

The Global Dissemination of Chinese Culture through Black Myth Wukong: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The dissemination of Chinese culture through digital media has gained significant momentum, with video games emerging as powerful tools for cultural transmission. Black Myth: Wukong exemplifies this trend, blending traditional Chinese storytelling with modern gaming technology to introduce global audiences to Chinese mythology. This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) to analyze how the game integrates traditional narratives, promotes Chinese cultural identity, and compares to other Chinese mythology-based games. The findings indicate that Black Myth: Wukong enhances cultural appreciation through imagological representation, foreignization strategies, and immersive gameplay, successfully bridging cultural gaps. Additionally, the game contributes to China's soft power strategy, reinforcing national identity while appealing to international audiences. Compared to earlier Chinese mythology-inspired games, Black Myth: Wukong has achieved greater global recognition due to its high production quality, deep narrative structure, and innovative storytelling techniques. The study's findings have practical implications for game developers, cultural policymakers, and scholars, highlighting how video games can serve as effective cultural diplomacy tools. Future research should explore player reception and long-term industry impact to further understand the role of gaming in global cultural exchange.

Keywords: Cultural Dissemination, Chinese Mythology in Gaming, Black Myth Wukong, Cross-cultural Communication, Digital Storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural communication has been revolutionized in the Information Age. With the aid of new media and communication channels, Chinese cultural elements have been gaining attention overseas. For instance, Li Ziqi's short videos, which centered on idyllic life have sparked strong resonance abroad, fulfilling the shared psychological demand for global netizens to seek "escape from the pressure of modern society, and longing to return to the nature" (Feng, Ren, & Wu, 2022). As another example, the single-player game Black Myth: Wukong, which was officially released on August 20, 2024, generated more than 800 million U.S. dollars (81.2 million) in sales within just 11 days of its release, according to Video Game Insights, a game market research website. The game topped the sales charts in various countries and regions worldwide, and its scenarios, characters, and plots ignited widespread interest and discussion among game enthusiasts and even ordinary Internet users worldwide.

As the game gained popularity, its commercial value attracted the attention of scholars (Xiao & Chu, 2024). The breathtaking architecture, sculptures, and murals in the game's scenes, as well as traditional Chinese music and medicine, once again gained attention. Many official media outlets also participated in promoting the game's cultural symbols. However, beneath the surface of the hype, what contents ignite the emotional resonance of global players, and what topics touch the sensitive nerves of those who pay attention? What are the logical motivations behind the explosion, and what are the implications for Chinese culture going overseas? The discussion of these issues from the perspective of game users has not attracted enough attention, which fails to

grasp the concerns and understanding of overseas audiences about the cultural elements involved in the game.

Cultural Consistency Theory posts that audiences prefer to access information in cultural forms that are familiar to them in terms of language, culture, customs and beliefs (Hunzaker, 2016). While *Black Myth: Wukong* has strong Chinese culture as its base, the fact that the game is popular worldwide, shows that it goes beyond the cultural similarities based on the stereotype of the same culture type, but based on the presence of certain archetypes and topics. This aligns with the game's strategies: In fact, Sun Wukong's story captures the universal image of the hero: rebellion, endurance, and the spirit of fighting against destiny that will be natural for an audience of any nationality. For example, one TikTok post even said directly: "Wukong is like our God of War" which proves the similar experiences of the game's protagonist to the Western hero archetypes. Such an archetype simplifies the cultural differences and lets the global player establish an emotional appeal to the character.

While cultural proximity often requires media localization, *Black Myth: As in Wukong*, the show uses many foreignization strategies in the translation, for instance, Pinyin names all through- Sun Wukong. This meets the cognitive needs of users by providing Chinese phonetics and mythology as original as possible and the explorative need of global players by making it curious enough for them. Issues like robbed treasures and the relevant search for the real history identity (an example is the Lingji Bodhisattva statue) elicit passion. Although these are historically Chinese themes, people all over the world can relate to issues such as loss of culture and regaining the same.

Uses and Gratifications Theory implies the identification of a specific use and gratification regarding the media gratification. Liu (2015) provides a framework for understanding why players engage with *Black Myth: Wukong*. Players actively seek out media to fulfill specific needs, which can be categorized as: Stakeholders are fascinated with social themes incorporated in the game based on comments such as "Where can I read about Journey to the West". On a mental level, such frustrations increase curiosity with regard to Chinese mythology and history effectively satisfying a mental urge to discover cultural roots.

The way the narrative is formed in the game develops affection with one or another character, such as the friendship between Wukong and Pigsy or Bodhi Laozu. Emotional gratifications are evident in comments expressing attachment to these characters: "This has made me remember my childhood especially the close relationship between Wukong and Bajie". Further, accomplishment and adversity lead to distinct emotional experiences as suggested by the impressions such as 'engaging,' or 'edgy.' However, there are a number of things that players compliment in the game – great visuals, interesting graphics, amazing scenery, and the choice of the music, which is traditional Chinese music. Comments like 'This feels like watching a movie' express the pleasure associated with the pastime nature, high image quality into which users plunge themselves.

Problem Statement

The dissemination of Chinese culture on a global scale has been increasingly facilitated by digital media, yet the role of video games in this process remains underexplored. *Black Myth: Wukong* has emerged as a significant medium for introducing Chinese mythology, aesthetics, and storytelling to international audiences. However, limited research examines how the game actively contributes to the dissemination of Chinese culture beyond entertainment. While the focus of existing studies is on its commercial success, the role of the play in cultural transmission and audience reception is ignored. Thus, there are surprisingly few comparative analyses of this game in relation to other games based on Chinese mythology. In filling these gaps, this study systematically reviews how *Black Myth: Wukong* promotes Chinese cultural dissemination worldwide. The objectives of the study are therefore:

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how *Black Myth Wukong* integrates traditional Chinese storytelling techniques into modern gaming.
2. To analyze the effectiveness of *Black Myth Wukong* in promoting Chinese cultural identity and heritage through its narrative, aesthetics, and gameplay.
3. To compare *Black Myth Wukong* with other video games inspired by Chinese mythology in terms of global cultural impact.

Significance of the Study

This study elucidates Black Myth: Wukong's key role in Chinese culture spreading globally and its capability as a medium for cultural storytelling, identity affirmation and soft power projection. Together, they offer game developers, cultural policymakers, and scholars insight into how to maintain authenticity while making games accessible globally. The study contributes to cross-cultural communication research by analyzing audience reception and narrative strategies, and underscores the potential for video games to promote global appreciation of Chinese heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural Dissemination of Cultural Products

Edward T. Hall introduced the concept of Intercultural Communication in 1959 in his seminal work, *The Silent Language*. Intercultural Communication is an intersection of anthropology and communication studies in which the study of how people from different cultural backgrounds can communicate and understand each other effectively and how to handle cultural diversity in communication are addressed. Although this theory has added to our understanding of culture and communication as well as helped us understand intergroup relations (Kulich, Weng, Tong, & DuBois, 2020), it has also been used to explore cross cultural communication strategies and practices at the same time.

Successful cross-cultural communication strategies analyzed by scholars include storytelling, the use of culturally significant symbols, empathic communication that focuses on emotional relations and immersive communication experiences (M. Wang, 2024). These strategies are used to address the phenomenon of cultural discounts that occur with the contact of cultures. What is more, the recent emergence of new media has generically lowered barriers to cultural communication (Razmerita, Kirchner, & Nielsen, 2016) increasing the efficiency and convenience of cross-cultural exchanges. The existing research attempted to find a theoretical basis for the research on the intangible cultural heritage (Sun, 2024) and the dissemination path of ethnic music (Mingjie, W. 2024), as a reference for the communication of Chinese culture.

Despite these advancements, existing research has generally overlooked the "Other" perspective, failing to adequately explore the interpretation and feedback of foreign cultural products from the cultural context of the receivers. However, the game industry, characterized by its profound social and cultural attributes and substantial commercial market value, has emerged as a crucial platform for the overseas dissemination of Chinese cultural elements. Games, beyond being mere entertainment products, serve as a medium for cultural transmission, highlighting China's emotional value, historical traditions, and contemporary lifestyles through rich storylines, characterizations, visual arts, and so on.

Cultural Discount

Cultural discount refers to the diminished value of a cultural product when consumed outside its origin culture due to differences in values, attitudes, and predispositions (Mazzanti, 2002). For *Black Myth: Wukong*, this is evident in several ways. The game's foundation in *Journey to the West*, a classic Chinese myth, poses challenges for international audiences unfamiliar with the story, leading to confusion and comments such as "What is Wukong's story?" To address this, the game incorporates universally recognizable tropes like heroism and overcoming fate, while employing a foreignization strategy by retaining authentic elements such as Chinese names in Pinyin, sparking curiosity about the culture. In contrast, controversy arises when symbolic and religious elements of a form, such as Lingji Bodhisattva, are misunderstood. In addition, they could seem alienating, to foreign audiences, to complex ideas nourished by Taoism or Confucianism like the 'mastership' (as it were) of Wukong. Games could bridge that cultural gap by offering strategies like in game glossaries, interactive lore sections or informative videos on the most popular YouTube and TikTok-like platforms.

In addition, prejudices against Chinese products, which are seen as inferior or imitative, elude foreign content further complicating reception. These comments are 'is this just another knockoff game?' reflect lingering stereotypes. Moreover, there are those who consider Chinese cultural elements inclusion as cultural imperialism, especially where they overlap with the political ideologies. In order to counter these views, the graphics, controls, and plotlines offered by Black Myth: Wukong are nothing short of superb and stand at the heights of today's gaming standards. This focus on universal gaming excellence, combined with thoughtful cultural presentation, helps mitigate resistance and fosters broader acceptance.

Video Games as a Medium for Cultural Dissemination

In the digital age, video games have become a force for cross-cultural communication with the ability to transmit cultural narratives to global audiences. Consalvo (2006) posits that video games have evolved as interactive storytelling platforms that can embed folklore, history and traditions in play, facilitating engagement of many cultural components in a profoundly immersive way. Digital storytelling is a way for developers to bring together cultural gaps, build up and help global appreciation of different traditions.

While some scholars emphasize the positive role of video games in the dissemination of cultural content, other scholars concern themselves with cultural misrepresentation. As Šisler (2008) notes, Western developed video games tend to take from non-Western cultures and with distortion reinforce stereotypes rather than foster an exchange of culture. This implies that games could be valuable cultural tools, but their effectiveness depends on the representation of cultural phenomena. On the other hand, it has been praised for its authenticity in terms of the representation of Chinese mythology and aesthetics in *Black Myth: Wukong*, as it conserves the Chinese cultural dissemination that was delivered much better than the rest.

An example of a successful cultural adaptation is *Assassin's Creed: Origins*, which introduced players to ancient Egyptian history with significant historical depth. As Aldea (2017) showed, the educational value of the game was increased by its realistic representation of historically relevant places and by collaboration with historians. However, video games can also serve a role in cultural dissemination, but only with the means of careful construction of narrative and cultural sensitivity.

Global Influence of Chinese Mythology in Video Games

Increasingly influenced by Chinese mythology, video games have been leveraging China mythology as a medium for cultural representation and for global dissemination. Zhu (2024) observes that 'Chinese folklore' provides some relief, not just in the sense that traditional stories are being told but that they are being brought to international audiences in a game format. Games like *Black Myth: Wukong* taps into its rich mythological heritage in a way that draws from Chinese classical literature in the form of the very *Journey to the West*.

While some scholars assert the educational and cultural value of this type of representation, others believe that such Chinese mythology in gaming is often tailored to Western market requirements, at the same time diluting culture. Vindigni (2023) finds that many mythologies become adjusted in terms of what is internationally released, denying their authenticity. However, the Chinese studio *Black Myth: Wukong* retained the original essence of Chinese folklore essence, holds traditional aesthetics, language and philosophical themes, providing a more real cultural experience.

League of Legends is one of the examples of how The Western mentality took to Chinese mythology, simply introducing characters like Wukong with such cosmetic changes in order to fit a Western fantasy framework. As stated by A. Wang and Whyke (2024), such adaptations enhance accessibility but may conceal or distort cultural symbols. In the end, more or less, how broadly the Chinese mythology is deployed in video games is contingent upon whether the developers are truthful enough with the folkloric pieces, yet globally attractive at large.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

This study investigates the global dissemination of Chinese culture through *Black Myth: Wukong* by employing a qualitative research approach through a systematic literature review (SLR). As defined by Creswell (2018), quantitative research focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, whereas qualitative research explores phenomena through in-depth textual analysis, including document reviews, case studies, and thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A mixed-method approach combines both methodologies to enhance understanding (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

Since the study analyses how *Black Myth: Wukong* mix traditional Chinese storytelling, pushes cultural identity and how it differs from other Chinese mythology-based game, the qualitative approach seemed to be more appropriate. Such a structured review, for instance, involves reviewing existing research with a sparse critical synthesis of the previous work and then identifying gaps (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). By doing so, this research systematically aggregates, evaluates, and synthesizes academic literature on cultural dissemination via gaming through a systematic and unbiased search method of SLR.

Research Design

This study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to collect, evaluate, and synthesize secondary data relevant to how Black Myth: Wukong contributes to the dissemination of Chinese culture. The SLR method is structured, transparent, and replicable, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of existing research while identifying knowledge gaps (Tranfield et al., 2003). This design is particularly effective for analyzing the cultural impact of digital games, as it provides a broad perspective across multiple studies rather than relying on a single dataset.

Data Collection

The secondary sources were collected and analyzed with a structured approach. This approach enables a selection of high quality and relevant sources. However, doing this required a specific keyword strategy, the use of Boolean operators, and clear inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Keyword Strategy

To identify the relevant studies for the global dissemination of Chinese culture through Black Myth: Wukong, a well-structured keyword strategy was used. It used keywords related to cultural representation in gaming, globalization, audience reception, and comparative analysis respectively, as the synonyms for more generic word searches. Iteratively, the search process was refined for accuracy (Al-Zubidy & Carver, 2019). For this study, relevant keywords are illustrated in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Keywords

Category	Keywords
Core Concept	"Chinese mythology in video games", "Black Myth: Wukong", "cultural storytelling in gaming"
Globalization Context	"Chinese video games international reception", "cultural dissemination in digital games"
Gaming & Culture	"Video games as cultural artifacts", "gaming and cultural identity"
Impact & Comparison	"Black Myth: Wukong vs. Chinese mythology games", "global reception of Chinese culture in gaming"

Boolean Operators

Boolean operators were employed to enhance search precision and filter irrelevant studies. Such a Boolean operator is given below in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Boolean Operator

Boolean Operator	Search Expression
AND	"Black Myth: Wukong" AND "cultural identity"
OR	"Chinese mythology in gaming" OR "digital storytelling in China"
NOT	"Western video games" NOT "Japanese games"

Databases

Seven academic databases were selected to ensure credibility and diversity in the retrieved literature. These databases are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Databases

Database	Papers Retrieved	Justification
Scopus	15	Covers interdisciplinary research
Web of Science	25	Features peer-reviewed, high-impact journals
Google Scholar	20	Provides a broader collection of studies, including grey literature
ProQuest	10	Accesses diverse research across disciplines
Springer Link	10	Features scholarly books and journals
Elsevier	10	Provides reliable, high-quality academic research
JSTOR	10	Includes historical and theoretical studies

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain research quality and relevance, a clear inclusion and exclusion criteria framework was applied. For this study, a detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria is given in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria Type	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Timeframe	Studies published after 2022	Articles outside this range
Language	English-language studies	Non-English studies
Peer Review	Peer-reviewed articles	Non-peer-reviewed content
Focus Area	Studies on Chinese culture in video games	Studies on unrelated gaming genres
Accessibility	Full-text available	Abstract-only studies

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) for analyzing data. In meeting the purpose, this approach was used to identify how key themes in the international distribution of Chinese culture appeared via cultural representation in gaming, audience reception and related impact compared to other mythology-based games. The systematic summarizing of patterns in the selected studies aided the synthesis of themes and helped a deeper understanding of *Black Myth: Wukong* as a medium of cultural transmission. To ensure a structured and transparent selection of studies, the PRISMA framework was applied. This was successful in making the data selection and the data analysis process more reproducible as well as forming the systematic literature review of the most relevant literature. The thematic analysis followed seven steps as depicted in **Figure 1**.

1. Familiarization with the data—Reading and comprehending the selected literature in depth.
2. Generating initial code—Identifying key concepts related to cultural storytelling, dissemination, and global reception.
3. Searching for themes—Grouping similar codes to form broader themes aligned with the research objectives.
4. Reviewing themes—Refining and ensuring that the themes accurately represent the study's focus.
5. Defining and naming themes—Assigning clear and descriptive labels to each identified theme.
6. Classifying themes—Organizing themes based on their relevance to *Black Myth: Wukong* and its role in cultural dissemination.
7. Producing the final report—Synthesizing the findings into a cohesive analysis to address the research objectives.

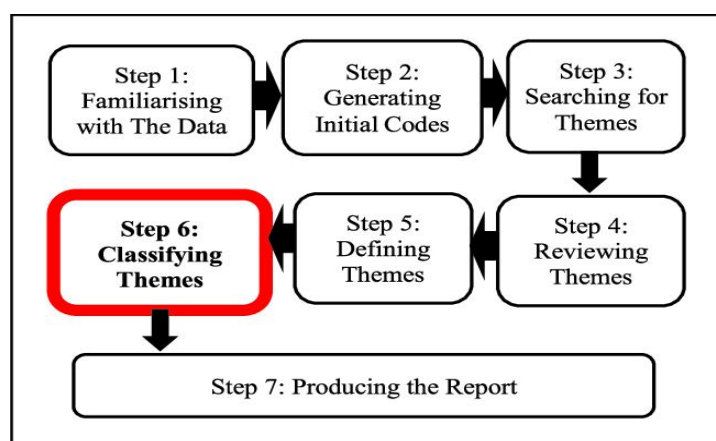


Figure 1. Thematic Analysis Steps (Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-seven-steps-in-the-Thematic-Analysis_fig2_352234410)

PRISMA Framework

The process of selecting relevant studies was conducted systematically, transparently and replicably to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. The use of this method helped in identifying, screening and including research articles in a systematic manner with a well-

planned approach to literature selection.

Initially, 100 publications were retrieved through database searches. During the identification stage, 30 duplicate studies were removed, reducing the total to 70 publications for screening. In the screening phase, 30 studies were excluded due to being non-English or published before 2022, while 10 studies were inaccessible. This left 30 studies for eligibility assessment. During the eligibility evaluation, 17 publications were excluded due to insufficient methodological rigor, and 7 studies were removed for lacking relevance to the research focus. Ultimately, 6 studies were selected for the final analysis.

For instance, as shown in **Figure 2**, this rigorous selection process also depicts. Moreover, this process facilitates access to high quality and relevant research articles, consequently improving the credibility, accuracy and reliability of the study's findings.

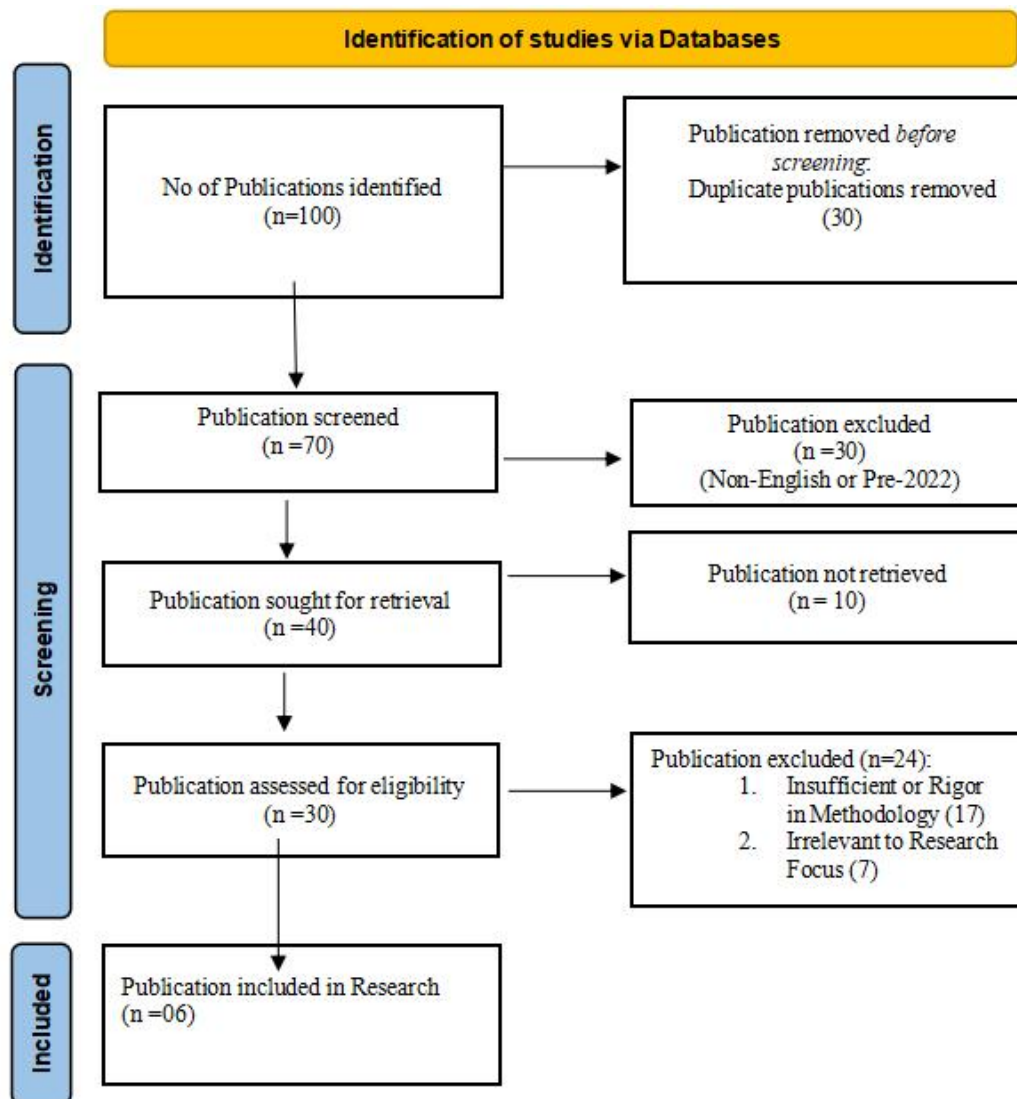


Figure 2. Prisma Flow Diagram

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter conducts a systemic study of selected studies on how *Black Myth: Wukong* spreads Chinese culture globally. The findings are organized into three themes: traditional Chinese storytelling, promoting Chinese cultural identity; comparative global impact. This thematic analysis is used to show how narrative techniques, cultural representation and international reception are used in games, in order to sharpen their role in the field of cross cultural communication and digital storytelling.

Publications Selected for Analysis

A selection of the most relevant papers is given in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Selected Paper

Sr. No	Author/ Publication Date	Title	Research Objectives	Methodology	Findings
1	W. Yuan (2024)	<i>An Imagological Analysis of the Video Game Black Myth: Wukong</i>	To examine how <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> represents Chinese culture through imagology.	Imagological analysis of the game's characters, settings, and themes.	The game effectively reinforces Chinese cultural identity and challenges Western perceptions of Chinese mythology.
2	Luo & Han (2024)	<i>Study on the Narrative Expression of Chinese Culture in AAA Game Cutscene Animation: Focusing on Black Myth: Wukong</i>	To analyze the narrative techniques used to express Chinese culture in <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> .	Qualitative analysis of game cutscenes and storytelling strategies.	The game integrates traditional Chinese aesthetics and narrative structures, enhancing cultural immersion for global audiences.
3	Eyman, Guo, & Sun (2024)	<i>Introduction: Games, Gaming, and Interactive Aesthetics in Contemporary Chinese and Sinophone Cinema</i>	To explore the intersection of Chinese video games, cinema, and interactive aesthetics.	Literature review and thematic analysis of Chinese digital entertainment media.	Chinese games, including <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> , contribute to the broader Sinophone media landscape by blending traditional and modern artistic elements.
4	Sun (2024)	<i>From Farm to Game: Understanding Chinese Culture through Video Games</i>	To investigate how video games serve as a medium for cultural education and transmission.	Case study analysis of Chinese-themed games, including <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> .	Games like <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> help international audiences engage with Chinese history, folklore, and philosophical traditions.
5	S. Yuan (2024)	<i>From Play to Power: China's Video Games as Instruments of Soft Power</i>	To examine how Chinese video games contribute to China's soft power and global influence.	Policy analysis and discourse analysis of government-backed game development.	<i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> serves as a cultural diplomacy tool, promoting China's national identity and historical narratives globally.
6	Mao (2024)	<i>A Study on Cross-Cultural Communication Factors of Black Myth: Wukong</i>	To analyze the cross-cultural communication strategies used in <i>Black Myth: Wukong</i> .	Content analysis of game design, marketing strategies, and international audience reception.	The game balances cultural authenticity with global accessibility, using foreignization and localization strategies to appeal to diverse players.

Theme 1: Traditional Chinese Storytelling in *Black Myth: Wukong*

Three studies (Mao, 2024; Luo & Han, 2024; W. Yuan, 2024) present the function of traditional Chinese storytelling in forming the cultural identity of *Black Myth: Wukong*. W. Yuan (2024) states that the game makes use of imagological representation to reinforce Chinese cultural identity through the use of character details, settings, and themes based on Chinese classical mythology. Luo and Han (2024) concentrate on the use of narrative techniques, including cut scenes, employed in the game 'Black Myth: Wukong' to demonstrate how the game's 'cinematic storytelling' enhances the cultural authenticity of *Black Myth: Wukong*. In an extension of this discussion, Mao (2024) further explores how the narrative of the game used cross cultural communication strategies and Mao points out that the game balances foreignization and localization in order to attract a Chinese audience as well as a global audience.

All three studies discuss cultural storytelling but focus on different aspects. W. Yuan (2024) considers how the imagology of China influences cultural perceptions, Luo and Han (2024) identify narrative approaches in animation while Mao (2024) analyses animation's use of such techniques to foster cross-cultural communication,

as shown in **Table 6**. Taken together, these findings support Objective 1 and Black Myth: Wukong's success at integrating traditional Chinese storytelling into modern gaming in order to both enrich its global appeal and maintain cultural authenticity.

Table 6. Traditional Chinese Storytelling in Black Myth: Wukong

Study	Findings	Comparison
W. Yuan (2024)	Uses imagological representation to reinforce Chinese cultural identity.	Focuses on how visual and thematic elements shape cultural perception.
Luo & Han (2024)	Examines narrative techniques in cutscenes to enhance storytelling.	Highlights the role of cinematic storytelling in game immersion.
Mao (2024)	Explores cross-cultural communication through storytelling.	Focuses on how the game balances authenticity with global accessibility.

These findings support Objective 1, showing that Black Myth: Wukong effectively preserves and modernizes traditional Chinese storytelling while reaching a global audience.

Theme 2: The Role of Black Myth: Wukong in Promoting Chinese Cultural Identity

Three studies (Sun, 2024; W. Yuan, 2024; S. Yuan, 2024) show that Black Myth: Wukong acts as a means of cultural dissemination, serving to reaffirm Chinese identity and heritage through gaming. According to Sun (2024), video games are educational tools through which players understand Chinese culture by means of an interactive storyline. W. Yuan (2024) further examines the mythological themes of the game that challenge the way the West see heritage in China, making China's story even more visible on the global stage. S. Yuan (2024) also discusses the role of Black Myth: Wukong within the scope of China's soft power strategy by stressing that the game acts as a means to China's soft power at the international level, improving China's presence in the global gaming market.

All three studies focus on cultural identity, but they emphasize different aspects: Sun (2024) focuses on education, W. Yuan (2024) on cultural representation, and S. Yuan (2024) on soft power and global influence, as shown in **Table 7**. These findings are in concert with Objective 2: how Black Myth: Wukong crafts a story that effectively communicates the theme of its perversion of black heritage to make it unique to Chinese culture, through narrative, aesthetics, and gameplay.

Table 7. The Role of Black Myth: Wukong in Promoting Chinese Cultural Identity

Study	Findings	Comparison
Sun (2024)	Games act as educational tools, teaching players about Chinese culture.	Focuses on interactive learning through gameplay.
W. Yuan (2024)	Challenges Western perceptions of Chinese culture through mythology.	Explores the game's role in reshaping global cultural narratives.
S. Yuan (2024)	Examines Black Myth: Wukong as a soft power tool for China.	Focuses on how video games contribute to China's global influence.

This supports Objective 2, with these findings showing that Black Myth: Wukong does indeed promote Chinese cultural identity and heritage in gaming.

Theme 3: The Global Impact of Black Myth: Wukong Compared to Other Chinese Mythology-based Games

The global reception and cultural impact of Black Myth: Wukong is analyzed through three studies (Eyman et al., 2024; Mao, 2024; S. Yuan, 2024) regarding where other Chinese mythology based games do in comparison. In 2024, Eyman, Guo, and Sun examine Chinese video games, such as Black Myth: Wukong, as they constitute the totality of Sinophone media, ranging from traditional to modern, appealing to an increasingly global audience. According to Mao (2024), Black Myth: Wukong is also special in that it takes advantage of unique cross cultural communication strategies that are unique to Black Myth: Wukong games and not other Chinese mythology based games. In contrast, S. Yuan (2024), from a political vantage point contends that Black Myth: Wukong has a significant cultural and political impact over Black Myth because it became successful globally and was backed by the government.

The factors emphasized in each study are slightly different: Eyman et al. (2024) focus on the influence of aesthetic and media influences, Mao (2024) on cross-cultural communication, and S. Yuan (2024) on the impact

of cultural diplomacy and policy driven, as the findings are illustrated in **Table 8**. This also conforms to Objective 3, which sees Black Myth: Wukong influence more globally than other games rooted in Chinese mythology.

Table 8. Global Impact of Black Myth: Wukong Compared to Other Chinese Mythology-based Games

Study	Findings	Comparison
Eyman et al. (2024)	Chinese games shape the Sinophone media landscape, blending tradition and modernity.	Focuses on the game's artistic and cinematic influences.
Mao (2024)	Highlights Black Myth: Wukong's cross-cultural communication strategies.	Emphasizes how the game differs from other Chinese mythology-based games.
S. Yuan (2024)	Examines the policy-driven success of Black Myth: Wukong compared to past Chinese games.	Focuses on cultural diplomacy and government support.

The results validate Objective 3, which reveals Black Myth: Wukong, unlike previous Chinese mythology-based games, has a higher international footprint than ever in the past and thus a new standard for cultural presentation in games.

Therefore, the thematic analysis of the selected studies shows Black Myth: Wukong to be a powerful medium to spread Chinese culture. The results show that the game is successfully mixing traditional Chinese storytelling, boosting Chinese cultural identity and beating other Chinese mythology based games on global reach and cultural impact. Together, these themes carry support for the study's objectives and contribute to the growing involvement of video games in cross-cultural communication and digital storytelling.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings elucidate how Black Myth: Wukong informs the global diffusion of Chinese culture through Chinese mythology, cultural identity promotion and on a global scale, compared to how Chinese mythology based games are distributed globally. It provides a discussion of these findings with respect to existing literature, and identifies theoretical and practical contributions as well as filling the gaps.

The integration of traditional Chinese storytelling is one of the most significant themes of Black Myth: Wukong. W. Yuan (2024) describes the way this game employs imagological representation to enhance Chinese cultural identity through mythical figures, historical landscapes, and folklore in an honest way. Research by Pasqualotto, Parong, Green, and Bavelier (2023) suggest that digital games have emerged as a powerful medium to tell a story with a culture, by preserving folklore in a contemporary and interactive manner. Unlike many other Chinese mythologies based games, which did the rounding off traditional mythology for the sake of accessibility, Black Myth: Wukong does not do that, it stays complex philosophically and literarily, so it is more immersive and authentic. Luo and Han (2024) also point out that cinematic cut scenes and detailed narrative mechanisms in the game boost cultural immersion, which is consistent with the observation of Mar, Oatley, Djikic, and Mullin (2011) that a rich game narrative can strengthen the emotional attachment to the audience. Furthermore, these insights validate that Black Myth: Wukong is able to seamlessly weave traditional storytelling into the modern format of gaming, which will appeal to both the Chinese audience and others outside of it.

A second important theme was how the game can help promote a Chinese cultural identity. Sun (2024) puts forth an argument stating that video games are being used as an educational tool for international players to be able to learn about Chinese history, folklore and traditions. That is in line with Squire (2014), who observed that video games are informal learning systems-tools with which people acquire cultural knowledge through interactive storytelling. In addition, W. Yuan (2024) explores how Black Myth: Wukong shatters the Western perceptions of Chinese mythology. Jiang (2012) discovers that the Western public frequently experiences distorted or oversimplified versions of Chinese culture in the media. The game unfolds a nuanced and authentic Chinese mythology to change perceptions on a global scale. Moreover, as W. Yuan (2024) explains, Black Myth: Wukong instigated in the line of China's soft power initiative that Hjorth and Chan (2009) observe China is using its gaming industry as a cultural diplomacy tool. Nevertheless, while Black Myth: Wukong successfully implies Chinese cultural identity, as evidenced by Hyttinen (2010) excessive localization attempts in global gaming markets diminish cultural authenticity, a point worthy of additional research.

The third major theme deals with in comparison the impact Black Myth: Wukong has had on other Chinese mythology based games globally. As Eyman et al. (2024) state, Chinese video games such as Black Myth: Wukong have played a part in the Sinophone media landscape, melding traditional aesthetics with current gaming

mechanics. This corresponds well with Lickert (2019), who states that gaming is a transnational medium that unites cultural differences. But *Black Myth: Wukong* is unique for its high production quality, real animation and solid narrative, a far more powerful influence than other previous Chinese mythology based games. Mao (2024) also discusses its cross-cultural communication strategies, which follows Zhang and Frazier's (2017) arguments that Chinese games usually face difficulties in balancing cultural authenticity with global accessibility. W. Yuan (2024) corroborates with Ni (2024), who discovers that Chinese games backed by the government paid off with the success of the *Black Myth: Wukong*, as intended, and that games financed by the government tend to get more global support as well as distribution opportunities. Although the game has spread all over the world, future studies will need to explore whether this is just a momentary phenomenon in its industry or whether it is a symptom of a new trend within gaming.

Taken together, these findings continue to demonstrate that video games like *Black Myth: Wukong* is leading the way in translating Chinese heritage into global entertainment. Yet some questions still remain unresolved around the long-term success of its campaign, its effect on the wider gaming industry and how future Chinese games can strike the balance between authenticity and global marketability.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how *Black Myth: Wukong* facilitates the spread of Chinese culture in terms of traditional storytelling, in support of developing cultural identity, as well as its effects on the international gaming industry. The findings show that the game has a broader value as a vehicle for cultural preservation and appropriation, facilitating engagement with Chinese mythology and aesthetics in an interactive, immersive form for an international audience.

Integrating traditional Chinese storytelling into modern gaming is one of the biggest contributions of *Black Myth: Wukong*, which has not been done. Game's faithful adaptation of *Journey to the West* preserves and resurrects classical Chinese literature so that historic and mythological tales become accessible to the global audience. Compared with other games that had reduced or reworked mythical content tailored for their Western audiences, the Chinese heritage and its mythological refinement are very well done in *Black Myth: Wukong*. For example, the game's cinematic quality, narrative tactics, and visual style enhance the game's appeal, bolstering the idea that video games are not just entertainment forms, but powerful cultural storytelling tools.

The study shows that the game promotes Chinese cultural identity and soft power. *Black Myth: Wukong* reflects on Chinese mythology, Chinese architecture and historical themes through its representation, challenging common stereotypes of China, the game is also a good example of how China's gaming industry has evolved into overseas markets and aligned with the global entertainment. This fits China's larger soft power strategies, which include using cultural products like films, music, and video games for cultural diplomacy. Despite some scholars suggesting that localization brings down authenticity, *Black Myth: Wukong* strikes the right chord between the cultural peculiarities and their global reach, and has certainly been one of the most successful Chinese video games to be noticed internationally.

Another interesting finding is that the impact of a game based on Chinese mythology is different from that of other Chinese mythology based games. *Black Myth: Wukong* is different because unlike any previous games incorporating Chinese folklore, it has great production value, realistic animation, and deep narrative. This will mark a change in perception of Chinese video games as Chinese developers have proven to be able to compete with Western gaming studios in terms of quality and storytelling. Moreover, the game's success highlights that there is a huge worldwide interest in Chinese mythology, opening the door for more culturally authentic games to be released to the international markets.

Overall, the development of *Black Myth: Wukong* proves that gaming can be an avenue for cross-cultural communication, particularly concerning cultural transmission. The game's rich storytelling, cultural authenticity and global reach define an important step in the internationalisation of Chinese video games. During this period of explosive growth of gaming as a worldwide cultural industry, titles like *Black Myth: Wukong* show the potential of traditional stories to be preserved and reused as a starting point for new modern audiences to understand and appreciate the culture of China in an increasingly global world.

LIMITATIONS

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the reliance on a systematic literature review (SLR) restricts direct engagement with players and developers, limiting insights into real-time audience perceptions and industry strategies. Additionally, the study is constrained by language barriers, as most reviewed sources are in English, potentially overlooking relevant Chinese-language research. Furthermore, the study focuses primarily on *Black Myth: Wukong*, making comparisons with other Chinese mythology-based games somewhat limited. Finally, cultural interpretation challenges may affect how global audiences engage with the game, an area that requires further empirical investigation through player-based studies and audience reception analysis.

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