Research on the Psychological Impact of "Black Myth: Wukong" on Chinese High School Students

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Abstract: This research investigates the psychological impact of "Black Myth: Wukong" on Chinese high school students, emphasizing its visual allure, plot design, and cultural relevance. As China's first AAA game, "Black Myth: Wukong" reimagines the classic tale of *Journey to the West*, blending traditional Chinese mythology with cutting-edge graphics and modern gameplay techniques to create a deeply immersive experience. The study reveals that students are particularly drawn to the game's breathtaking visual effects, intricate storytelling, and strong connection to Chinese culture. These aspects not only evoke emotional engagement but also shape their gaming preferences, influencing both their entertainment choices and purchasing behaviors. Moreover, the game's cultural significance fosters a sense of pride and connection to Chinese heritage among young players, offering them a unique opportunity to engage with their cultural identity in a contemporary medium. This demonstrates the game's substantial psychological and cultural influence, highlighting the potential for video games to bridge the gap between traditional narratives and modern technology while resonating deeply with younger audiences.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Game, Chinese High School Students.

1. Introduction

The development of China's game industry can be divided into four periods. In the 1990s, as computers began to enter people's lives, computer software began to become popular. Then came the corresponding game importers, introducing a large number of foreign games, initially popular in China "World of Warcraft", but at that time Chinese users mainly through pirated channels to unlock some Western and Japanese games. After 2000, due to the reform of Chinese game enterprises, the consumption pattern of Chinese games began to change from buyout games to free games. For example, the contemporary "Elden Ring", "Two Men" and so on are excellent games in the game industry, most of them are buyout games. In other words, in the film industry, films are mainly divided into commercial films and art films, commercial films tend to make profits and use popular actors and IP, whereas art films are focused on artistic expression, will use different methods of expression, Oscar-nominated director Nolan is a representative figure in the field of art films. Therefore, in the field of games, games can also be divided into commercial games and art games, free games are typical commercial games, and game merchants will provide players with very basic gameplay for free, but most of the game content needs to be paid to unlock, in the subsequent behavior, game merchants will continue to launch a lot of beautification content in the game. Like different gun skins,

and all kinds of costumes. Therefore, in the development of games in China, the focus of game producers has shifted slightly. After 2010, smartphones began to become popular in China, which led to the explosive growth of the mobile game market. Tencent's mobile terminal competitive games and Miha You company's game "Original God", these games have not only been very good in China but also began to go to the international stage. Due to the excessive popularity of mobile games and the allure of in-game recharge systems, the government began to strengthen supervision and strictly control the content and behavior of games. The launch and release of new games need to be issued and licensed by the relevant Chinese authorities, which makes many high-quality games unavailable in China. After 2015, because of the global gaming trend, e-sports also began to become popular in China.

As China's first strictly artistic game work, "Black Myth: Wukong", game science also captures the psychology of players' in-game production. "Black Myth: Wukong" is an RPG game developed by the Chinese game company Game Science. In 2020, the producer first announced the first trailer of the game to the media platform. In terms of gameplay, game science does not have a unique advantage in the overall global game market, but in terms of the selection of game content, game Science is created on the background of the famous Chinese classical novel *Journey to the West*. Compared to the book, the game's storyline is treated in a dark style, exploring themes of power, fate, and inner struggles. In *Journey to the West*, one of the four great masterpieces of Chinese literature, Sun Wukong is the most representative role, his image represents rebellion and freedom, and at the same time shoulders great responsibility. With its treatment of the dark style, which is the most anticipated feature of the content, game science creates a more brutal and gloomy worldview while retaining elements of the classic storyline of the original *Journey to the West*. Much of what players expect from a game comes from exploring the "familiar unknown."

In the context of the lack of console games in China, online games and mobile games have developed rapidly and become entertainment tools for contemporary teenagers. Different from console games, which require the purchase of hardware products, online games are mainly consumed by the purchase of software and the replenishment of internal virtual props. Can each game consumption mode with its own characteristics be recognized by contemporary teenagers? It is closely related to the consumption concept of teenagers. Therefore, it is very important to study the game consumption concept of contemporary teenagers.

2. Literature Review

Xinhua mentioned the development of China's game industry which mobile games have always dominated, the United States and Japan are China's main overseas markets, and the revenue of client games is also rising, while web games have been declining [1]. Lai Lin Thomala believes that Tencent and NetEase have been the most successful game developers in China. As an emerging enterprise, Mihayou also occupies the main leadership of Chinese games [2]. Banyte said it is characterized by three dimensions – cognitive, emotional, and behavioral [3]. Research says that Chinese students account for 90% of the Internet and are the main audience of Chinese games [4]. Scholars show that capturing the factors affecting purchasing behavior can help businesses have reasonable marketing strategies to improve business efficiency, beliefs, and attitudes are formed in consumers in many different ways [5]. Scholars suggested that Chinese teens are the main consumers of the Chinese market [6]. Messner says that The State Council's ban on PlayStation games is just one of the government's tactics [7]. Devin Lin believes that the promotional form of "Black Myth: Wukong" is very much in line with the cultural awareness and expectations of players [8]. Kai Feng believes that "Black Myth: Wukong", the first AAA game in China, Helped China open up the market on the Steam gaming platform [9]. Phuong said the game market has evolved since 2000 [5].

Although there has been a large number of studies on adolescent consumption behavior, there is still a lack of research on the attitude and psychological motivation of Chinese high school students towards the first domestic 3A game. This study will fill in the gap and deeply analyze the specific attitude and behavior patterns of high school students toward "Black Myth: Wukong".

3. Methodology

The main form of this study is a questionnaire survey, aiming to explore the motivational theories in consumer psychology. It focuses specifically on the features and aspects of "Black Myth: Wukong" that Chinese high school students pay attention to before making a purchase decision, such as visual appeal, cultural background, and gameplay mechanics. As a highly anticipated AAA game, "Black Myth: Wukong" represents a significant milestone in the Chinese gaming market, making it an interesting case for understanding the purchasing motivations and decision-making processes of young consumers. The questionnaire covers several core areas: first, it examines the level of awareness Chinese high school students have about AAA games, particularly since "Black Myth: Wukong" is one of the first domestically produced AAA titles. Understanding their knowledge of this game category provides insight into how they perceive its value and prestige. Secondly, the cultural background and impact of "Black Myth: Wukong" are explored, considering the game is deeply rooted in the famous Chinese legend of the Monkey King. This cultural connection could potentially enhance the game's appeal to students by fostering a sense of familiarity and national pride. Another important aspect of the survey is the students' evaluation of the game's visual effects, examining whether the visuals meet their expectations, as AAA games are often praised for their cutting-edge graphics. Additionally, the questionnaire seeks to understand the influence of social circles on purchase decisions, investigating whether students are influenced by the opinions and recommendations of their peers, friends, or family when deciding to buy the game. The survey was distributed online through the "Black Myth: Wukong" on Weibo, reaching a broad audience of interested consumers. The questionnaires were available for two weeks, during which a total of 112 responses were collected, of which 96 were valid. The invalid responses were excluded from the analysis due to their lack of relevance to the research theme.

The primary analysis focuses on how the specific characteristics of "Black Myth: Wukong"— including its visual design, cultural depth, and gameplay—affect the purchasing intentions and preferences of Chinese high school students. By examining these factors, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the key drivers behind their decision-making process when considering a major game purchase, especially within the context of a culturally significant and technically advanced title like "Black Myth: Wukong".

4. Result

The results showed that in a survey on the most attractive features of the "Black Myth: Wukong", 42% of Chinese high school students rated visual effects as the most important factor in a game, stating that visual effects and immersion are the most direct sources of attraction, and they clearly stated that they are first attracted to visual impact when choosing a game. Secondly, 38% of Chinese high school students found the plot design very attractive. However, the vast majority of Chinese high school students hope that the story of the game can be more innovative, and expect to start the narrative through the character's own story background, they said that if the story of the game is rich enough, and the character's development is complete and unique, they will be more inclined to buy the understanding of the story they hope to achieve through the game experience. In addition, 20% of participants considered the Sinicized element details to be a highlight, and they said they were impressed by Black Myth: The cultural features in Wukong, such as the symbol of Wukong, the

monster, and traditional Chinese background, can bring a strong sense of identity and national pride. The Chinese mythical background in the game and the image of Wukong can bring a special sense of belonging so that they can carry on cultural inheritance while entertaining. As the first Chinese AAA game blockbuster, 58 percent of Chinese high school students said the game's story is capable of attracting international game fans, while 42 percent of Chinese high school students said the game's setting is too stereotypical and unappealing. One in five Chinese high school students think the Monkey King game company did not do a good job of promoting the game before its release.

5. Discussion

As can be seen from the result, Chinese high school students' consumer psychology of "Black Myth: Wukong" is mainly influenced by visual effects, plot design, and cultural identity. For a young generation of game players, sensory stimulation is undoubtedly the primary criterion for them to choose a game, especially for games such as "Black Myth: Wukong", which is sold with high image quality. In the presentation of visual effects, Wukong adopts 3D modeling technology and image rendering technology to reproduce the details of traditional Chinese architecture and create a highly immersive game environment. The visual experience is a key factor in their decision to continue playing the game. From the perspective of consumer behavior theory, the exquisite screen design and dynamic effects in the game stimulate their desire to buy through direct sensory stimulation.

In addition to visual effects, plot design also plays an important role in the consumption motivation of high school students. Through the innovative expression of traditional culture, "Black Myth: Wukong" makes the classic cultural work *Journey to the West* glow with new vitality. "Black Myth: Wukong" is also inspired by Buddhist sutras in the plot design, giving Sun Wukong this legendary role more depth and connotation. This combination of in-depth plot design and cultural elements enhances players' sense of identity and belonging to Chinese culture, thus stimulating their purchase motivation. In the survey, many Chinese high school students mentioned that they would be willing to spend more time in the development of a game if the story was rich and suspenseful. The depth of the story and character development become important factors affecting their consumption decisions. Motivation theory can also explain their pursuit of story depth. In the growth stage of high school students, academic pressure and emotional activity, are more inclined to seek emotional catharsis and spiritual transmission in the virtual world. Story-rich games not only provide emotional resonance but also allow players to have fun with self-actualization through the play experience. As a result, story design is an important factor in their decision to play the game in depth.

The success of the game is not only reflected in its plot and characters but also in its rich display of Chinese cultural ICONS. "Black Myth: Wukong" not only contains ancient Chinese classic poetry but also shows the traditional Chinese culture through classical architectural style, carved beams, painted buildings, glazed tiles, and other unique Chinese elements. This display of cultural ICONS helps to strengthen players' sense of identity with Chinese culture, which is an important factor that Chinese high school students are willing to spend money on. Especially in the market environment where Chinese games compete with other international giants, its games with traditional Chinese cultural elements can inspire national pride among high school students. Twenty percent of Chinese high school students said they bought "Black Myth: Wukong" not only because the game itself is innovative and entertaining, but also because it carries the classic story of *Journey to the West* and has cultural significance. Therefore, cultural design in games can enhance the purchase motivation of Chinese high school students under certain images. Social identity theory can help understand why high school students resonate with the Chinese cultural elements of "Black Myth: Wukong". According to this theory, consumer purchasing behavior is often driven by social culture.

6. Conclusion

Through in-depth analysis of Chinese high school students' consumer psychology and behavior towards "Black Myth: Wukong", this study reveals the decisive factors such as visual effects, cultural identity and plot design in consumers' purchase decisions. The interest and purchase willingness of Chinese high school students in the game is closely related to the cultural identity of "Black Myth: Wukong", the high quality of the visual effects, and the development of the story.

First of all, the visual effects have a significant appeal to the Chinese high school community. With its excellent picture quality, vivid character design, and exquisite scenes, Black Myth: Goku meets the needs of this group for the visual experience. For Chinese high school students, this visual enjoyment not only improves the overall quality of the game but also meets the needs of high school students for high-quality entertainment content. A good visual presentation can not only quickly capture their attention, but also increase their willingness to buy.

Secondly, the depth and creativity of the plot design are also the key factors affecting the consumer psychology of high school students. "Black Myth: Goku" retains the spirit of the original, while providing an innovative interpretation of the classic story to bring players a fresh and profound experience. Surveys show that many high school students prefer games with complex plots and emotional involvement. This adaptation of the traditional culture of *Journey to the West* has enhanced the emotional resonance of Chinese high school students.

Moreover, cultural identity also occupies a core position in high school students' consumption behavior. "Black Myth: Wukong" cleverly integrates traditional Chinese cultural elements and inspires Chinese high school students sense of national pride and cultural belonging through the carefully designed "Man of Destiny". This sense of cultural identity promotes word of mouth about the game, thus expanding the market influence of the game.

The discussion section further analyzes how these factors work together in the purchasing decision-making process of consumers. The marketing activities of social media, the technological innovation of games, and the strategy of cultural output all affect the consumer psychology of high school students to varying degrees. This study reveals the psychological needs of Chinese high school students when they choose to buy games. Visuals are the main thing that keeps them hooked, and story depth is what keeps them hooked. At the same time, cultural identity can enhance their purchase motivation. As a result, when designing and promoting Black Myth, game science needed to balance the game's sensory experience, story content, and cultural elements for different consumer motivations.

Although this study provides an in-depth insight into the consumer psychology of high school students, it also has certain limitations. The sample size was small and concentrated in schools, which may limit the general applicability of the findings. Future studies should expand the sample to include high school students from different regions and backgrounds to gain a more comprehensive perspective. In addition, further exploration of the long-term effects of games on adolescent behavior and psychology, as well as how games can better serve as a medium for cultural transmission, is also an important direction for future research.

The success of "Black Myth: Wukong" provides valuable lessons for the Chinese game industry, showing how to attract young consumers through a combination of traditional culture, technological innovation, and effective marketing strategies. As a new cultural carrier, the potential of games in cultural communication and youth growth is worth further exploration and research.

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