

Research on the Mode and Path of Integrated Development of Esports Industry and Traditional Sports Industry

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Abstract: This study explores the mode and path of integrated development between the esports industry and traditional sports industry. With the development of digital technology, the esports industry is rapidly rising, while the traditional sports industry still occupies an important position. The two complement each other in terms of culture, audience groups, and commercialization models, promoting cross-border cooperation and resource sharing. This article analyzes the current situation, integration models, and key factors of esports and traditional sports, proposes integration paths such as event cooperation, club co construction, and brand linkage, and explores the roles of technological empowerment, policy support, and socio-cultural factors in integration. Research has shown that the deep integration of esports and traditional sports industries can not only enhance market competitiveness, but also provide audiences with more diversified entertainment experiences. In the future, the combination of the two will tend towards closer cooperation, promoting industrial innovation and global development.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of digital technology, the esports industry has achieved rapid growth worldwide and gradually become an important form of entertainment for the younger generation worldwide. At the same time, the traditional sports industry still holds an important position globally, not only with a broad audience base, but also with strong commercial value and cultural influence. In recent years, the trend of integration between esports and traditional sports has become increasingly evident, and many sports organizations, clubs, and star athletes have begun to try to enter the esports field, promoting the exploration of cross industry cooperation between the two.

The integration of the esports industry and traditional sports industry not only creates new development opportunities for both parties, but also brings more diverse entertainment experiences to the audience. However, despite significant industry differences, esports and traditional sports have strong complementarity in terms of culture, brand, fan base, and commercial operations. Therefore, studying the integration mode and path between the esports industry and the traditional sports industry has important theoretical value and practical significance for promoting the mutually beneficial development of both and driving industrial innovation.

This study aims to explore different models and paths for the integration and development of the esports industry and traditional sports industry, analyze the challenges and opportunities faced in the process of their integration, and propose corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. The research adopts literature analysis, case study, and comparative analysis methods to reveal the actual effects and future development potential of the integration of e-sports industry and traditional sports industry through the comparison of relevant cases at home and abroad.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Esports Industry and Traditional Sports Industry

2.1. Current Development Status of Esports Industry

In recent years, the global esports industry has continued to expand in scale, especially in China, where the esports industry has become an important economic growth point. According to data statistics, the global esports industry market size has exceeded 1 billion US dollars in 2022, and it is expected to reach 1.5 billion US dollars by 2025. The sales of esports events, live streaming platforms, and peripheral products constitute the main economic pillars of the esports industry ^[1].

The characteristics of the esports industry are its low cost, high efficiency, and high interactivity. Esports competitions have strong entertainment and viewing value, and can quickly attract a large number of young audiences. In addition, the e-sports industry has a high degree of digitalization. With the help of the Internet platform, live broadcast and interaction of events have become its main profit model.

2.2. Current Situation of Traditional Sports Industry

The traditional sports industry covers multiple fields such as sports events, athlete training, club operation, and sports facility construction. In recent years, with sports consumption gradually becoming a part of middle-class cultural consumption, the traditional sports industry still maintains a strong growth momentum globally. Especially in sports such as football, basketball, and tennis, a mature market system has been formed, and the annual revenue of the global sports industry has approached 500 billion US dollars ^[2].

However, the traditional sports industry also faces some challenges, such as an aging audience, slowing market growth, and the gradual decline of traditional media. For this reason, many sports brands have begun to explore diversified business models, cross industry cooperation with other industries, and strive to find new growth points in the new market environment.

2.3. The Relationship between Esports and Traditional Sports Industry

There are differences between the esports industry and the traditional sports industry in terms of audience groups, event operations, and commercialization models. Traditional sports emphasize competitiveness and physical fitness, while esports relies more on the competition of intelligence and reaction speed. However, the commonality between the two is also quite obvious: both rely on a large fan base and media communication channels, and have strong entertainment and viewing value ^[3].

In recent years, the integration of esports and traditional sports has become an increasingly trend, especially in terms of event cooperation, club cross-border cooperation, and brand cooperation. The sports industry attracts young audiences through esports, while the esports industry expands its market through the commercialization model and brand influence of traditional sports, forming a complementary and win-win relationship between the two sides.

3. The Model of Integrated Development between E-sports Industry and Traditional Sports Industry

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry can be achieved through various modes. The competition cooperation model enhances the viewing value of traditional sports and expands the audience base of esports by jointly hosting cross-border events; The club co construction model enables traditional sports clubs to establish esports teams, expand the market, and attract young fans; The integration of training systems improves the physical fitness of esports players by drawing on traditional sports training methods, while providing new competitive perspectives for traditional athletes; The brand and commercial operation model promote mutual benefit and win-win cooperation between both parties in brand cooperation and commercial operation. These modes promote the deep integration and common development of the two, as shown in Figure 1.

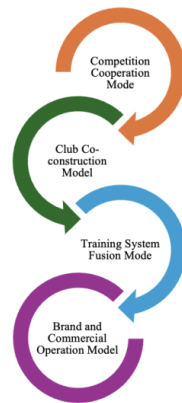


Figure 1: The model of integrated development between e-sports industry and traditional sports industry.

3.1. Competition Cooperation Mode

Competition cooperation is one of the most common forms of integration between esports and traditional sports. Many sports clubs and organizations have started to jointly organize esports events. For example, the NBA has partnered with Tencent to launch the "NBA 2K League", showcasing basketball culture to fans worldwide through electronic sports platforms; FIFA and EA Sports have collaborated to promote the development of virtual football events ^[4]. These cross-border events not only enhance the viewing experience of traditional sports events, but also expand the audience base of esports.

In addition, some traditional sports events have also begun to introduce esports elements. For example, some major sports events such as the World Cup and the Olympics have attempted to include esports as an official competition event, which may become the norm in the future.

3.2. Club Co-construction Model

With the rise of the esports industry, more and more sports clubs are entering the esports field and establishing their own esports teams. This model can not only increase the business income of the club, but also attract more young fans. For example, Spanish football clubs Barcelona and Real Madrid already have their own esports teams involved in the operation of esports events. Traditional sports clubs have achieved dual expansion of resource sharing and market through this approach.

3.3. Training System Fusion Mode

Esports and traditional sports are also showing a trend of integration in their training systems. The scientific training methods of traditional sports provide theoretical support for improving the physical fitness of esports players, while the high-intensity and fast-paced competition style of esports can also provide new competitive perspectives for traditional sports players. For example, some football clubs have begun to introduce esports training methods to improve athletes' reaction speed and decision-making ability. This cross disciplinary integration has promoted the bidirectional development of traditional sports and esports training systems ^[5].

3.4. Brand and Commercial Operation Model

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry is also reflected in brand cooperation and commercial operation. Many sports brands have begun to enter the esports market, launching esports specific equipment, peripheral products, etc. At the same time, esports events have also begun to introduce the commercial operation model of traditional sports, such as sponsors, advertising revenue, and media broadcasting rights. Through this cross-industry brand collaboration, esports and traditional sports can jointly increase market share and achieve a win-win situation.

4. Path Analysis of the Integration of E-sports Industry and Traditional Sports Industry

Through policy support, technological empowerment, education and training system construction, and coordinated optimization of the industry chain, the deep integration of esports and traditional sports industry will usher in more development opportunities. These paths provide strong support for the integration of the two, while also driving innovation and transformation in the industry. As shown in Figure 2.

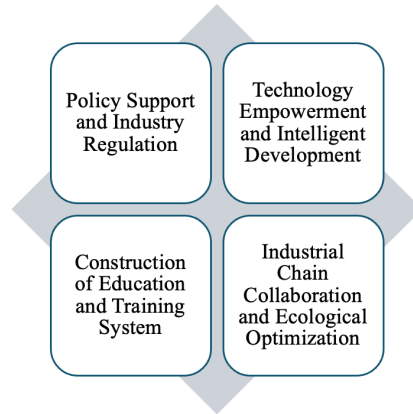


Figure 2: Path analysis of the integration of e-sports industry and traditional sports industry.

4.1. Policy Support and Industry Regulation

The government's policy support plays a key role in the integration of the esports industry and traditional sports industry. In recent years, multiple countries and regions have introduced policies regarding the esports industry, promoting its standardized development. The government can encourage the integration of the two through financial support, tax incentives, and other means. At the same time, establishing industry standards and regulatory measures can help avoid disorderly competition in the industry and improve integration effectiveness [6].

4.2. Technology Empowerment and Intelligent Development

Technological progress, especially the development of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI), has provided technical support for the integration of esports and traditional sports. These technologies can not only enhance the interactivity of the event, but also provide viewers with a brand-new viewing experience. In the future, with the empowerment of technology, the integration of esports and traditional sports will become even deeper, creating new forms of entertainment.

4.3. Construction of Education and Training System

Education and training are important paths for the integration of esports and traditional sports. Major sports colleges and esports colleges can collaborate to offer interdisciplinary courses to cultivate talents who understand both sports and esports. These talents can play a role in multiple fields such as sports clubs, esports teams, and event organization, promoting the deep integration of the two.

4.4. Industrial Chain Collaboration and Ecological Optimization

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry requires the construction of a collaborative industrial chain. Promote the collaborative development of the industrial chain through resource sharing, data exchange, joint marketing, and other means. Meanwhile, optimizing the industrial ecosystem and promoting cross industry cooperation can enhance the competitiveness and innovation capabilities of the entire industry [7].

5. Analysis of Key Factors for the Integration of Esports Industry and Traditional Sports Industry

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry is a multidimensional and mutually beneficial process. Through the overlap and diversification of audience groups, the linkage of brand effects, the complementarity of event organization and operation models, technological empowerment and innovation, and cross-border cooperation of social and cultural factors, esports and traditional sports can jointly promote the development of the industry. The in-depth cooperation between the two sides in resource sharing, technological innovation, and brand promotion will open up new growth points for the future sports and entertainment industry, meet the needs of different groups, and achieve a more diversified market and industrial ecology, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Analysis of key factors for the integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry.

5.1. Overlap and Diversification of Audience Groups

Although there are differences in origin, culture, and forms of expression between the esports industry and the traditional sports industry, their audience groups have strong overlap, especially among young people. With the popularization of the Internet and the globalization of e-sports events, more and more young audiences have begun to pay attention to e-sports events, while maintaining high enthusiasm for traditional sports events. Both have common needs and potential in attracting young audiences and expanding markets ^[8].

Esports can attract a younger audience, while traditional sports have accumulated a huge fan base worldwide. The combination of the two can meet the needs of different age groups and interest groups, thereby expanding and diversifying the fan base. For example, joint live streaming of sports and esports events can attract a wider audience and create more business opportunities.

5.2. Brand Effect and Commercial Operation

Brand and commercial operation are key factors in the integration of esports and traditional sports. The traditional sports industry, with its long-term accumulated brand effect and mature business model, can provide strong brand endorsement for the integration of the esports industry. At the same time, the esports industry has demonstrated its strong market-oriented capabilities and profit potential through innovative business models such as live streaming platforms and virtual prop sales ^[9].

The combination of the two can achieve mutual benefit and win-win through brand linkage, cross-border marketing, and other means. For example, the investment and cooperation of sports brands such as Nike and Adidas in the esports field can not only increase brand exposure, but also attract the attention of more young consumer groups. Through forms such as joint sponsorship and event naming, esports and traditional sports industries can jointly enhance their market influence and promote the deep integration of cross-border brands.

5.3. Complementarity between Event Organization and Operation Mode

The organizational forms and operational models of esports and traditional sports events have

many similarities, which provide a foundation for the integration of the two. Firstly, event organizers need to carry out refined management and provide high-quality event experiences; Secondly, the commercialization models of traditional sports and esports events have similar profit streams, such as ticket revenue, advertising sponsorship, and event copyrights.

However, the flexibility, quick response, and innovation of esports events can precisely compensate for the fixed models and operational bottlenecks that may exist in traditional sports events. For example, the diversified operation of esports events (such as mixed online and offline events) can enhance the viewing and participation of the events, providing reference for the innovation of traditional sports events.

By drawing on each other's operational experience, traditional sports events can introduce innovative elements of the esports industry, and esports events can also enhance their brand value and marketization level through the operation mode of traditional sports events. The complementarity between the two in event organization and operation will help achieve more efficient integration ^[10].

5.4. Empowering Technology and Mutually Beneficial Innovation

Technological innovation is one of the core driving forces behind the integration of esports and traditional sports industries. Whether it is esports events or traditional sports events, with the continuous advancement of technology, the interactivity, viewing experience, and audience participation have been greatly improved. Technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), big data analysis, and artificial intelligence (AI) have been widely applied in the competition between the two.

For example, esports events enhance audience immersion through virtual reality technology, while traditional sports events rely on real-time analysis of player performance through big data analysis, increasing the strategic and viewing value of the event. The application of these technologies not only enhances the audience's participation experience, but also promotes the technological integration between the two.

The empowerment of technology has blurred the boundary between esports and traditional sports, and in the future, more cross disciplinary innovative cooperation can be achieved, such as incorporating esports elements into traditional sports events, and integrating the strategic and competitive aspects of traditional sports into esports events. This technological innovation will provide a more solid foundation for the integration of the two and promote breakthroughs in industrial boundaries.

5.5. Sociocultural Factors and Cross-border Cooperation

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry is not only about commercial and technological cooperation, but also involves deep-seated social and cultural factors. The differences in cultural identity, fan base, and entertainment methods between esports and traditional sports require mutual respect and integration of culture in the process of cooperation.

The traditional sports industry has a profound cultural heritage and historical accumulation, representing core values such as team spirit and competitive spirit. Esports culture emphasizes individual competition, quick feedback, and instant rewards. The integration of the two requires finding commonalities at the cultural level, such as how to combine the competitive spirit of traditional sports with the entertainment and innovation of esports to form an inclusive cultural platform.

In addition, cross-border cooperation is not limited to event and brand collaborations, but also includes interactions between sports stars and esports players. Sports stars participating in esports events or esports players endorsing traditional sports brands can not only break down barriers between industries, but also provide new entertainment experiences for their respective fan groups, further deepening the interaction and sense of identity among fans.

6. Conclusion and Prospect

6.1. Research Summary

The integration of esports industry and traditional sports industry has enormous potential and broad prospects. From event cooperation to brand collaboration, from technological innovation to social and cultural integration, the deep cooperation between the two has brought more diversified development paths for the entire industry. Through reasonable policy support, technological empowerment, and brand innovation, esports and traditional sports can achieve complementary and win-win results, promote further market expansion, and optimize industrial ecology.

6.2. Future Development Trends

In the future, the integration of esports and traditional sports industries will present a more diversified and innovative trend. With the advancement of technology, the expansion of audience groups, and the deepening of cross-border cooperation, the boundary between esports and traditional sports will gradually blur, forming a closer cooperative relationship. Meanwhile, the interaction between the two in terms of culture, commerce, and marketization will bring new development opportunities to the entire entertainment industry.

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