

A Comprehensive Analysis of Game Success: Synergy Between Quality, Brand, and Market

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Abstract. This study scrutinizes the important factors behind the success of video games, Targeting a comprehensive paradigm which merges game quality, brand influence, and market strategies. By investigating the top 100 best-selling titles on Steam, the research looks into the interconnections between creative gameplay, the depth of storytelling, audiovisual quality, and sales results. Analysis of quantitative regression shows that although game quality is important, it is not the main factor for success. A qualitative assessment of high-priced, low-rated games including Overwatch 2 and NBA 2K25, and high-rated, low-selling games like Stardew Valley and Euro Truck Simulator 2, shows how significant brand loyalty, multiplayer interaction, and market segmentation are. This study demonstrates the value of original gameplay, successful marketing approaches, and technological innovations, like VR and superior graphics, in increasing sales and supporting player retention. The results provide key understanding for game developers and marketers who want to improve game performance in a cutthroat and rapidly evolving market.

Keywords: Game, sale, innovation, market.

1. Introduction

The existing platform in the global game market represents a boom, which makes it a key component of the global entertainment sector. The quick expansion of the game industry has produced significant economic rewards and has had a serious impact on culture and society. The game industry has produced many jobs and encouraged the innovation and development of related technologies, as seen economically [1]. The global game industry is on track to create more than \$200 billion in revenue annually by 2023, which is much greater than the combined revenue of the music and film industries. In terms of culture, games have become a new way of expression and social media, affecting many fields such as fashion, music, film and television.

The success of a game comes from a combination of factors. This research will assume three of the most important: 1. The combination of original gameplay and clear design gives players a special and seamless experience, which is key to attracting a player base. 2. The player's immersion is enhanced along with a feeling of emotional connection to the game, thanks to deep storyline and character building. 3. High quality images and sound effects. Also, accurate marketing and brand loyalty can help the game to attract and reach a diverse audience for the long haul.

At present, the researches on the success factors of games are scattered and lack of systematic integration. Academic circles focus on technical optimization or a single dimension of discussion, and

fail to fully cover the multiple factors of game success. The fragmentation not only restricts academic understanding of success factors in games, but also makes it hard for developers to access complete guidelines during practice. As a result, this study intends to merge various factors to deliver a more complete analytical framework and supply a more organized route to success for the game industry.

At this moment, the studies into the success factors of games are fragmented and unsystematically integrated. Academic communities concentrate on improving technical aspects or a single angle of discussion, which leaves the multiple factors that contribute to game success unexamined. This fragmentation not only limits academic understanding of what makes a game successful, but also makes it difficult for developers to find complete guidelines in practice. Therefore, this study hopes to integrate multiple factors to provide a more comprehensive analytical framework and provide a more systematic path to success for the game industry.

Through this study, the desired goal is to identify the common characteristics of successful games in the market and analyze in depth how these characteristics influence the market performance of games. Specifically, the study will explore which game design elements, marketing strategies, user experiences, and technological innovations play a key role in successful games and assess their impact on game sales, player retention, and brand impact.

The following chapters are arranged as follows: Through a quantitative analysis of the top 100 best-selling games in the world, three key aspects of game success are explored: 1. Innovative gameplay and intuition 2. In-depth story and character building 3. As well as high quality visuals and sound effects.

2. Research methodology analysis

This chapter will test the correlation between game quality and sales through quantitative analysis, and examine other possible factors affecting sales besides game quality through qualitative analysis of high-sales and low-score games and low-sales and high-score games

Using quantitative analysis, three aspects of the game are analyzed through the world's top 100 best-selling games.

- Innovative gameplay and intuitive design provide players with a unique and fluid experience, which is the basis for engaging players.
- Deep storyline and character building enhance the player's immersion and make them feel emotionally connected to the game.
- High quality visuals and sound effects to determine whether a higher quality game will sell more than a lower quality game. If the result is not, we want to use qualitative analysis to determine whether there are other factors affecting the sales of the game.

The top currently global selling steam games as of August 2024 can be found through steam DB as it has a large enough base of consumer and collected the top 100 selling games, excluding pre-sales and game dlc, leaving 88 sets of data. Since it is difficult to find separate rating score for each of the three aspects of a game, we did a regression of steam DB's favorable rate, which represents innovative gameplay, story and character building, visual and sound effects, and sales to roughly determine whether the higher the quality of the game itself, the higher the sales.

Table 1. Simple Regression Model for Sales Ranking and Game Quality [1]

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	30.634	15.60583403	1.96298281	0.05288023
rate	0.175	0.193914838	0.9023914	0.36936949

A regression coefficient of 0.17 indicates a positive relationship between the independent variable (in this case, the overall score of game quality) and the dependent variable (game sales). The magnitude of the coefficient value (0.17) indicates the strength of this effect (Table 1). Here, the coefficient of 0.17 is relatively small, indicating that the effect of game quality on sales, while present, is not particularly significant or strong. Although the regression coefficient is 0.17, whether it has practical significance

needs to be judged by combining the P-value. If the P-value is greater than the commonly used significance level (e.g. 0.01 or 0.05), then the estimate of the coefficient may not be statistically significant and does not provide sufficient evidence that the effect of game quality on sales is significant.

From regression analysis, it is found that rate is not a significant factor ($p\text{-value} > 0.01$) in explain there is not a clear positive relationship between sales and game quality

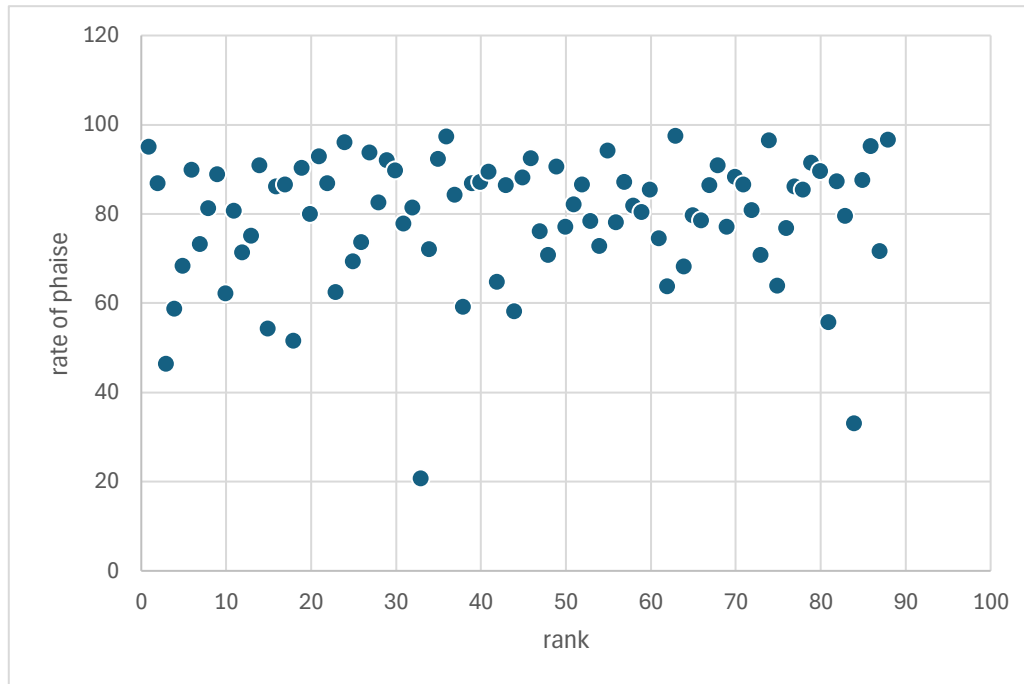


Figure 1. Scatter Chart for Game Rating and Number of Sales Rankings [1]

From the figure 1, the dots show a discrete distribution, and game quality is not the determinant of sales. Next, the two games will be chosen with the lowest rating in the top 44 sales ranking and the two games with the highest rating in the bottom 44 sales ranking for qualitative analysis. The four games are shown in table 2.

Table 2. the two games with the lowest rating in the top 44 sales ranking and the two games with the highest rating in the bottom 44 sales ranking [1]

Rank	Game	Favourable rate
63	Stardew Valley	97.5
88	Euro Truck Simulator 2	96.59
33	Overwatch 2	20.71
3	NBA 2K25	46.35

There are two possible reasons for Overwatch2's high player base. The first is that it is a sequel to overwatch itself, and with the overwatch brand, despite the low ratings, there will still be a large number of loyal players following it. The second reason is that these types of multiplayer online games usually have a high player base, and multiplayer games provide community interaction that increases player engagement, and multiplayer teamwork that allows players to invest time and effort.

The reason NBA 2K25 has a high number of players despite having a low rating is similar. It has a stable audience in its own right as a sports game, with legions of loyal players buying the latest version every year. Sales of such games are often not entirely dependent on reviews and may be more dependent on brands. In contrast to the previous two games, Stardew Valley is a business simulation game, and

Euro Truck Simulator 2 is a driving simulation game. Although it has a higher rating, it does not have the market coverage of the big commercial games, so the audience is relatively small

3. Market influence and innovation factors behind game success

An analysis of market segments and successful games reveals the growth and success factors of games in different markets. First, market segmentation understand the sales performance of platform types, game types, and regional markets. Platform types include console, PC, and mobile games (games that run on mobile devices such as phones, tablets, etc.), each with its own unique characteristics and marketing strategies. For example, consoles and PCS often rely on the device's high-performance hardware to provide a graphically beautiful, smooth gaming experience. Mobile games, on the other hand, focus on short casual experiences and in-app purchases. According to Babb, Terry and Dana's research report, with the rise of mobile devices and online gaming, the future gaming market will be more diverse [2]. The growth of mobile gaming and online content distribution could have an impact on the traditional gaming market. Genres include action/adventure, role-playing, and simulation games, with different genres catering to different players. Regional market analysis shows that the North American market favors high-budget AAA games, the Asian market favors mobile games and MMORPGs, and the European market shows a strong interest in indie games and innovative design.

Successful games often have some key commonalities, but the audience in the market can also significantly affect sales. First, for players, a high quality user experience is the foundation of success, including fine design, smooth operation experience and technical stability, while constantly optimizing based on player feedback. Secondly, innovative gameplay is also the key to success, and successful games often introduce innovative game mechanics and unique creative elements that make them stand out in the market. However, even if a game is of high quality, sales will be affected by the audience in the market, and sometimes a poorer quality game will sell better because of a wider market audience or an effective marketing strategy. Research by Eulerich, Eulerich, and Prinz reveals that better reviews from the trade press and consumer and user reviews can drive global sales of video games [3] In addition, a strong brand and effective marketing strategy can build broad market recognition and build a loyal fan base through positive community interactions. Finally, successful games have deep content, including compelling storylines and a variety of gameplay features that increase long-term engagement.

4. Key success factors analysis

4.1. Game design and innovation

Innovative design plays a crucial role in games, driving success and standing out in a highly competitive market. Innovative design can cover many aspects, including gameplay (game mechanics), visual design, story, and interactive experience.

The gameplay innovations in both the 'Legend of Zelda' along with the 'Souls' series (including 'Dark Souls') have played a key role in their success (Figure 2). The open world design of Breath of the Wild gives players the freedom to roam, breaking away from the usual linear mission framework, which allows them to select their personalized approach to problem-solving, world exploration, and even a direct confrontation with the final boss. The physics engine of the game together with its environmental interaction mechanisms, especially the use of wind, fire and other elements, create a multitude of combat and puzzle strategies that greatly boost player freedom and creativity.



Figure 2. The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild [4]

'Dark Soul' series is famous for its very challenging, detailed combat mechanics and a high level of immersion in exploration. Playing the game delivers a special sense of accomplishment, thanks to its rhythmic design and accurate feedback, and the battle demands both technology and strategic thinking along with patience (Figure 3). The Soul series introduces an original 'death-rebirth' mechanic that allows the player to learn and improve after each failure, adding tension and fun to the exploration.



Figure 3. DARK SOULS III [5]

Both innovate in gameplay and deliver special player experiences. The basis for the success of Breath of the Wilderness is its freedom and interaction with the environment, while the tough challenges and elaborate combat systems of the Soul series lead to their success. In addition to making them popular among players, these gameplay innovations have had a significant effect on the field of game design.

4.2. Game market

For the success of a game, having a strong marketing strategy is particularly important when it comes to its target market users. Game businesses can improve their player engagement by using social media promotion, cross-platform promotion, and managing user communities. This success serves as a good

illustration. Thanks to social media, especially in conjunction with streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube, the game obtained promotion that brought in famous anchors to broadcast live, which drew in a large community of young players and rapidly boosted its popularity. Also, the ability to distribute across platforms enables games to execute on PC, console, and mobile platforms, so players can move fluidly between devices and connect across platforms, which invites in more casual gamers and groups with different gaming styles. Finally, Epic Games has managed to keep players interested in the game through regular releases of limited-time events, updates, new characters, and tie-ins with pop culture. In these ways, Fortnite has managed to build a huge global player base and become one of the most popular games of all time. At the same time, a key concept emerged as known as 'game culture'. According to Shaw, game culture is defined by video game consumption, covers player identity, game content, and gameplay, and is often seen as a distinct subculture distinct from mainstream culture [6]. Game culture and the market interact, and the market largely designs and promotes games based on existing game culture. Developers and publishers develop new games based on popular cultural trends and the preferences and needs of players. For example, with the rise of 'eSports culture' in the 21st century, game companies and markets have pushed for more competitive games, such as 'League of Legends' and 'Overwatch'[6].

4.3. Technology

Technological innovation and platform implementation have a significant impact on the sales of game manufacturers. For example, 'Half-Life: Alyx' uses VR technology. VR technology has revolutionized the gaming industry. By providing a highly immersive 3D virtual world, it enhances the user's sense of immersion and reality and introduces a new way of interaction. This not only makes the gaming experience more natural and intuitive but also creates new market opportunities and business models [7]. 'Half-Life: Alyx' takes full advantage of high-quality VR equipment and fine graphics rendering to enhance interactivity and immersion, making it stand out in the VR gaming market. This technological innovation has attracted not only gamers interested in VR, but also game enthusiasts seeking a unique experience, which has greatly contributed to the sales growth of the game. In addition, with the continuous development of 3D graphics, high-definition resolution, sound, VR and AR, the visual and auditory representations of games have become more realistic. These technological innovations have made the game screen more realistic and triggered a high level of interest among players, thus attracting the attention of a large number of consumers. For example, the evolution of game graphics from 8-bit resolution to 64-bit resolution has driven the improvement of game visuals, making games better on high-definition monitors such as HD, FHD, UHD and 4K. The visual and technological progress has fueled a player demand for enhanced games, which is propelling market growth. Through differentiated technological advantages, game manufacturers are able to gain an edge in a highly competitive market, demonstrating the critical role of advanced technology in boosting game sales and market success.

5. Conclusion

The research looks into the diverse factors that influence the success of a game through an analysis of the world's top-selling games. Investigate the effect of external elements on game sales. In summary, the success of games comes from a combination of several key factors. Innovative gameplay design, in-depth storyline, excellent visual and sound effects, and precise marketing strategies contributed to the game's market performance. While the quality of the game plays a role in sales to some extent, the brand, loyal player base and market segmentation are also key factors in determining a game's success. In addition, technological innovations such as VR and high-quality 3D graphics presentations further enhance the immersion and appeal of games, driving the growth of the gaming industry. With the proliferation of mobile devices and online content distribution, the future gaming market will be more diverse, and developers and publishers will need to continue to innovate to meet the needs of different audiences.

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