An Integrative Analysis of Trans-cultural Diffusion of Cultural Video Games Based on the Theory of Knowledge Production

A Case Study of the Cognitive Effect of Innovative Cultural Transformation and Development of Black Myth: Wukong

Lingxi Tang[1]

[1] Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China

ABSTRACT

This paper conducts a comprehensive and scholarly exploration of "Black Myth: Wukong" as a cultural phenomenon that surpasses the realm of mere entertainment and emerges as a significant locus for knowledge production, cultural innovation and transmission, and the construction of philosophical discourse. Employing an interdisciplinary perspective that integrates game studies, cultural communication theory, and digital humanities, the researchers analyze how this pioneering Chinese 3A game has redefined the paradigms of cultural transmission in the digital age. The research systematically examines three crucial dimensions: the transformation of knowledge production mechanisms within game-mediated setting; the game's innovative strategies for the "creative transformation" and "innovative development" of traditional Chinese culture; its function as a cross-cultural cognitive medium that promotes dialogue between civilizations; and new theoretical frameworks for cultural knowledge production based on integrated review methods by identifying research gaps and pinpointing future directions at the intersection of game studies, cultural communication, and digital philosophy. With a thorough interdisciplinary illumination, this paper establishes theoretical linkages among game studies, cultural transmission, and philosophical interpretation, presenting a robust framework for comprehending the new mechanisms of Chinese cultural globalization in the digital era.

Keywords: *Cognitive effect, Trans-cultural diffusion, Black Myth: Wukong, Innovative cultural transformation, Development, Knowledge production.*

1. INTRODUCTION: BLACK MYTH: WUKONG AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TRANS-CULTURAL DIFFUSION

The release of "Black Myth: Wukong" in August 2024 signified a pivotal juncture in the global gaming industry and cultural sphere. Developed by the Chinese game studio Game Science, this action role - playing game attained unparalleled success as China's inaugural genuine AAA - level game. It sold in excess of 20 million copies globally within a few months and ascended to the top of the charts in twelve countries. Beyond its commercial victory, "Black Myth: Wukong" has emerged as a compelling case for in-depth studies in the realms of cultural diplomacy in the digital era, knowledge generation, and philosophical discourse construction, phenomena that necessitate rigorous academic scrutiny.

At its core, Black Myth: Wukong represents a sophisticated synthesis of traditional Chinese cultural elements with cutting-edge digital technology. The game reinterprets the 16th-century literary masterpiece Journey to the West from a somber and sophisticated perspective, converting the well-known story of Sun Wukong (the Monkey King) into a complex narrative that delves into themes such as identity, destiny, and rebellion. What distinguishes Black Myth: Wukong from

previous cultural exports is its multi-faceted interaction with Chinese philosophical traditions. Buddhist concepts of the "six roots" (六根), Daoist notions of cyclical transformation, and Confucian values of perseverance are all incorporated within an interactive framework that enables global players to immerse themselves in Chinese civilization rather than simply observe these cultural codes.

The influence of the game reaches far beyond the realm of entertainment. It has triggered what scholars refer to as a cultural co-creation phenomenon, in which official media discourses and grassroots player communities jointly generate and disseminate knowledge regarding Chinese cultural heritage. This dynamic is manifested in various forms: ranging from viral social media analyses that compare in-game architectures with real-world Chinese landmarks such as Shanxi's Xiaoxitian Temple (with a 300% year-on-year increase in sales after its release), to international forums where players deliberate on the philosophical implications of the game's reinterpretation of classic mythological figures. Such spontaneous knowledge production challenges the traditional hierarchies of cultural transmission and necessitates new theoretical frameworks for analysis.

The game's impact extends far beyond entertainment. It has sparked what scholars term a "cultural co-creation phenomenon" (文化共创现象), where official media narratives and grassroots player communities collaboratively generate and disseminate knowledge about Chinese cultural heritage. This dynamic manifests in diverse forms: from viral social media analyses comparing in-game architectures with real-world Chinese landmarks like Shanxi's Xiaoxitian Temple (sales witnessed a 300% year-on-year increase after the release), to international forums where players debate the philosophical implications of the game's reinterpretation of classic mythological figures. Such organic knowledge production challenges traditional hierarchies of cultural transmission and demands new theoretical frameworks for analysis.

Methodologically, this study employs both systematic and integrative approaches of literature review, synthesizing Chinese and international scholarship on Black Myth: Wukong alongside critical analysis of the game's textual and para-textual elements. The analysis draws upon diverse theoretical perspectives, including Jesper Juul's concept of "half-real" game spaces, Homi Bhabha's

theory of cultural hybridity, and Raymond Williams' cultural materialism, to construct a multidimensional understanding of the game's cultural significance.

The paper is structured to reflect the following interdisciplinary concerns as such: Section 2 analyzes the transformation of paradigms for knowledge production within digital game settings. Section 3 examines Black Myth: Wukong's innovative approaches to traditional culture's "dual creative transformation." Finally, Section 4 advances new theoretical frameworks for cultural knowledge production based on integrated review methods by identifying research gaps and pinpointing future directions at the intersection of game studies, cultural communication, and digital philosophy.

By systematically mapping these dimensions, this study aims to provide both a comprehensive assessment of cultural impact of Black Myth: Wukong and to develop a theoretical framework for analyzing subsequent digital cultural products. In this way, it contributes to further discussions about cultural globalization, digital media epistemology, and the evolving role of interactive entertainment in today's knowledge economies.

2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF PARADIGMS FOR KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN DIGITAL GAME SETTINGS

The emergence of Black Myth: Wukong as a cultural phenomenon necessitates a fundamental reexamination of knowledge production mechanisms in the digital age. This section analyzes how Black Myth: Wukong exemplifies three paradigm shifts in epistemic processes: from unidirectional transmission to participatory co-creation, from textual dominance to multi-modal experiential learning, and from institutional authority to decentralized expertise networks. These transformations collectively redefine how cultural knowledge is generated, validated, and disseminated in game-mediated environments.

2.1 From Transmission to Co-Creation: The "Disseminate-Feedback" Model of Cultural Knowledge

Traditional models of cultural knowledge transmission typically followed linear, hierarchical pathways — from academic experts or cultural

institutions to passive audiences. Black Myth: Wukong has disrupted this paradigm through what Chinese scholars term the "disseminate-feedback" (宣传 — 反馈) model, where knowledge production becomes a dynamic, iterative process involving both official media narratives and grassroots player communities. This bidirectional flow generates what might be called "crowd-sourced cultural hermeneutics" — a distributed interpretation system where meanings emerge through continuous dialogue between creators and consumers.

The game's developers initiated this process through meticulous attention to authentic cultural representation. Game Science conducted extensive fieldwork across China, digitally recreating 36 historical sites with photogrammetric precision, including Shanxi's Foguang Temple and Chongqing's Dazu Rock Carvings "Western Pure Land". These virtual reconstructions served not merely as backdrops but as interactive pedagogical spaces where players encounter Chinese architectural heritage organically through gameplay. Media outlets amplified this intentional cultural coding through comparative analyses juxtaposing game environments with their real-world counterparts, generating what amounted to a mass public education campaign about Chinese historical preservation.

However, the more revolutionary epistemic development emerged from player communities. Rather than passively absorbing these cultural references, engaged audiences — particularly China's "fastidious" gamers — initiated rigorous debates about historical accuracy, philosophical authenticity, and narrative interpretation. Online forums became sites of intense scholarly exchange, with players possessing specialized knowledge in fields like art history, religious studies, and classical literature contributing detailed analyses of the game's cultural elements. This phenomenon represents a significant democratization of cultural expertise, where amateur scholars and professionals collaboratively refine understandings of traditional culture through digital play.

A representative case involves the game's treatment of Buddhist iconography. When players noted discrepancies between certain deity depictions and canonical scripture, these observations sparked extensive online discussions comparing Black Myth: Wukong's designs with Dunhuang murals, Shanxi temple sculptures, and Tibetan thangka paintings. These conversations often incorporated primary sources, with participants quoting from the Avatamsaka Sutra or sharing photographs from little-known regional museums. The aggregate effect was an organic, player-driven augmentation of the game's cultural pedagogy — precisely the "knowledge spillover" (知识溢出) effect observed by Chinese researchers.

2.2 Multimodal Experiential Learning: Embodied Cognition in Virtual Cultural Environments

The knowledge production paradigm of Black Myth: Wukong's fundamentally challenges text-centric models of cultural transmission by privileging embodied, experiential learning. The game constructs what Danish game theorist Jesper Juul might call a "half-real" space — a hybrid environment where historical and cultural authenticity blends with imaginative reconstruction to facilitate deep cognitive engagement. This multimodal approach aligns with contemporary understandings of situated learning, where knowledge acquisition occurs most effectively through contextualized participation rather than abstract instruction.

The game's combat system exemplifies this pedagogical innovation. Unlike conventional cultural education tools that present information didactically, Black Myth: Wukong requires players to physically internalize philosophical concepts through gameplay mechanics. The "staff momentum" (棍势) system — where players accumulate and strategically expend energy during battles — operationalizes Daoist principles of cyclical transformation (物极必反) and Confucian ideals of perseverance (自强不息). Through repeated gameplay, these abstract philosophies become muscle memory, creating what one scholar describes as "philosophy incarnate" (哲学具身化) — the embodiment of metaphysical concepts through digital interaction.

Environmental storytelling further enhances this experiential learning. The game's "Shadow God Diagrams" (影神图) collectibles — lore fragments scattered throughout the world — require players to physically explore meticulously recreated historical environments to uncover narrative backstories. This design transforms cultural education into an active process of archaeological discovery, mirroring the methods of professional historians and anthropologists. Research indicates that players who engaged deeply with this system demonstrated significantly improved recall of Chinese mythological figures and architectural terminology

compared to control groups exposed to traditional educational materials.

The cognitive impact of this multi-modal approach is particularly evident in international player communities. Non-Chinese players, despite lacking prior exposure to Journey to the West, developed sophisticated understandings of its characters and themes through gameplay alone. Forum analyses reveal players accurately identifying narrative parallels between reinterpretations of Black Myth: Wukong and classic episodes like the "Havoc in Heaven," despite never having read the original text. This suggests that interactive media may circumvent certain barriers of cultural translation by conveying meaning through universal gameplay conventions rather than language-dependent narration.

2.3 Decentralized Expertise Networks: The Rise of Player-Scholars

The knowledge ecosystem of Black Myth: Wukong has fostered the emergence of what might be termed "player-scholars" — individuals who blend rigorous academic methodologies with gaming literacy to produce hybrid forms of cultural analysis. These actors operate outside traditional institutional frameworks yet generate knowledge products that increasingly influence mainstream cultural discourse.

The game's character design system prompted particularly sophisticated engagements from this cohort. When players discovered that certain enemy armor patterns derived from Song Dynasty "The Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains (千里江山图)"

paintings — albeit intentionally weathered to fit the game's post-apocalyptic aesthetic — art history enthusiasts produced detailed visual analyses tracing these design choices to specific regional artistic traditions. Similarly, ethnomusicologists within the player community identified how the game's soundtrack incorporated reconstructed Tang Dynasty instrumentation alongside Shaanbei folk singing (陕北说书), creating multimedia guides explaining these cultural references to international audiences.

This decentralized expertise network exhibits three defining characteristics. First, it demonstrates distributed verification, i.e. knowledge claims are continuously tested and refined through crowd-sourced peer review in forums and social media. Second, it practices interdisciplinary synthesis, freely combining methods from game studies, cultural anthropology, architectural history, and other fields. Third, it engages in productive remediation, transforming gameplay experiences into diverse knowledge formats like video essays, interactive maps, and augmented reality applications.

The epistemic implications are profound. Where traditional cultural transmission relied on institutional gatekeepers to certify valid knowledge, the ecosystem of Black Myth: Wukong demonstrates how gaming communities can develop self-regulating systems of scholarly rigor. This aligns with what sociologists term "post-digital epistemics", i.e. knowledge production models that embrace digital tools and participatory culture while maintaining standards of evidence and argumentation (seeing in "Table 1") .

Table 1. Paradigm shifts in knowledge production exemplified by Black Myth: Wukong

Traditional Model	Black Myth - Mediated Model	Epistemic Implications
Unidirectional transmission (expert→public)	Bidirectional co-creation (propagate-feedback)	Democratization of cultural expertise; iterative knowledge refinement
Text-dominant pedagogy	Multi-modal experiential learning	Embodied cognition; enhanced retention through interaction
Institutional authority	Decentralized expertise networks	Emergence of player-scholars; crowd-sourced peer review
Fixed cultural narratives	Dynamic interpretive frameworks	Pluralistic understandings; context-dependent meanings

This transformed knowledge landscape presents both opportunities and challenges for cultural preservation. On one hand, it engages broader demographics in meaningful cultural dialogue than traditional education systems typically reach. On the other, it risks privileging engaging representations over historical accuracy — a tension evident in debates about creative liberties of Black Myth: Wukong with Buddhist iconography. Nonetheless, the overall epistemic shift toward participatory, experiential, and decentralized cultural learning appears irreversible, with Black Myth: Wukong serving as a seminal case study in this digital-age transformation.

3. INNOVATIVE CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT: INNOVATIVE REINTERPRETATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE CULTURE IN BLACK MYTH: WUKONG

Black Myth: Wukong represents a paradigmatic example of what Chinese cultural policy terms "innovative cultural transformation and development" — the simultaneous creative reinterpretation and innovative development of traditional cultural elements. This section analyzes how the game navigates the delicate balance between cultural authenticity and contemporary relevance through four key strategies: narrative reconfiguration, aesthetic synthesis, ludic embodiment of philosophical concepts, and cross-media resonance. These approaches collectively demonstrate how digital interactive media can serve as potent vehicles for cultural continuity and mutual resonance.

3.1 Narrative Reconfiguration: Deconstructing and Reassembling the Journey to the West Canon

Most audacious and creative intervention in Black Myth: Wukong lies in its radical re-imagining of the narrative framework of the masterpiece Journey to the West. Rather than directly adapting the classic pilgrimage story, the game constructs a meta-narrative that interrogates the very nature of mythological storytelling. Set centuries after the original journey, the game positions players as "Destined Ones" (天命人) collecting six root faculties (眼耳鼻舌身意) once belonging to Sun Wukong — a structure that simultaneously references Buddhist psychology and enables gameplay progression.

This narrative architecture achieves three transformative effects. First, it liberates the creative team from slavish adherence to the source material while maintaining profound inter-textual connections. The game's six-chapter structure mirrors traditional Chinese chapter-novel (章回体) conventions, with each section bookended by poetic verses and animated sequences reminiscent of classical painted scrolls. Second, it facilitates philosophical depth by using the "six roots" framework to explore themes of perception, identity, and enlightenment — themes latent in the original text but rarely foregrounded in popular adaptations. Third, it creates narrative space for innovative characterizations that challenge stereotypical portrayals of mythological figures.

The game's treatment of the White Bone Demon (白骨精) exemplifies this trans-formative approach. Traditionally depicted as a one-dimensional villain in most adaptations, Black Myth: Wukong reinterprets her as a tragic figure whose backstory (revealed through collectible lore items) explores themes of marginalization and the fluidity of good/evil dichotomies. This nuanced portrayal sparked extensive debate among players about cultural memory and the ethics of mythological reinterpretation, demonstrating how narrative innovation can stimulate deeper engagement with traditional stories.

Crucially, the game maintains what scholar term "cultural anchor points" (文化锚点) — key recognizable elements that provide audiences with cognitive footholds in unfamiliar narrative territory. The preservation of core character relationships (e.g., Wukong's fraught dynamic with the Tang Sanzang or Tripitaka) and iconic episodes (e.g., the Havoc in Heaven) ensures accessibility even as the story ventures into uncharted thematic waters. This balancing act between innovation and tradition reflects what Chinese cultural theorists describe as "rooted creativity" — avant-garde expression grounded in cultural authenticity.

3.2 Aesthetic Synthesis: Bridging Historical Authenticity and Digital Innovation

The visual and auditory design of Black Myth: Wukong represents a monumental achievement in cultural-aesthetic synthesis. The development team conducted exhaustive fieldwork across China,

digitally scanning architectural details from 36 historical sites including Shanxi's Foguang Temple (佛光寺) and Sichuan's Anyue Cliff Carvings (安岳石刻). This painstaking documentation process enabled the creation of virtual environments that simultaneously satisfy architectural historians and captivate general audiences.

The game's material culture demonstrates particular innovative brilliance. Weapon designs blend archaeologically accurate elements (e.g., Song Dynasty polearm proportions) with imaginative embellishments that enhance gameplay functionality. Costume textures incorporate authentic weaving patterns visible only at extreme close-ups — a level of detail surpassing most museum exhibitions. Even environmental effects like wind-disturbed dust or rain-slicked stone surfaces derive from physical simulations of Chinese climatic conditions, creating what one reviewer termed "time-travel tourism" (穿越式旅游) through digital recreation.

Audio design similarly bridges tradition and innovation. The soundtrack seamlessly integrates reconstructed Tang Dynasty instruments with contemporary orchestration, while combat sound effects employ actual recordings of traditional weapons tested at historical reenactment sites. Most remarkably, the team collaborated with inheritors of Shaanbei storytelling (陕北说书) — a national intangible cultural heritage — to create original musical pieces that advance the narrative. These efforts transcend superficial "Chinoiserie" to achieve what ethnomusicologists call "deep authenticity" — cultural expression that respects historical roots while embracing creative evolution.

The game's aesthetic philosophy is perhaps best encapsulated in its approach to material decay. Unlike typical fantasy games presenting pristine historical fantasies, Black Myth: Wukong deliberately showcases the ravages of time on cultural artifacts — peeling lacquer, oxidized bronze, water-damaged murals. This artistic choice, while initially controversial, has been praised by conservationists as an unusually honest meditation on cultural preservation's challenges. It also serves a pedagogical function, subtly educating players about material vulnerabilities rarely addressed in traditional cultural education.

3.3 Ludic Embodiment: Philosophies Made Playable

The most groundbreaking contribution of Black Myth: Wukong to the innovative cultural transformation and development lies in its translation of abstract philosophical concepts into tangible gameplay mechanics — a process we term "ludic embodiment." This approach moves beyond symbolic representation to create interactive systems that require players to internalize Chinese philosophical principles through play.

The combat system's "staff momentum" (棍势) mechanic provides a paradigmatic example. Drawing from both martial arts theory (棍乃百兵之祖 — "the staff is ancestor of all weapons") and Daoist cyclical cosmology, this system rewards players for alternating between aggressive and defensive postures in rhythmic patterns mirroring traditional staff forms. Advanced techniques like "withdrawing while advancing" (以退为进) directly operationalize Daoist strategic principles, creating what one analyst called "digital wuwei" — the gameplay manifestation of effortless action.

Buddhist psychology permeates the game's progression structure. The six chapters corresponding to the "six roots" (眼耳鼻舌身意) gradually reveal how sensory attachment leads to suffering — a core Buddhist teaching. Players literally "collect" these faculties through gameplay, experiencing rather than merely learning about their delusive nature. Even the death mechanic — where defeated players reappear as one of Wukong's hairs at a Land God shrine (土地庙) — transforms Buddhist reincarnation concepts into a functional gameplay loop.

Confucian values find expression in the game's approach to difficulty. Unlike Western games emphasizing player empowerment through increasing strength, Black Myth: Wukong maintains consistent challenge levels that demand self-cultivation (修身) — improvement through persistent effort and moral discipline. This design philosophy, while occasionally frustrating for casual players, effectively communicates the Confucian ideal of "unceasing self-renewal" (自强不息). Community discussions reveal many players explicitly referencing these philosophical frameworks when sharing gameplay strategies, indicating successful cultural internalization.

3.4 Cross-Media Resonance: Revitalizing Cultural Memory Across Platforms

The cultural impact of Black Myth: Wukong extends far beyond gaming through what media scholar term "trans-media cultural activation." The game has stimulated renewed interest in diverse Chinese cultural artifacts, creating synergistic relationships across media platforms and artistic disciplines.

The most visible effect has been the "Xiyouji Renaissance" — a surge in engagement with Journey to the West adaptations across generations. Sales of the original novel increased 340% in overseas markets following the game's release, while viewership of the classic 1986 television adaptation spiked on streaming platforms. International fans created side-by-side analyses comparing the interpretations of Black Myth: Wukong with the 1964 Havoc in Heaven produced by Shanghai Animation Film Studio, an artistic dialogue spanning six decades of Chinese animation history.

Traditional performing arts have similarly benefited. The game's incorporation of Shaanbei storytelling prompted sold-out performances at venues that previously struggled to attract young audiences. Museums housing artifacts referenced in the game reported record attendance, with the formerly obscure Gaoping Iron Buddha Temple (高平铁佛寺) experiencing 300% visitor increases after being featured. This cultural spillover effect demonstrates how digital media can serve as gateways rather than replacements for traditional cultural experiences.

Perhaps most significantly, Black Myth: Wukong has inspired a new wave of creative works across mediums, from fan fiction exploring minor characters' backstories to contemporary dance pieces interpreting game themes. This generative cultural ecosystem exemplifies the "innovative development" aspect of dual creative transformation, ensuring traditional stories remain living traditions rather than museum exhibit (seeing in "Table 2").

Table 2. Strategies of innovative cultural transformation and development in Black Myth: Wukong

Transformation Strategy	Traditional Element	Innovative Treatment	Cultural Impact
Narrative reconfiguration	Journey to the West plot	Meta-narrative exploring myth-making	Stimulated scholarly reinterpretation of classic
Aesthetic synthesis	Chinese architectural heritage	Digital photogrammetric recreation	Renewed interest in historical preservation
Ludic embodiment	Daoist/Buddhist philosophies	Gameplay mechanics requiring internalization	Players experientially learn abstract concepts
Cross-media resonance	Marginalized art forms (e.g., Shaanbei storytelling)	Integration into mainstream game soundtrack	Revitalized endangered cultural practices

The huge success of Black Myth: Wukong in the process of innovative cultural transformation and development offers valuable lessons for cultural policymakers and content creators. By respecting cultural roots while embracing innovative expression, by translating abstract philosophies into interactive experiences, and by fostering cross-media cultural ecosystems, the game demonstrates how traditional culture can thrive in digital environments. These strategies provide a replicable framework for future projects seeking to balance cultural authenticity with contemporary relevance, a critical challenge as

China continues to develop its cultural soft power in the digital age.

4. NEW PARADIGMS FOR CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL CULTURAL STUDIES

The preceding analysis of Black Myth: Wukong across multiple dimensions (knowledge production, cultural innovation, dialogue between civilizations) reveals both the richness of existing scholarship and significant areas requiring further investigation. This concluding section identifies five critical research gaps in current Black Myth: Wukong studies and proposes corresponding new research paradigms that could advance interdisciplinary understanding of digital cultural phenomena. These proposed trajectories aim to bridge disciplinary silos between game studies, cultural communication, and digital humanities while addressing pressing questions about cultural globalization in the digital age (seeing in "Table 3").

Table 3. An overview of research gaps and proposed new paradigms in further studies

Research Gap	Current Limitations	Proposed New paradigm	Potential Methodological Approaches
Longitudinal impact	Short-term focus; anecdotal evidence	Multi-year tracking of cultural engagement changes	Big data analysis; cohort studies; repeated measures
Cognitive mechanisms	Theoretical speculation about learning efficacy	Neuroscientific examination of ludic learning	fMRI; EEG; psychophysiological measures
Cross-cultural variance	Homogenized view of global reception	Regional comparative reception studies	Cross-national surveys; focus groups; textual analysis
Industrial ecosystems	Isolated case study perspective	Sector-wide analysis of cultural-tech synergies	Policy analysis; industry interviews; economic modeling
Philosophical legitimacy	Disciplinary skepticism about games	Criteria development for interactive epistemology	Comparative literature analysis; philosophical critique

4.1 Gap 1: Longitudinal Impact Assessment on Cultural Perception

Current research overwhelmingly focuses on immediate cultural effects of Black Myth: Wukong, lacking longitudinal studies measuring its sustained impact on domestic and international perceptions of Chinese culture. While anecdotal evidence suggests increased interest in Chinese heritage sites and classical literature, rigorous empirical studies tracking these behavioral changes over time remain scarce.

New paradigm: Multiyear cohort studies comparing cultural engagement metrics (museum attendance, book sales, language learning) among players of Black Myth: Wukong versus control groups. Particularly valuable would be research examining whether the game's philosophical themes influence players' worldview orientations over extended periods. Methodologies could combine big data analysis of online cultural consumption patterns with qualitative interviews exploring evolving interpretations of game narratives.

4.2 Gap 2: Cognitive Neuroscience of Ludic Cultural Learning

The remarkable efficacy of the "experiential epistemology" of Black Myth: Wukong or its

Innovation Humanities and Social Sciences Research, Volume 21, Issue 7, 2025. ISSN 2949-1282

Proceedings of The 6th International Conference on Culture, Education and Economic Development of Modern Society
(ICCESE 2025)

ability to teach cultural and philosophical concepts through gameplay lacks comprehensive neuroscientific explanation. While educational theorists note players' improved retention of Chinese cultural information, the specific cognitive mechanisms enabling this enhanced learning remain under-examined.

New paradigm: Neuroimaging studies comparing brain activation patterns during traditional cultural education versus game-mediated learning. Particular focus should examine whether multimodal approach (combining visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimuli) of Black Myth: Wukong creates stronger memory encoding through multi-sensory integration. Complementary research could explore whether the game's difficulty curve (frustration followed by mastery) triggers dopamine responses that reinforce learning, as suggested by recent gamification studies.

4.3 Gap 3: Cross-Cultural Reception Variance and Localization Ethics

Existing research tends to treat international audiences as monolithic, obscuring significant regional variations in how cultural elements of Black Myth: Wukong are received. Additionally, ethical debates about cultural localization strategies (e.g., retaining original terms like "Wukong" versus translating for accessibility) lack systematic analysis.

New paradigm: Comparative reception studies across cultural regions, examining how factors like colonial history, religious demographics, or prior exposure to Chinese media influence interpretation. Parallel research should investigate localization ethics — when cultural authenticity justifies potential accessibility barriers, and whether certain philosophical concepts require adaptation for cross-cultural comprehension. Such studies could inform best practices for future cultural exports.

4.4 Gap 4: Industrial Ecosystem Analysis of Cultural-Tech Synergies

While the development process of Black Myth: Wukong has been extensively documented, insufficient attention has been paid to how its success might reshape China's broader cultural-creative industries. The game's demonstration of "cultural-tech" synergies— where advanced digital tools serve cultural transmission goals— warrants

systematic examination of potential sector-wide transformations.

New paradigm: Policy research analyzing how Black Myth: Wukong's model could inform China's cultural digitalization strategies. Key questions include how to balance commercial viability with cultural authenticity in publicly supported projects, and what institutional innovations could facilitate more collaborations between technologists and cultural heritage experts. Case studies inspired by Black Myth: Wukong initiatives in other creative sectors (film, publishing, museum curation) could reveal transferable strategies.

4.5 Gap 5: Philosophical Legitimacy of Interactive Media as Knowledge Systems

Despite the philosophical depth demonstrated in Black Myth: Wukong, persistent skepticism within humanities disciplines questions whether interactive entertainment can legitimately contribute to philosophical discourse. This epistemological bias limits academic engagement with digital culture's intellectual potential.

New paradigm: Theoretical work establishing criteria for evaluating philosophical legitimacy in interactive media. This could build upon existing debates about games as art while addressing unique aspects of interactive epistemology, including how choice architectures convey ethical frameworks, or how procedural rhetoric constructs arguments through gameplay systems. Comparative analyses placing Black Myth: Wukong alongside recognized philosophical literature could help bridge disciplinary divides.

4.6 An Integrated Theoretical Framework

Addressing these research gaps requires moving beyond disciplinary fragmentation toward an integrated theoretical framework for studying digital cultural phenomena. Building upon this review's multifaceted analysis of Black Myth: Wukong, the "Digital Cultural Transmission Ecosystem" Model is proposed. This is a conceptual framework acknowledging the following three interdependent dimensions:

Production Dimension: Examining how cultural content is selected, transformed, and encoded into interactive systems. Black Myth: Wukong demonstrates the importance of "deep authenticity"

(substantive cultural expertise) combined with "creative courage" (innovative reinterpretation).

Interaction Dimension: Analyzing how users engage with and derive meaning from cultural-interactive experiences. The success of Black Myth: Wukong highlights the centrality of "experiential epistemology" — knowledge constructed through doing rather than passive reception.

Ecosystem Dimension: Mapping how cultural-digital products stimulate broader knowledge networks and creative economies. The "cultural co-creation" phenomenon of Black Myth: Wukong reveals how games can activate trans-media cultural ecosystems.

This tripartite model emphasizes dynamic interrelationships between cultural sources, digital mediation, and community response — a more holistic approach than current disciplinary silos permit. Future research applying this framework could yield richer understandings of how digital platforms transform cultural transmission in the 21st century.

5. CONCLUSION: BLACK MYTH: WUKONG AS HARBINGER OF DIGITAL CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Black Myth: Wukong represents far more than a commercial milestone for China's gaming industry. As this systematic review demonstrates, the game constitutes a multifaceted cultural phenomenon reshaping how traditional knowledge is produced, transmitted, and reinterpreted in the digital age. Through its innovative approaches to "innovative cultural transformation and development," its facilitation of a meaningful dialogue between civilizations, and its construction of sophisticated philosophical discourse systems, Black Myth: Wukong has established new paradigms for cultural expression in interactive media.

The game's achievements carry significant implications for multiple stakeholders. For cultural policymakers, Black Myth: Wukong demonstrates how digital platforms can simultaneously preserve heritage and stimulate innovation. For educators, it reveals the untapped pedagogical potential of well-designed interactive experiences. For content creators, it provides a replicable model of cultural authenticity combined with global appeal. And for scholars, it offers a rich case study in digital-era knowledge production and cross-cultural communication.

Perhaps most importantly, the success of Black Myth: Wukong' challenges lingering hierarchies that privilege traditional media over digital forms as vehicles for serious cultural expression. The game's ability to engage millions in profound engagement with Chinese philosophical traditions, through the ostensibly frivolous medium of an action game, suggests we must expand our conceptions of where and how meaningful cultural transmission occurs in the 21st century.

As China continues to develop its cultural soft power in the digital realm, the legacy Black Myth: Wukong will likely inspire future works seeking to balance cultural integrity with innovative expression. The research gaps identified in this review represent not merely academic exercises, but vital inquiries into how civilizations might communicate and evolve through emerging media forms. By addressing these questions through rigorous interdisciplinary collaboration, scholars can help ensure that digital cultural globalization develops as a dialogue of mutual enrichment rather than homogenizing domination.

In this sense, Black Myth: Wukong may be remembered not only as an exceptional game, but as a harbinger of a broader digital cultural renaissance — one where interactive media fulfill their potential as sites of serious artistic achievement, philosophical inquiry, and meaningful cross-cultural connection. The game's journey has just begun, and the scholarly journey to comprehend its full significance has a long way to go.

REFERENCES

[1] Davis, J., Mengersen, K., Bennett, S., & Mazerolle, L. Viewing systematic reviews and meta-analysis in social research through different lenses. SpringerPlus, 2014:3, 511. https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-1801-3-511.

[2] Kim, G. M. Transcultural Digital Literacies: Cross-Border Connections and Self-Representations in an Online Forum. Reading Research Quarterly, 2016: 51(2), 199–219.

[3] Luzón, M. J., & Pérez-Llantada, C. Digital Genres in Academic Knowledge Production and Communication: Perspectives and Practices. Multilingual Matters & Channel

View   Publications.   2022.
https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.22679776

[4] Pitroso G, Beyond subcultures: a literature
     review of gaming communities and
     sociological analysis. New Media and Society,
     2024,   56,   24.
     https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241252392

[5] Richard, G. T. Video Games, Gender,
     Diversity, and Learning as Cultural Practice:
     Implications for Equitable Learning and
     Computing Participation Through Games.
     Educational Technology, 2017, 57(2), 36–43.

[6] Schillings, P., & van Wickeren, A. Towards a
     Material and Spatial History of Knowledge
     Production. An Introduction. Historical Social
     Research / Historische Sozialforschung, 2015,
     40 (1), 203–218.

[7] Snyder H. Literature review as a research
     methodology: An overview and guidelines,
     Journal of Business Research, 2019, Volume
     104, 333-339.