IMPROVING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN MANADO'S EAFC 24 COMMUNITIES: THE INFLUENCE OF CREATIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS, PROFITABLE PROGRAMS, AND STAKEHOLDER

MENINGKATKAN PEMBANGUNAN EKONOMI LOKAL MELALUI PEMBERDAYAAN MASYARAKAT PADA KOMUNITAS EAFC 24 DI MANADO: PENGARUH SISTEM EKONOMI KREATIF, PROGRAM PROFITABEL, DAN KOLABORASI PEMANGKU KEPENTINGAN

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Abstract: Digital gaming communities have increasingly evolved beyond entertainment into platforms that support creative economic activities and community-based development. However, empirical evidence regarding their contribution to local economic development remains limited, particularly within EAFC 24 communities in Manado. This study aims to analyze the influence of Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, and Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Empowerment and their impact on Local Economic Development. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed. Data were collected through structured questionnaires from 100 members of EAFC 24 communities in Manado using purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with RStudio. The results indicate that Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, and Stakeholder Collaboration positively and significantly influence Community Empowerment. Furthermore, Community Empowerment has a positive and significant effect on Local Economic Development, with Stakeholder Collaboration showing the strongest influence among the independent variables. These findings suggest that strengthening collaboration, implementing sustainable programs, and promoting creative economic initiatives within gaming communities can enhance community capacity and contribute to local economic development.

Keywords: Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, Stakeholder Collaboration, Community Empowerment, Local Economic Development.

Abstrak: *Komunitas gim digital berkembang tidak hanya sebagai sarana hiburan, tetapi juga sebagai wadah aktivitas ekonomi kreatif dan pemberdayaan masyarakat. Namun, bukti empiris mengenai kontribusinya terhadap pembangunan ekonomi lokal, khususnya pada komunitas EAFC 24 di Manado, masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh Sistem Ekonomi Kreatif, Program Profitabel, dan Kolaborasi Pemangku Kepentingan terhadap Pemberdayaan Masyarakat serta dampaknya terhadap Pembangunan Ekonomi Lokal. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain eksplanatori. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur kepada 100 anggota komunitas EAFC 24 di Manado menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) dengan bantuan perangkat lunak RStudio. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Sistem Ekonomi Kreatif, Program Profitabel, dan Kolaborasi Pemangku Kepentingan berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Pemberdayaan Masyarakat. Selanjutnya, Pemberdayaan Masyarakat berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Pembangunan Ekonomi Lokal, dengan Kolaborasi Pemangku Kepentingan sebagai variabel yang memiliki pengaruh paling kuat. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penguatan kolaborasi, pelaksanaan program yang berkelanjutan, dan pengembangan ekonomi kreatif dalam komunitas gim mampu meningkatkan kapasitas masyarakat serta mendorong pembangunan ekonomi lokal.*

Kata Kunci: *Sistem Ekonomi Kreatif, Program Profitabel, Kolaborasi Pemangku Kepentingan, Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Pembangunan Ekonomi Lokal.*

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed economic activities, shifting traditional production and consumption systems toward digitally connected ecosystems. One of the fastest-growing sectors within this transformation is the digital gaming industry, which has evolved beyond entertainment into an ecosystem that supports innovation, digital entrepreneurship, and community participation. The integration of digital platforms, internet accessibility, and interactive technologies has enabled gaming communities to become active contributors to the digital economy through value creation, collaboration, and user-generated content. As a result, gaming is increasingly recognized as an important component of the creative economy rather than merely a recreational activity (Liu et al., 2024; OECD, 2024).

Indonesia represents one of the largest gaming markets in Southeast Asia, supported by its young demographic structure, increasing internet penetration, and expanding digital ecosystems. The gaming and esports industries have experienced substantial growth and are increasingly viewed as strategic sectors capable of creating employment opportunities, encouraging innovation, and strengthening the creative economy. Beyond professional players, the ecosystem also involves tournament organizers, content creators, streamers, sponsors, and digital entrepreneurs who collectively generate economic value (Jiwandono, 2026).

At the local level, the development of esports communities has become increasingly visible in Manado through tournaments organized by universities, gaming communities, internet cafés, and private organizations. These activities encourage youth participation while creating opportunities for event organizers, sponsors, and local businesses. However, most gaming communities remain focused on competition and entertainment, whereas structured economic initiatives such as sponsorship programs, coaching services, and community-based entrepreneurship remain limited. Consequently, the economic potential of gaming communities has not yet been fully optimized to contribute to sustainable local economic development.

From the perspective of the creative economy, gaming communities possess considerable potential to become platforms for community empowerment. Creative economic systems encourage communities to transform knowledge, creativity, and digital competencies into economic value, while stakeholder collaboration strengthens access to resources, partnerships, and market opportunities. Previous studies indicate that creative industries contribute positively to community empowerment and inclusive economic growth by fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaborative networks (Howkins, 2001; Freeman et al., 2018).

Despite the rapid growth of the gaming industry, empirical studies examining the contribution of gaming communities to local economic development remain limited. Existing studies have primarily focused on esports commercialization, digital platforms, or virtual economies at the national and industrial levels, while relatively little attention has been given to community-based gaming ecosystems and their capacity to empower local communities, particularly in secondary cities such as Manado. Therefore, this study examines the influence of Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, and Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Empowerment, and subsequently their contribution to Local Economic Development within EAFC 24 communities in Manado.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the influence of creative economic systems implemented within EA Sports FC 24 communities on local community empowerment in Manado.
2. To examine the effect of profitable gaming-related programs on income generation and entrepreneurial opportunities among local community members in Manado.
3. To evaluate the role of collaboration between EA Sports FC 24 communities and local stakeholders in strengthening sustainable economic development in Manado.
4. To determine the simultaneous influence of creative economic systems, profitable programs, and stakeholder collaboration on local economic empowerment in Manado.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Economic Systems (CES)

Creative Economic Systems refer to economic activities that generate value through creativity, innovation, knowledge, and intellectual capital rather than relying solely on physical resources. The creative economy emphasizes the utilization of human creativity and digital innovation to stimulate economic growth,

entrepreneurship, and sustainable development (Howkins, 2001). In digital environments, creative economic systems encourage communities to transform technological skills and collaborative networks into productive economic activities. Within gaming communities, creative economic systems may be reflected through tournament organization, digital content creation, esports events, streaming, and other innovation-driven initiatives that generate economic value. Consequently, stronger creative economic systems are expected to enhance community participation and strengthen local economic capacity.

Profitable Programs (PP)

Profitable Programs refer to structured initiatives designed to generate sustainable economic benefits while maintaining long-term operational viability. Effective program implementation enables communities to create stable income opportunities through well-managed business activities, strategic planning, and efficient resource utilization (Bryson, 2018). Within digital gaming communities, profitable programs may include organized tournaments, paid coaching services, sponsorship partnerships, digital content monetization, and community-driven entrepreneurial activities. Sustainable profitable programs not only improve financial performance but also strengthen community participation and organizational sustainability, thereby supporting broader economic empowerment.

Stakeholder Collaboration (SC)

Stakeholder Collaboration refers to cooperative relationships among multiple actors including government institutions, private businesses, community organizations, and local communities to achieve shared development objectives. According to Freeman et al. (2018), stakeholder collaboration creates shared value through resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and coordinated decision-making. Collaborative partnerships improve access to financial resources, technology, expertise, and market opportunities while enhancing the effectiveness of community-based development programs. In gaming ecosystems, collaboration among esports communities, sponsors, local businesses, educational institutions, and public agencies can strengthen entrepreneurial activities and improve the sustainability of community development initiatives.

Community Empowerment (CE)

Community Empowerment refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to actively participate in economic, social, and institutional development. Empowered communities possess greater knowledge, skills, confidence, and access to resources that enable them to improve their welfare and become economically independent (Zimmerman, 2000). Within digital ecosystems, community empowerment can be achieved through digital literacy, entrepreneurial development, collaborative participation, and income-generating activities. Gaming communities therefore have the potential to become platforms for strengthening local capacity through creative economic initiatives and stakeholder collaboration.

Local Economic Development (LED)

Local Economic Development refers to collaborative efforts aimed at improving economic conditions, creating employment opportunities, and enhancing community welfare within a specific locality. Rather than relying solely on external investment, local economic development emphasizes the utilization of local resources, innovation, entrepreneurship, and community participation to achieve sustainable growth (Blakely and Leigh, 2017). In the digital economy, gaming communities may contribute to local economic development through esports events, digital entrepreneurship, sponsorship activities, and community-based economic initiatives. Consequently, strengthening community empowerment is expected to generate positive impacts on local economic development.

Empirical Studies

Nambisan *et al.* (2019) aimed at understanding the digital transformation of the economy needs to incorporate multiple and cross-levels of analysis, embrace ideas and concepts from multiple fields/disciplines, and explicitly acknowledge the role of digital technologies in transforming organizations and social relationships. To help realize this research agenda, we identify three key themes related to digitization—openness, affordances, and generativity—and, outline broad research issues relating to each. They suggested that such themes that are innate to digital technologies could serve as a common conceptual platform that allows for connections between issues at different levels as well as the integration of ideas from different disciplines/areas.

Autio and Thomas (2020) explored value co-creation in ecosystems from three broad disciplinary perspectives: those of strategic management, service marketing, and information systems. These perspectives offer complementary insights into what is a complex phenomenon. They considered the premises, underlyed theoretical

considerations, insights, and contributions of each, identified commonalities and complementarities, and suggested directions for future research agenda.

Pizzo et al. (2022) argued for the inclusion of organized eSport events and competitions within sport management vis-à-vis eSport's meeting certain defining criteria of sport in general. eSport's connection to traditional sport and defining characteristics are addressed to support eSport's role as a sport entertainment product recognized by industry as representing a substantial growth opportunity for sport and related organizations. As eSport continues to evolve, practitioners face managerial challenges that are similar to those in traditional sport, particularly in areas of governance and diversity. Sport management academics should embrace the potential of eSport in order to examine this evolution and provide guidance to industry through education and research.

Research Hypothesis

H1: Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, and Stakeholder Collaboration simultaneously and significantly influence Community Empowerment.
H2: Creative Economic Systems significantly influence Community Empowerment.
H3: Profitable Programs significantly influence Community Empowerment.
H4: Stakeholder Collaboration significantly influences Community Empowerment.
H5: Community Empowerment significantly influences Local Economic Development.

Research Model

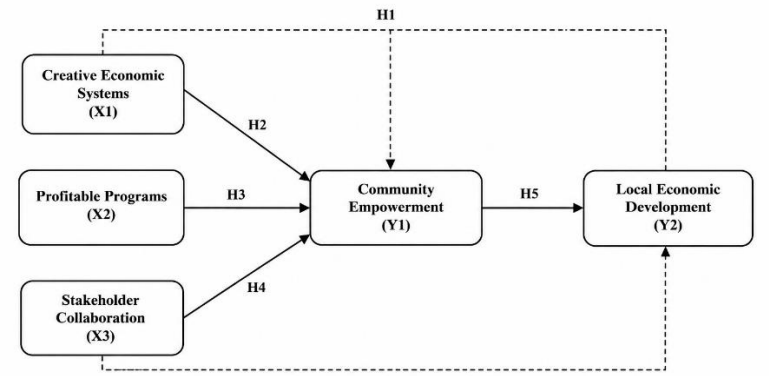


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Literature Review

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationships among Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Programs, Stakeholder Collaboration, Community Empowerment, and Local Economic Development. A quantitative approach was selected to test the proposed hypotheses using numerical data and statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). The relationships among variables were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study consisted of members of EA Sports FC 24 (EAFC 24) communities in Manado. A total of 100 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The respondents were required to be active members of EAFC 24 communities in Manado, at least 18 years old, and have participated in community activities such as tournaments, online competitions, or other gaming-related events.

Data Type and Data Sources

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to EAFC 24 community members in Manado. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, government reports, and other relevant literature related to the creative economy, stakeholder collaboration, community empowerment, digital entrepreneurship, and local economic development.

Method of Collecting Data

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. Each indicator was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The collected data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with RStudio, including measurement model evaluation and structural model assessment to test the proposed hypotheses.

Operational Definition and Indicators of Research Variable

Table 1. Operational Definition and Indicators of Research Variable

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Creative Economic Systems (X1)	A system that utilizes creativity, innovation, and digital technology to create economic value and improve community productivity.	1. Utilization of local creative resources 2. Innovation in economic activities 3. Adoption of digital technology 4. Community participation in creative activities
Profitable Programs (X2)	Sustainable programs designed to generate economic benefits, improve financial performance, and strengthen community welfare.	1. Program sustainability 2. Financial benefits 3. Scalability of program outcomes 4. Participant satisfaction
Stakeholder Collaboration (X3)	The degree of collaboration among government, private sector, community organizations, and other stakeholders in achieving common development goals.	1. Government support 2. Private sector involvement 3. Community participation 4. Effectiveness of collaboration
Community Empowerment (Y1)	The process of enhancing community capacity, independence, participation, and decision-making in development activities.	1. Capacity building 2. Decision-making ability 3. Participation in economic activities 4. Access to economic opportunities
Local Economic Development (Y2)	Sustainable improvement in local economic conditions reflected by increased income, employment opportunities, productivity, and economic resilience.	1. Increased community income 2. Employment opportunities 3. Improved local productivity 4. Sustainable economic growth

Research Instrument Testing

Validity and Reliability Tests

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were evaluated using the measurement model (outer model) in Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Indicator validity was assessed through outer loadings, where values greater than 0.70 indicate satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). Construct validity was further evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a minimum acceptable value of 0.50, indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators.

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA). A construct is considered reliable when both CR and CA exceed 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). These procedures ensure that the measurement model is both valid and reliable before evaluating the structural relationships among variables.

Data Analysis Method

Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with RStudio through the seminr package. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for analyzing complex structural models involving multiple latent constructs, mediation effects, and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis consisted of two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model).

1. Measurement Model (Outer Model). The measurement model was evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. The evaluation included:
   - Indicator Reliability (Outer Loading), with acceptable values above 0.70.
   - Convergent Validity, assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values should exceed 0.50.

- Internal Consistency Reliability, evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA), with values greater than 0.70.
- Discriminant Validity, assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), where values below 0.90 indicate adequate discriminant validity.

2. Structural Model (Inner Model). After confirming the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships among constructs. The evaluation included:
   - Coefficient of Determination (R^2) to measure the explanatory power of the endogenous constructs.
   - Effect Size (f^2) to evaluate the contribution of each exogenous construct.
   - Predictive Relevance (Q^2) using the blindfolding procedure to assess the predictive capability of the model.
   - Path Coefficients, estimated using the bootstrapping procedure to examine the direction and strength of the relationships among variables.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples in the seminr package. The significance of each hypothesis was evaluated using the path coefficient (β), t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis was accepted when the p-value was less than 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

Convergent Validity

Table 2. Outer Loadings and Average Variance Extracted

Construct	Loading Range	AVE
Creative Economic Systems	0.800–0.909	0.744
Profitable Program Implementation	0.848–0.892	0.762
Stakeholder Collaboration	0.768–0.865	0.672
Community Empowerment	0.725–0.896	0.695
Local Economic Development	0.836–0.920	0.756

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

As presented in Table 2, all indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.725 to 0.920. The highest loading was observed for indicator Y2.4 (0.920), while the lowest loading belonged to Y1.3 (0.725). Since all loading values satisfied the recommended criterion, every indicator adequately represented its respective latent construct. The AVE values ranged from 0.672 to 0.762, all exceeding the minimum requirement of 0.50. These results indicate that each construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators, confirming satisfactory convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Results

Assessment	Result
Fornell–Larcker Criterion	Passed
Cross Loading	Passed

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

The Fornell–Larcker analysis demonstrated that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs, indicating adequate discriminant validity. Furthermore, the cross-loading results showed that every indicator loaded highest on its intended construct compared with the remaining constructs. These findings confirm that each latent variable measures a distinct concept and is empirically different from the others.

Reliability

Table 4. Reliability Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Creative Economic Systems	0.884	0.921
Profitable Program Implementation	0.896	0.928
Stakeholder Collaboration	0.837	0.891
Community Empowerment	0.852	0.9
Local Economic Development	0.892	0.925

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

The reliability analysis indicates that all constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.837 and 0.896, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Likewise, the Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.891 to 0.928, confirming a high level of internal consistency among the indicators. Overall, the results demonstrate that all constructs satisfy the requirements for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. Therefore, the measurement model is considered valid and reliable, allowing the analysis to proceed to the evaluation of the structural model.

Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model)

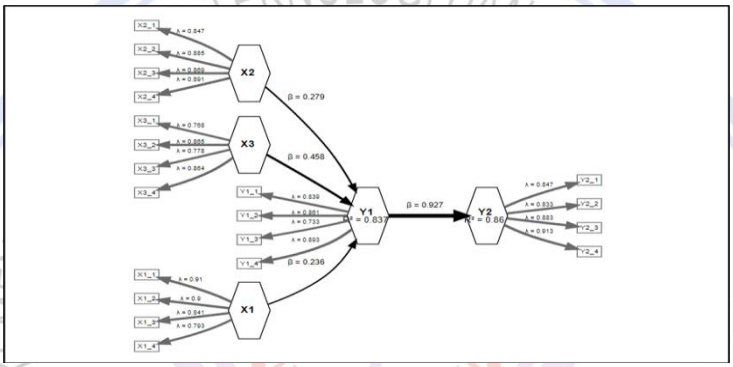


Figure 2. Structural Model Estimation Using PLS-SEM

Source: Processed data using RStudio (2026).

As illustrated in Figure 2, the three exogenous constructs are positively associated with Community Empowerment, which subsequently influences Local Economic Development. The standardized path coefficients indicate the magnitude and direction of the relationships among the constructs, while the R^2 values represent the proportion of variance explained by the predictor variables. Overall, the structural model provides preliminary evidence that the proposed conceptual framework adequately explains the relationships among the research variables.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.837
Local Economic Development (Y2)	0.86

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

The results indicate that the model possesses substantial explanatory power. Community Empowerment (Y1) has an R^2 value of 0.837, meaning that 83.7% of its variance is explained jointly by Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Program Implementation, and Stakeholder Collaboration. Meanwhile, Local Economic Development (Y2) records an R^2 value of 0.860, indicating that 86.0% of its variance is explained by Community Empowerment. These findings demonstrate that the proposed structural model explains a large proportion of the variability in both endogenous constructs, confirming the model's strong predictive capability.

Path Coefficient Analysis

Table 6. Path Coefficient Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient
Creative Economic Systems → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.236
Profitable Program Implementation → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.279
Stakeholder Collaboration → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.458
Community Empowerment (Y1) → Local Economic Development (Y2)	0.927

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

The analysis reveals that all structural relationships are positive. Stakeholder Collaboration (β = 0.458) exhibits the strongest influence on Community Empowerment, followed by Profitable Program Implementation (β = 0.279) and Creative Economic Systems (β = 0.236). Furthermore, Community Empowerment demonstrates a remarkably strong positive relationship with Local Economic Development (β = 0.927), indicating that improvements in community empowerment substantially contribute to local economic growth. These findings suggest that collaborative governance and active community participation play a central role in translating creative economic initiatives into broader local development outcomes.

Effect Size (f^2)

Table 7. Effect Size (f^2)

Relationship	f^2
Creative Economic Systems → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.064
Profitable Program Implementation → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.138
Stakeholder Collaboration → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.302
Community Empowerment (Y1) → Local Economic Development (Y2)	6.151

Source: Processed data using R (2026).

The findings indicate varying contributions of the predictor variables. Creative Economic Systems (f^2 = 0.064) exhibit a small effect on Community Empowerment, while Profitable Program Implementation (f^2 = 0.138) approaches a medium effect. Stakeholder Collaboration (f^2 = 0.302) demonstrates the largest contribution among the exogenous variables, highlighting its importance in strengthening community empowerment. Moreover, Community Empowerment shows an exceptionally large effect on Local Economic Development (f^2 = 6.151), emphasizing its dominant role within the structural model.

Bootstrapping Results

Table 8. Bootstrapping Results

Relationship	β	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
Creative Economic Systems → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.236	2.241	0.038	Supported
Profitable Program Implementation → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.279	3.279	<0.001	Supported
Stakeholder Collaboration → Community Empowerment (Y1)	0.458	8.982	<0.001	Supported
Community Empowerment (Y1) → Local Economic Development (Y2)	0.927	59.941	<0.001	Supported

Source: Processed data using RStudio (2026).

The bootstrapping results confirm that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant at the 5% significance level. Creative Economic Systems positively influence Community Empowerment (β = 0.236; p = 0.038), while Profitable Program Implementation also demonstrates a significant positive effect (β = 0.279; p < 0.001). Stakeholder Collaboration records the strongest effect on Community Empowerment (β = 0.458; p < 0.001), indicating that collaborative efforts among government, private organizations, and community groups substantially strengthen community capacity. Finally, Community Empowerment exerts an exceptionally strong positive influence on Local Economic Development (β = 0.927; p < 0.001), highlighting its strategic role in translating collaborative and creative economic initiatives into sustainable local economic growth.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 9. Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
Creative Economic Systems → Community Empowerment	0.236	2.241	0.038	Supported
Profitable Program Implementation → Community Empowerment	0.279	3.279	<0.001	Supported
Stakeholder Collaboration → Community Empowerment	0.458	8.982	<0.001	Supported
Community Empowerment → Local Economic Development	0.927	59.941	<0.001	Supported

Source: Processed data using RStudio (2026).

The results indicate that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Each structural relationship demonstrates a positive path coefficient, t-statistics above the critical value of 1.96, and p-values below 0.05, confirming statistically significant relationships among the constructs. Among the exogenous variables, Stakeholder Collaboration exhibits the strongest positive influence on Community Empowerment (β = 0.458), followed by Profitable Program Implementation (β = 0.279) and Creative Economic Systems (β = 0.236). Furthermore, Community Empowerment shows a very strong positive effect on Local Economic Development (β = 0.927), indicating its central role in translating creative economic initiatives into broader local economic outcomes.

Discussion

The Effect of Creative Economic Systems on Community Empowerment (H1)

Hypothesis 1 proposed that Creative Economic Systems positively influence Community Empowerment. This finding indicates that the implementation of creative economic initiatives contributes significantly to strengthening community capacity, encouraging innovation, and increasing participation in productive economic activities.

The Effect of Profitable Program Implementation on Community Empowerment (H2)

Hypothesis 2 examined the influence of Profitable Program Implementation on Community Empowerment. The findings suggest that programs capable of generating sustainable economic benefits enhance community participation and improve local capacity for economic development.

The Effect of Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Empowerment (H3)

Hypothesis 3 proposed that Stakeholder Collaboration positively affects Community Empowerment. Compared with the other exogenous variables, Stakeholder Collaboration demonstrates the strongest influence on Community Empowerment, highlighting the importance of coordinated efforts among government institutions, private organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders in supporting sustainable empowerment initiatives.

The Effect of Community Empowerment on Local Economic Development (H4)

Hypothesis 4 examined the relationship between Community Empowerment and Local Economic Development. This finding indicates that empowered communities are more capable of creating economic opportunities, strengthening local productivity, and contributing to sustainable local economic growth.

The Simultaneous Effect of Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Program Implementation, and Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Empowerment

The simultaneous influence of Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Program Implementation, and Stakeholder Collaboration on Community Empowerment is reflected in the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.837$). This result indicates that 83.7% of the variance in Community Empowerment is jointly explained by the three exogenous variables, while the remaining 16.3% is influenced by other factors not included in the research model. According to the PLS-SEM criteria, this value represents substantial explanatory power, demonstrating that the integration of creative economic initiatives, sustainable economic programs, and collaborative stakeholder engagement provides a strong foundation for enhancing community empowerment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Creative Economic Systems have a positive and significant influence on Community Empowerment within EA Sports FC 24 communities in Manado. The findings indicate that creative economic activities supported by digital innovation encourage community members to develop entrepreneurial skills, increase participation in productive activities, and strengthen their capacity to contribute to local economic initiatives.
2. Profitable Program Implementation positively and significantly influences Community Empowerment. Well-structured and sustainable gaming-related programs provide opportunities for community members to generate income, improve digital competencies, and participate in entrepreneurial activities. These programs contribute to strengthening the economic capacity of the community and encourage greater involvement in local development.
3. Stakeholder Collaboration has a positive and significant influence on Community Empowerment and represents the strongest predictor among the exogenous variables. Collaboration between gaming communities, government institutions, educational institutions, and the private sector enhances access to resources, knowledge, and institutional support, thereby improving the effectiveness and sustainability of community empowerment initiatives.
4. Creative Economic Systems, Profitable Program Implementation, and Stakeholder Collaboration collectively explain a substantial proportion of Community Empowerment, which subsequently has a strong positive and significant effect on Local Economic Development. The structural model demonstrates high explanatory power, indicating that integrating creative economic initiatives, sustainable programs, and collaborative partnerships can effectively strengthen community empowerment and promote sustainable local economic development within EA Sports FC 24 communities in Manado.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed for relevant stakeholders.

1. Local governments and policymakers should recognize digital gaming communities as part of the creative economy ecosystem by facilitating community-based programs, providing entrepreneurship training, and supporting esports-related initiatives that encourage sustainable economic participation.
2. Gaming communities and community leaders are encouraged to develop structured and sustainable programs, such as esports tournaments, digital content creation, coaching services, and collaborative business initiatives. These activities can strengthen community empowerment while creating new economic opportunities for community members.
3. Collaboration among government institutions, educational institutions, private organizations, and gaming communities should be enhanced through strategic partnerships. Such collaboration may include financial support, mentoring, digital infrastructure development, and capacity-building programs to maximize the economic potential of gaming communities.
4. Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study by incorporating additional variables, such as digital literacy, technological readiness, innovation capability, social capital, or entrepreneurial orientation. Future studies may also involve larger samples, different gaming communities, or comparative analyses across regions to improve the generalizability of the findings and provide a broader understanding of the contribution of digital communities to local economic development.

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