

## **Middle East Gaming Market - Growth, Trends, Covid-19 Impact, and Forecasts (2023 - 2028)**

Market Report | 2023-01-23 | 120 pages | Mordor Intelligence

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### **Report description:**

The Middle East gaming market is expected to register a CAGR of 13.88% during the forecast period of 2022-2027. With the recent outbreak of COVID-19, the gaming market in the region is expected to witness significant growth due to an increased usage of online gaming services. Various gaming vendors in the market are expected to focus on increasing their user base during this period and surging returns post COVID-19 scenarios, owing to which vendors are offering benefits, offers, and waiving off their fees on the use of their services.

The gaming industry proliferates in the United Arab Emirates, with rising interest and investment in locally developing homegrown talent and games. In terms of spending, it is a very diverse region. It is expected that the average gamer in the country spends USD 115 per year.

Additionally, the growing penetration of smartphones and online gaming is a crucial factor driving the market's growth. The growing development of AR-based apps and games is expected to create market opportunities over the forecast period.

The Saudi Arabian government is also heavily investing billions of dollars in theme parks and amusement spaces. So, as Saudi entertainment industry stakeholders, trade visitors can attend dedicated conferences to gain knowledge and wealth of experience and get a hands-on technology experience at its innovative best.

Saudi Arabia set up a new charity e-sports event to raise money to fight the COVID-19 outbreak with a USD 10 million prize fund. The competition comes as the COVID-19 outbreak keeps people at home, shuts down businesses, and restricts travel to a minimum. This may unite and connect the global gaming community in response to COVID-19. With around 70% of the country's population under 30 years and approximately 20 million gamers or gaming enthusiasts, the market is expected to grow over the

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forecast period.

## Middle East Gaming Market Trends

### The Smartphones Segment is Expected to Hold the Significant Market Share

Smartphone gaming has increased in the past couple of years. In the United Arab Emirates, mobile gamers play an average of 20 to 40 minutes of video games a day (source: AdColony). This increasing demand for mobile games directly results from various technological advancements such as AR, VR, cloud gaming, and 5G. This trend is not surprising, considering the mobile game industry primarily relies on new technology. Another trend in the market includes the rise of the hyper-casual game genre.

AR is becoming perfect for mobile gaming, owing to its immersive and interactive nature of technology. Moreover, mobile games are the most popular AR category in app stores. Apart from previously released AR mobile games that are still popular, such as Pokemon Go and Ingress, multiple new additions to the genre are being made by market players, such as Harry Potter: Wizards Unite and Minecraft Earth.

In August 2020, OPPO, a global smartphone brand, partnered with Dubai Summer Surprises to create a gaming extravaganza for the youth. The challenge was developed to engage gamers in the country with a uniquely designed, socially distant gaming arena at the Mall of the Emirates.

Dubai Media City also announced that it would launch a new Instagram Live series called GAME\_ON, collaborating with ON.DXB, which will feature regular video game development workshops. Al-Natsheh's workshop will comprise 3D modeling, rigging, animation, sound engineering, VR, and tips for developers in the United Arab Emirates to progress in their careers.

### Adoption of E-sports Betting and Fantasy Sites Drives the Market

E-sports are witnessing substantial market demand in the current market scenario, and they are driving the overall gaming industry across the Middle East. The entire e-sports market is expected to grow over the coming years.

Working with the Saudi Telecom Company, Activision introduced dedicated servers, hosted in Riyadh and Jeddah, for Call of Duty in the region. Moreover, Riot Games, behind League of Legends, followed suit with Middle Eastern servers for the game Valorant in October 2020.

More recently, Kuwaiti telecom provider Zain Group, which has 50 million customers across MENA, launched a new eSports brand, Zain Esports, to build a calendar of regional online eSports tournaments.

As part of this growth, Dubai plans to build a dedicated E-sports stadium, and the South Korean-based International Esports Federation (IESF) signed an MoU with the UAE's Motivate Media Group as part of their plans to expand E-sports in the Middle East.

### Middle East Gaming Market Competitor Analysis

The Middle East gaming market is moderately competitive and consists of many global and regional players. These players account for a considerable share in the market and focus on expanding their client base across the world. They are focusing on R&D activities, strategic alliances, and other organic and inorganic growth strategies to stay in the market landscape over the forecast period.

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February 2022 - Zain Esports and the region's fast-growing gaming startup, PLAYHERA, announced a joint venture (JV) agreement to launch PLAYHERA MENA, targeting the region's lucrative gaming market, which counts an estimated 100 million gamers. The new JV will establish its HQs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with offices across Zain's footprint.

February 2022: Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund purchased a 5% stake in the iconic Japanese game developer Capcom and just over 5% of South Korean online game publisher Nexon for a total investment worth USD 1.0 billion.

Additional Benefits:

The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format  
3 months of analyst support

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