

A Multidimensional Analysis of the Impact of E-Sports on Modern Chinese Society

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Abstract: As an emerging industry, the E-Sports industry has been booming in the 21st century. With more and more games and tournaments coming up, the E-Sports industry has entered the views of more and more people. In China, the E-Sports industry has not only gained more and more attention and love but also some people have taken up related jobs, especially the younger generation. This paper focuses on the impact that E-Sports has on Chinese society and is based on the development of E-Sports worldwide and within China, in terms of cultural, economic and employment dimensions. To achieve this goal, the paper uses literature analysis, data analysis and case studies. It is possible to conclude that the impact of E-Sports on Chinese society has been more beneficial than detrimental. The rapid development of the E-Sports industry in recent years has not only promoted the exchange and spread of Chinese culture but also created huge economic benefits for China, thus also providing a large number of jobs and promoting employment in China.

Keywords: electronic sports, Chinese society, culture, employment

1. Introduction

Electronic Sports (E-Sports) is a sport that reaches the level of "competition" through video game competition [1]. As an emerging industry developing in China, there are fewer articles combining E-Sports development and employment, although some scholars have already done a certain number of research reports. In addition, the development of China's E-Sports industry has been in a stage of rapid development in the past five years. So if people want to keep up with this, they need to have a specific understanding of the situation of this industry. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to use the current state of development of the E-Sports industry in China, as well as to combine the author's analysis of the current state of development of some gaming tournaments, to draw more precise conclusions about the impact of E-Sports on Chinese society.

In terms of research content and research methods, this paper mainly uses the literature analysis method. It also analyzes the impact on culture by combining one of the most popular games among young people in China today as an example. After that, this paper uses data analysis to combine data to more accurately and visually illustrate the impact of E-Sports on China's economy and employment.

The significance of this paper is to make people abandon stereotypes and face up to the impact of E-Sports on Chinese society, as well as to give people a better understanding of this industry.

Finally, it is hoped that while it will give people an understanding of the development of E-Sports in China, it will provide experience for the development of E-Sports in other countries.

2. The Development of E-Sports Industry in China

E-Sports is a sport in which video game competition reaches the level of "competition". E-Sports is the use of electronic devices as sports equipment, the combination of intellectual and physical competition between people [2].

From the definition, E-Sports is different from simple video games. From the development history, the development of E-Sports is also later than that of video games, which were introduced in 1952. However, E-Sports are closely related to video games and are derived from video games.

The current E-Sports in China include the well-known League of Legends, King of Glory, Need for Speed, Live Soccer, StarCraft, Chinese Chess, Chess, etc.

It is undisputed that E-Sports is an emerging industry for any country, due to its relatively short history of development compared to traditional athletics. For China in particular, E-Sports is an industry that has only been in development for over twenty years. This is because in terms of the rise of E-Sports in the world, it originated in the United States in 1986, while Chinese E-Sports started in the 21st century. 1986, a TV show in which two children competed using Nintendo game consoles was seen as the beginning of E-Sports. And, the birth of the red and white machine means the prototype of E-Sports.

The development of E-Sports in China was in fact at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, a period of transition between the old and the new. Thanks to the development of China's economy and the rise of Internet cafes, Chinese people were introduced to this field [3]. In 2001, two Chinese players won gold medals at the World E-Sports Games (WCG), known as the "E-Sports Olympics", becoming the first Chinese E-Sports world champions in history. Since then, Chinese E-Sports has entered a new chapter. In 2003, the Chinese General Administration of Sports recognized E-Sports as the 99th official sport, which meant that E-Sports were officially recognized by China. But this move generated great public opinion in China at that time. An online debate ensued about whether E-Sports was a sport or not. Although some people argued that E-Sports, as a cerebral competitive activity, is distinct from traditional sports related to physical strength, such as marathons, E-Sports are by definition a type of sport without question. From the statistics at the time, different websites produced different voting results, but it all meant that some people's perception of this new industry at the time needed to be improved and some of the stereotypes should be abandoned.

Although the first China Electronic Games (CEG) was officially released in 2004, people were still prejudiced against the industry when viewed in the context of the times in China at the time. Some parents complained that the advent of Internet cafes and the popularity of video games had ruined their children. In response to public pressure, China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) issued a ban on online gaming TV shows in the same year, which affected many E-Sports programs. This nearly killed Chinese gaming in its cradle.

After nearly four years of silence, the road to E-Sports development in China took a turn for the better in 2008. That year, the State General Administration of Sports approved E-Sports as the 78th official sports competition. At the same time, ten E-Sports players became torchbearers in the Beijing Olympics, signifying China's recognition of the industry and its practitioners. After that, there are international sports that gradually include many gaming events in their official competitions, such as the Asian Games.

3. Impact of E-Sports Industry on Modern Chinese Society

After getting on the right track in 2008, Chinese E-Sports made another stage of progress in 2011. In that year, capital was injected into the gaming industry and gaming clubs emerged as one of the main components of the gaming industry. At the same time, a game called League of Legends (LOL for short) was officially released in China, attracting a large number of players.

Until now, most young people still remember that in the final of League of Legends Pro League (LPL) in 2021, EDG from China defeated DK from South Korea to win the championship, which was a historical milestone for Chinese E-Sports. As a result, the news was everywhere on Chinese social media that night. It was very hot-blooded and exciting indeed. After this, the Chinese E-Sports market was accompanied by the creation of more E-Sports events.

In the last decade, Chinese E-Sports has seen a booming phase of development and the industry has been a huge driving force for contemporary Chinese society on a cultural, economic and employment level.

3.1. Cultural Dimension

The development of Chinese E-Sports is to a certain extent inseparable from traditional Chinese culture. King's Glory, which is currently popular among the younger generation in China, is based on traditional Chinese culture and further game design based on respect for history, while traditional culture infuses the spiritual core of the game itself [4]. Most of the game characters within the game are taken from historical figures in traditional Chinese culture, and the real stories of historical figures and relationships between characters are also preserved in the game, helping people to grow their cultural knowledge while having fun and leisure.

The most noteworthy is the 2022 King of Glory World Cup (KIC). Unlike it in the past, except for Chinese teams, it also has 12 overseas teams from Latin America, South Asia, Brazil, Thailand, South Korea and other regions.

KIC has played a role in the promotion of Chinese culture. On the one hand, the staff changed the game's voice to English in order to allow foreign players to understand the meaning of the game's voice. On the other hand, the original names and characteristics of the game characters were kept, so that players from all over the world could be exposed to and understand Chinese culture while playing brain games. And the "phoenix" element chosen on the tournament badge is also very Chinese. In addition, the game is also very elaborate in terms of publicity. The staff deliberately chose Yunying, whose weapon is a firearm, as the promotional ambassador. Her movements in the game are done under the guidance of Ren Gang, a non-genetic inheritor of Chinese martial arts. King's Glory also designed this character to help promote Emei martial arts as an intangible cultural heritage and to make more people feel the charm of traditional Chinese martial arts. Using international events to promote it is undoubtedly a good way to promote the spread of culture and bring Chinese culture to the world.

3.2. Economic Dimension

The nature of the cultural industry determines that it is destined to rely on the financial support provided by the primary and secondary industries, and E-Sports, as a cultural industry, must also rely heavily on the economic support of sponsors, so this also determines that the economic form will also directly affect the development of E-Sports [5].

As shown in Figure 1, from 2016 to 2021, the Chinese E-Sports industry is doing well, creating a lot of wealth for Chinese society and the economic income created is increasing every year.

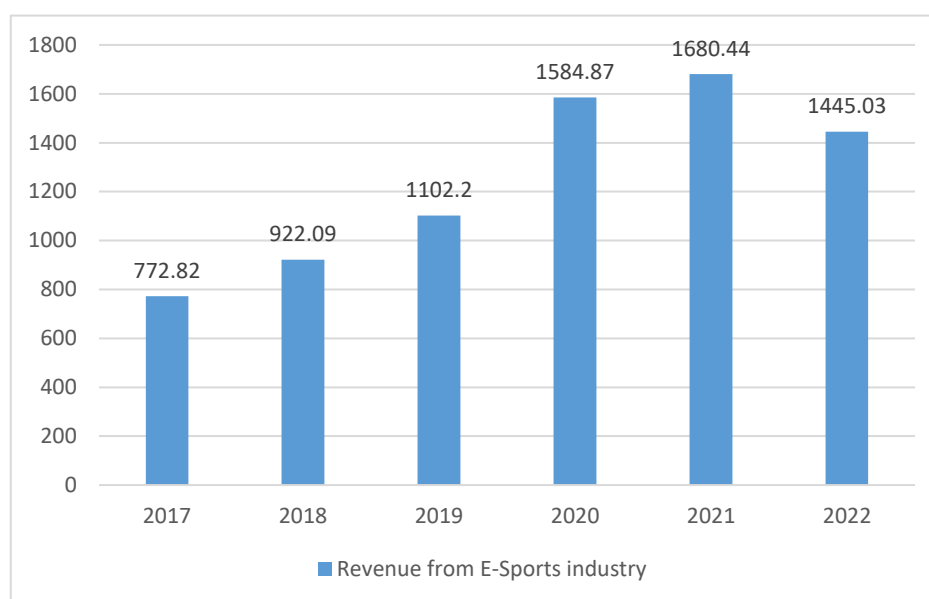


Figure 1: China E-Sports industry revenue status (billion yuan) [6].

However, according to a report released by the Game Industry Committee of the China Audio and Digital Association 2022, China's E-Sports industry revenue saw the first negative growth in the past five years. At the same time, the actual sales revenue of the Chinese game market in 2022 also decreased by about 30.6 billion yuan year-on-year, both in terms of revenue from pure E-Sports games and from E-Sports live streaming, tournaments, club operations and other revenues. This is also related to the downward global economic conditions in 2022. In addition, there is another factor that cannot be ignored, and that is the impact of the new crown epidemic and the policies adopted by China to deal with it. The vast majority of offline viewing has been canceled due to policy restrictions, and this is a major factor affecting the development of China's E-Sports industry in 2022.

Nevertheless, the overall development trend shows that China's E-Sports market still has a lot of potential, and 2023 is considered to be a possible recovery year for Chinese E-Sports. The influence of China's E-Sports industry will be further enhanced due to the upcoming unveiling of the Hangzhou Asian Games.

3.3. Employment Dimension

Employment is the basis of people's livelihood and the foundation of social and economic development. There is a big gap between the number of jobs and the number of job seekers in China. The Chinese government encourages all industries to expand their business within the scope of the law to provide jobs for the masses and increase employment. It is undoubtedly particularly important if it can provide jobs for people.

In terms of the composition of the E-Sports industry, in addition to gaming events, players, clubs, sponsors, spectators, anchors, hosts, and commentators are all part of E-Sports. A club needs to have experienced coaching staff members in addition to containing a large number of good professional players. This includes multiple coaches, assistant coaches, data analysts, etc. In addition, the day-to-day operation of a club requires an operations staff, who are responsible for scheduling players, organizing tournaments, operating social media accounts, etc.

According to the Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the demand for E-Sports workers continues to grow and is expected to reach more than 2 million by 2023. At the same time, by 2022, less than 15% of E-Sports positions in China are in a state of manpower saturation, and the demand for E-Sports talents is still huge [7].

Furthermore, with the rapid development of the E-Sports industry in China, the careers generated by it also usually have good salaries and benefits. It can also provide people with jobs, thus relieving the employment pressure in China to some extent.

4. Conclusion

Based on the current development of the E-Sports industry in China in recent years, this paper analyzes its impact on Chinese society from multiple perspectives using a variety of analytical methods, and ultimately draws conclusions. From the perspective of culture, the development of E-Sports has facilitated the spread of Chinese culture to the outside world, as well as the exchange and learning of different cultures. Also, based on the development of this industry, such as the income from peripheral products, it has accumulated wealth for Chinese society. Finally, as an emerging industry, it generates a demand for talents, which offers a large number of jobs, so it also helps to alleviate the employment pressure in China to a certain extent. However, in terms of research methods, this paper does not involve research methods such as interviews, field visits and questionnaires. Also, in terms of content, the focus of this paper is on the analysis of the social impact in China, and there is no comparative analysis with other countries in the world, so there are some improvements can be made.

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