

# “The **LEGENDS** of Chinese Electronic Sports”

Concept Progress  
or  
Fan Economy Driven?

The Affiliated High School of South China Normal  
University, Jiyu Chen

The Affiliated High School of South China Normal  
University, Genyan Li

The Affiliated High School of South China Normal  
University, Yutong Wang

The Affiliated High School of South China Normal  
University, Qi Wang

## The golden rain and the spring of Chinese e-sports

“We are the champion!”

People rushed out of apartments, restaurants and Internet bars; they hugged together and burst into tears. For Chinese e-sport fans, they have waited for this champion for nearly eight years. On an ordinary night, after the sun sets over the skyline, IG made history. On the award ceremony, a large number of golden pieces dropped down as heavy golden rain fell for their honor.

On 3 November, a Chinese e-sports club called “IG” won the League Of Legends World Championship in season 8. Nobody can anticipate this surprising result, including Wenbo Yu, the ADC (Attack Damage Carry) of IG. “We think that it’s good enough for us to enter semifinal, we want to win but we never imagine that we could make it this year,” said Yu.

In the summer of 2015, a boy with a southern accent was noticed by a large amount of LOL players as he reached

the highest level of this game although he was only 15 years old. Wenbo Yu can still remember the message left for him in his live studio which predicted his future accurately which read “Why don’t you try to become a famous player instead of playing games in a studio? It’s a waste of your talents.” “I didn’t notice the comment at that time but I still went to Shanghai to find a chance to become a professional player. Fortunately, I achieved my dream two years later,” said Yu, and he laughed like an ordinary 18-year-old boy.

However, Things are not as simple as that. In 2017, Yu took part in his first game as an IG player. However, he didn’t get a good score. He was criticized by millions of people and he knew the cruelty of e-sports when he was just seventeen years old. “I was very sad at that time, but I never have the concept to give up. I cannot imagine my life without e-sports since it gives me confidence and makes my life meaningful,” said Yu. He practiced harder and harder in order to win the

championship not only for his team but also for himself. Finally, he did it when he was 18. “I’ve never received so much praise before. In this November, I found that our job may no longer be looked down by others,” said Yu.

Yu acknowledged that it is a spring of Chinese e-sports happily and proudly.

After IG won the S8, “e-sports” became a hot word in China. As a trend, people seem to have changed their previous prejudice—nearly everybody places highly comments on IG—they

**“E-sport? Seems like a kind of sports.” “Yes, it is!”**

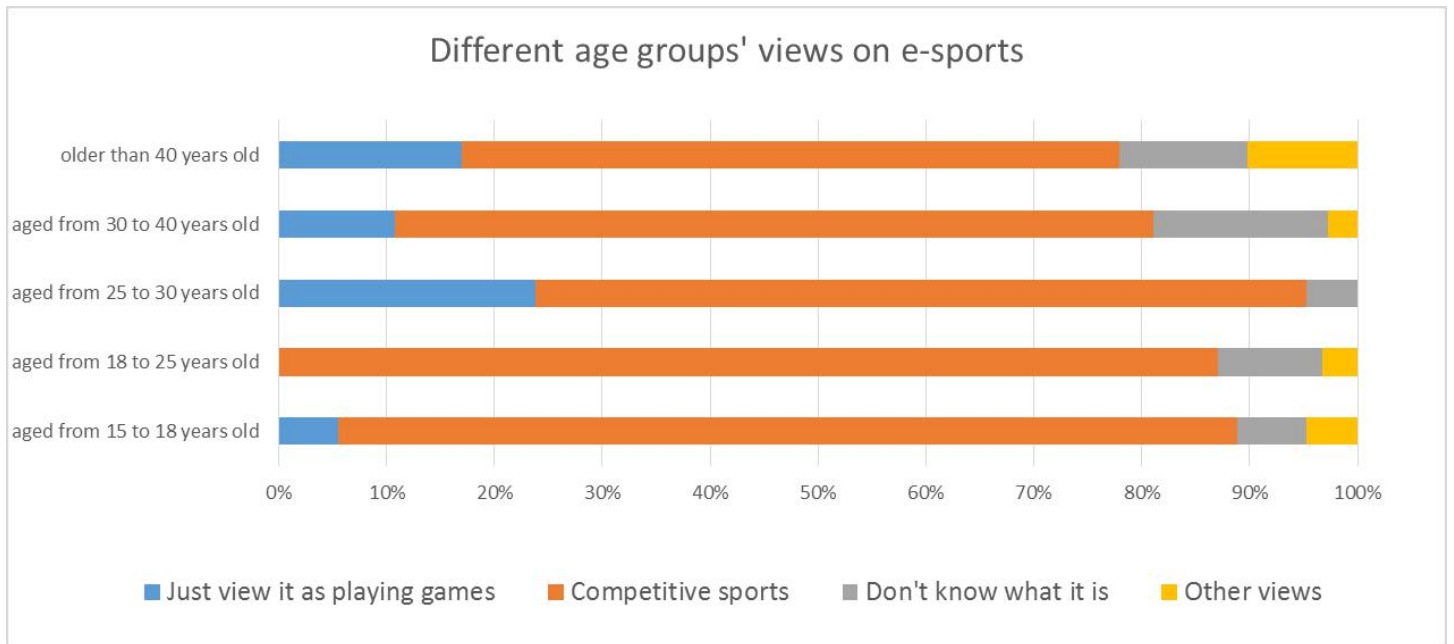
In the past, Chinese always thought e-sports games as evil incarnate and some parents even consider that play game equals to degenerate. However, since November of 2018, something has been quietly changed. We can see our classmates who did not know LOL (League of Legends) starts to play games and our parents are looking e-sport matches played in the Asian Games and trying to learn about e-sports

were called “the pride of China”. The video of the final game of S8 had more than 200 million viewers on the Internet. Even some girls who know less about games will say “IG” at once when being asked about the e-sports. This club and the company behind it received a large amount of flux and plenty of clients in this autumn.

Behind the national celebration, is it really the spring of Chinese e-sports? As far as we are concerned, yes. But the reasons for this phenomenon are more important and complex.

from us. Not only the young but also most of the middle-aged reexamine e-sports.

Mr. Peng, a 43-year-old civil servant, said that e-sports is not a kind of improper occupation. Peng said that since it can develop into an industry, it is able to solve some social problems, such as employment, economic promotion, and technological development.



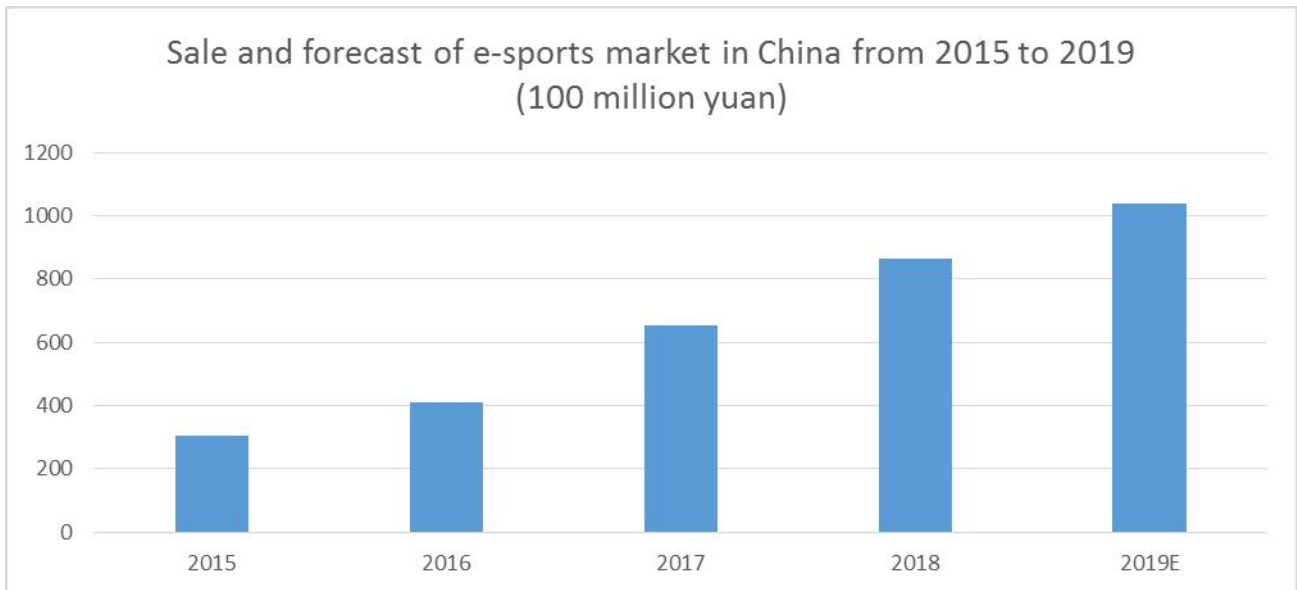
We use a questionnaire to survey how different age groups people view e-sports.

### **Substantial Profit behind E-sports**

In spite of Sicong Wang, the founder of IG who has played League of Legends (LOL) for several years, many famous investors are the same age as our parents, and they hardly pay attention to e-sports in their lives. Maybe some of them just see the amazing amount of profit behind e-sports such as holding games, live broadcast, sponsoring clubs and so on.

Mrs. Huang, 43, a manager in a communication company, holds the

view that the e-sports industry have a broad prospect for development. And after the 5th generation wireless system (5G) popularizes in China, it will be the major driving force of e-sports' development. Big communication company like the China Unicom may also invest in the e-sports industry in the future. Therefore, the profit behind the e-sports industry contributes to the spring of e-sports.



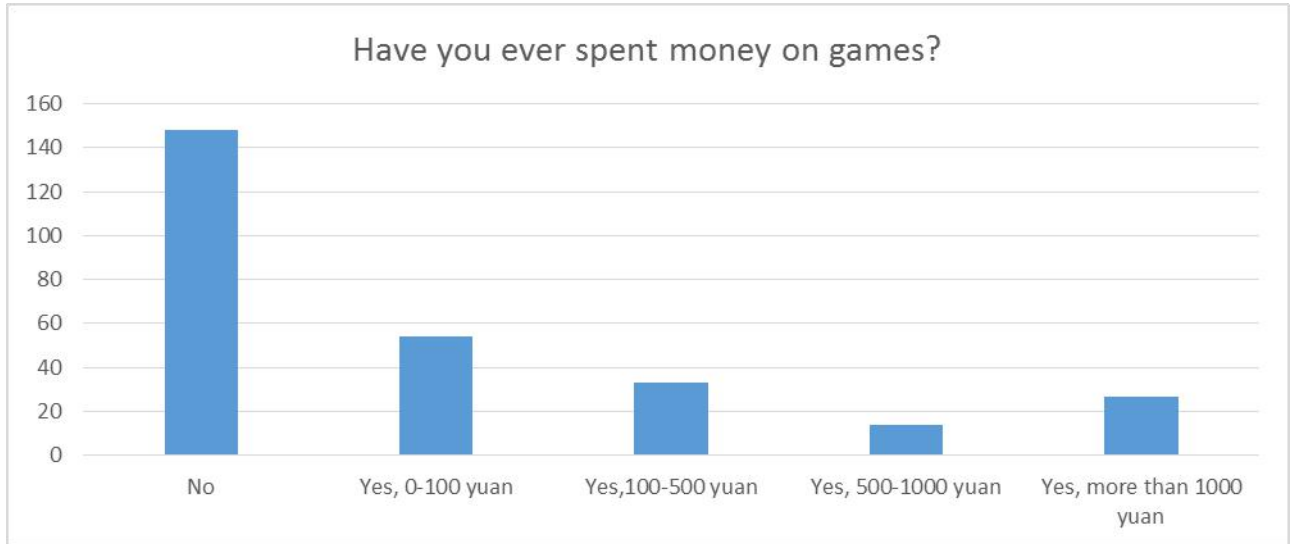
Source: China business industry research institute

### **Fan Economy**

“LOL is not just a game, but also a kind of belief in my mind. I have played it for nearly eight years since I was in junior high school. Actually, I am not the fan of a specific club; I appreciate every club which has high-quality competitions. In this case, buying the champion’s character clothes designed for IG, our Chinese club, is also a way to achieve my heroic dream which has lasted for eight years,” said Yi Zheng, a 22-year-old player of LOL. People like Zheng are fans of LOL, and they consider it a vital part of their daily lives.

Apart from LOL’s fans who think gaming technique is more important, some people would like to support one club and view its members as their idols. Hence, these fans are crazy about buying products related to the club such as team uniforms. In April 2019, character clothes customized for IG costs 500 RMB went public. Nearly every player of LOL brought it—it presented the commercial opportunity of e-sports. When a club wins a big game, it will attract not only fans but also investment. Because fans would like to buy things represented by the club’s members, the

company which supports the club will acquire payoff.



We use a questionnaire to survey how much will people usually spend on games.

### Policy Support

Electronic competition has both entertainment and media attributes which are greatly affected by policies. In the near term, the policy attitude towards the electronic competition industry has improved significantly.

Since 2016, government departments at all levels have issued a series of policies to support the e-sports industry. For example, on July 13, 2016, *the 13th Five-year Plan for the Development of Sports Industry* points

out that "with snow and ice, mountain outdoor, water, automobile, aviation, e-sports and other sports" as the focus, guide the development of fitness and leisure projects with consumption leadership. Also, to better guide the healthy development of the industry, it is reported that the sports information center of the general administration of sport will launch a series of graded management systems for sports events, athletes and referees to promote the professionalism and normalization of

e-sports from the policy level. Under this trend, a large number of professional e-sports practitioners will get qualification certificates in the future, and the influence of public opinion will be more positive, and its commercial value will be strongly enhanced.

What people focus more is the cultivation policy of e-sports talents. On September 6, 2016, the ministry of education announced *the Catalogue of Higher Vocational Education*

## **Conclusion**

All in all, from a minority culture to a popular topic, Chinese e-sports is a legend. Although it is hard to change conservatives' minds for their bias that game players mean chair warmers for a long time, there are more and more people offer respect to e-sports players.

Some people change their minds for gaining more incomes, while others love this aggressive culture. Profit is the largest impetus of e-sports' prosperity. When business benefit mixed with the fast-pace society and exciting dreams,

*(Specialized) Majors in Ordinary Universities.* The list includes 13 specialties, including "e-sports and management." It is a big step forward: a few years ago, e-sports were "electronic heroin", but now, college students can learn e-sports skills on campus. With the rapidly expanding demand of the e-sports industry and the shortage of e-sports talents, this policy has opened up a channel for the cultivation of e-sports professionals.

the legend of Chinese e-sports appeared. As the theme song of "LOL" said: Legends never died.