Medium
Personal interactions with creator	Personal and social	Weak
Sweepstakes and points programs	Personal	Weak
Subscriber badge	Social	Weak
Emotes	Personal and social	Weak
Regionalism	Social	Weak

From the analysis of Chart 3, it can be seen that personal reasons are more frequent. Even so, the importance of the social type reason, access to the community, is considerably relevant. As will be discussed below, the sense of community is significantly valued by all participants, but it is not considered a reason for registration, as it is possible to be part of communities for free. Therefore, the predominant majority of personal reasons involving a subscription are recognized, but the exception is made that we can relativize the impact of social reasons in general, largely because of the sense of community.

The reasons most valued by the group in answering this question were explored further with two questions in sequence, which aimed to deepen the understanding of the question: *Why do you want to support creators?*; and *Why do you think it is important not to see ads?*

Next, the needs involved in the decision to purchase a subscription are pointed out. The concepts of needs according to Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005) were associated, performing a classification by type (utilitarian and hedonistic). The classification of needs is presented in Chart 4. The interviewees brought them up naturally (and not only through question stimuli), but also proactively through the debate on information and aspects that they value both to consume and to stop consuming. In this sense, the focus group participants went further and brought relevant aspects to the group and to the research itself throughout the debate, which greatly contributed to the construction of charts that summarize the results.

Chart 4. Ranking of needs.

Need	Type	Intensity
Support the creator	Utilitarian	Strong
No ads	Utilitarian	Strong
Help personal friends	Utilitarian	Medium
Access to community	Utilitarian and hedonistic	Medium
Compatible schedule	Utilitarian	Medium
Get news or knowledge	Utilitarian	Medium
Personal interaction with creator	Utilitarian and hedonistic	Weak
Sweepstakes and points programs	Utilitarian	Weak
Subscriber badge	Utilitarian and hedonistic	Weak
Emotes	Hedonistic	Weak
Regionalism	Utilitarian and hedonistic	Weak

We noted a predominance of the utilitarian type in the identified needs. These represent the functional elements of a membership's benefits. A dose of interpretation was used to categorize some of the needs into more than one type, given the slightly greater scope than the Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005) examples for some of the needs.

The absence of advertisements was emphasized with heightened enthusiasm by panelists when the question was introduced: *Why do you think it is important not to see advertisements?* Unlike the rest of the meeting, in which each person's turn was respected, everyone spoke at the same time, in unanimous revolt against the announcements. The opinion was clearly of the very strong type that ads get in the way of the experience on the platform. Expressions such as *"very boring"*, *"repetitive"* and *"monotonous"* were used. One of the main negative points mentioned was the fact that the experience is interrupted and that a moment of climax can be completely lost, which is especially harmful during exhibitions of eSports championships.

Next, we sought to address the issue of complementarity in consumption. Considering the insertion level of the Twitch platform in the electronic games sector and the interest shown by the informants in it in previous stages of the conversation, the question to the group was: Do you play because you watch or do you watch because you play? The answer in this case was unanimous: all participants reported that the two reasons complement each other. It was said by J. that games he plays make him seek out and find previously unknown streamers making use of the same game content. P. mentioned that he likes to acquire knowledge involving games in which he works and that *"watching gives an incentive to play"*. There is therefore a relationship of reciprocity between the content to be watched and the habits that are practiced.

In the games section of Twitch this relationship is quite clear. For informants, the games they watch are typically the same ones they are currently playing and vice versa. Thus, this study reinforces the idea that popular streamers follow popular games or even make them popular. This is the case of the game *Among Us*, which grew to unprecedented proportions through its sharing on Twitch by a well-known streamer called Sodapoppin (JAIN, 2022).

Next, the concept of a sense of community was approached through a series of questions. It was identified that community is one of the most prominent elements in the Twitch live stream service, as participants addressed this theme repeatedly, demonstrating conscious familiarity and engagement. The first questions were: do you participate in the chat on the platform? Have you made any acquaintances or friends through chat? The interviewees did not prove to be such avid participants in the streams' chat, nor did they make acquaintances or friends through it.

That said, two of the panelists briefly interrupted the objectivity that presided over the conversation to tell stories related to the chat. T. mentioned his positive experiences with "ganks" or "raids" when using the chat, which are a platform feature to transfer viewers from a stream that is ending to another one in progress, making there a lot of interactivity at that moment in the chat. Another positive experience mentioned was that of X., who recorded a remarkable moment of a transmission that he watched through the Clip resource. X. shared this clip with other chat members and the streamer himself, which made them very grateful amid much laughter.

These two examples of chat interaction can be related to the concept of emotional connection shared by McMillan and Chavis (1986), that is, a community shares historical baggage and reinforces its ties when it does so. Both participants seemed to show a lot of positive affect towards the community when telling these stories, so their submissions were well justified for themselves.

At this point in the conversation, the subscriber badge was also mentioned as a means of attracting more attention in the chat, to communicate with the streamer more easily. The participants did not show much interest in this facet of the badges, explaining that, in general, there are so many subscribers in popular broadcasts that the badges fail to attract attention. From the comments to this question,

the aesthetic aspect of the badge did not seem to have much relevance either. Therefore, the entry badge was considered a weak reason for entries.

A continuation of this question was: do you go beyond the Twitch environment using other means of communication or social networks related to these same communities? In the answers to this question, it was possible to perceive that there is a strong involvement with the community because there is intense traffic to more than one environment. The digital communication network Discord was cited by almost all members of the conversation as an extension of content and communication involving a specific community. Groups on Telegram, WhatsApp and Facebook were also mentioned. X. and T. mentioned making friends through these community extensions, which enhances belonging to these groups. It is important to remember, at this point, that access to these networks is limited to subscribers, as an incentive established by the streamers themselves.

The last question addressed the lifestyle theme directly. The lifestyle most associated with the platform in question, also verified in the group, was mentioned by name to test the affinity with the categorization: do you consider yourself gamers or some other similar designation? Only two of the participants considered themselves gamers, J. and T. The first demonstrated knowledge about the platform, mentioning its history and its relationship with games. The conceptions about the gamer concept differed among the participants. Some connected it to the idea of professional esports players, and others just to the hobby of playing video games.

N., in an attempt to distance himself from the gamer identity, proposed the term "*nerd*", as someone who follows various topics related to streams. N., T. and P., between relaxed tones, agreed that they were nerds. P. even used one of the elements of the lifestyle concept when exemplifying his inclusion in the nerdy group: "*I have nerdy attitudes*".

It was concluded that the denomination of an identity is quite subjective in the responses and in line with aspects of the concept of identity according to Castells (1999), Giddens (2002) and Bauman (2005). Even if the participants demonstrated connection with consumption habits, culture and communities that revolve around the electronic games sector throughout the focus group, it is perceived that there would be a high probability of fitting into the gamer lifestyle. Such self-perception, however, is diffuse, so that some of the focus group participants themselves do not accept the term well for different reasons. It presents itself as an ambivalent question, as Woodward (2000) and Giddens (2002) point out in the debate on identities and identifications in contemporary times.

Finally, one of the main conclusions of this study was that all participants who signed up showed an interest in supporting, recognizing, honoring and valuing the streamer activity, whether as a professional or as a provider of a contemporary service whose financial remuneration is essential in the conception of value of the group participants. This reinforces the idea of Johnson and Woodstock (2019a) that the streamer career is desired and a real phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS

This work investigated the motivations related to users of the livestream platform Twitch, the main medium of this genre. More specifically, it focused on those paid subscribers of one or more channels, with data collection through a focus group. We sought to base the analysis on different theoretical perspectives in the field of social sciences, such as marketing, psychology and sociology. In the broader discussions of consumer behavior, contemporary society and consumer-related social interaction, a number of influential categories have taken shape in the context of Twitch channels. Through authors such as McMillan and Chavis (1986), Giddens (2002), Bauman (2005), Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005), Solomon and Bamossy (2006) and Benazzi (2016), a range of key concepts such as motivation, needs, identity, lifestyle and sense of community were talked about (Amazon Prime, 2022).

Much of the debate moved between the notions of identity and lifestyle. The results confirm that, although subtle, there is a difference between the two. The gamer identity is subjective, while the lifestyle, characterized by habits, was more clearly demonstrated. A strong demonstration of the lifestyle was achieved by complementarity, which was quite intense among the participants, identifying an opportunity for its application on the platform.

Among the main findings, the research identified the growth of the platform as a relevant phenomenon in the contemporary media universe.

The sense of community is another element with much presence in discussions around livestreaming on Twitch and was unanimously addressed by all participants in the focus group. This study observed that, despite being very relevant, the intensity of the sense of community was classified as medium by the group, since in certain communities it is possible to obtain the same level of access for free.

The concepts of needs and reasons were analytical dimensions that allow the systematization of the interpretation. With regard to the needs of Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2005), there was a large predominance of the utilitarian type, with less ambiguity between utilitarian and hedonistic. In the dimension of reasons of Solomon and Bamossy (2006), personal reasons were more emphasized, while social reasons were weaker. The difference between the sense of community, broadly understood, and the social reason access to the community, which has medium intensity, is highlighted.

Finally, restricting the analysis dimension to the strongest motivations, the highlights were the intention to support the creator and intolerance to ads. Participants showed an interest in valuing streamer activities as a professional, and the decision is taken by the quality of service, an explanatory variable. The absence of advertisements was another element of very strong intensity in the discussion, expressing the view that consuming Twitch channels is part of an experience. Finally, some elements present in the advertising of the platform itself, such as emotes and subscriber badges, were not shown to be intense during the debate.

Finally, the results obtained give rise to a reflection on how the consumption of such entertainment services is influenced by the identification of gamers with

content creators and the sense of community that comes from such interaction, both strongly associated with the growth of new media and its uses in contemporary times.

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