

Digital Games and the Global Dissemination of Chinese Traditional Culture

Yu Feng

Zhe Jiang normal University of foreign language college, Jinhua 321000, China

Email: 1315464817@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Feng, Y. (2025). Digital Games and the Global Dissemination of Chinese Traditional Culture. *Literature, Language and Cultural Studies*, 3(3), 56–59. ISSN Print: 3079-5095; ISSN Online: 3079-5109.

<https://doi.org/10.63313/LLCS.9118>

Published: 2025-12-30

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and

Erytis Publishing Limited.

This work is licensed under the Creative

Commons Attribution International

License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

Under globalization and digitalization, China's cultural dissemination is shifting from symbolic export to value-based integration. Digital technologies enable this transition, with interactive media like games playing a key role. Black Myth: Wukong, for instance, achieved global success by blending indigenous storytelling with cutting-edge technology, sparking international interest in related cultural elements like ancient architecture and music. It moved beyond simple translation by using terms like "Wu Kong" and "Loong," demonstrating cultural confidence. However, simply "adapting" content for foreign audiences can dilute its essence. Future efforts should focus on cultural re-creation rooted in indigenous values. This involves leveraging multimodal semiotic innovation, technological empowerment (e.g., AI, VR), and fostering community interaction to create deep resonance. The goal is a leap from merely "going out" to being genuinely embraced globally, facilitated by platforms that encourage cross-cultural co-creation and immersive experiences.

Keywords

China's Excellent Traditional Culture; International Dissemination; Digital Games; Cultural Communication

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and digitalization, the international dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture has become a central concern of national cultural strategy. As cultural exchange increasingly occurs within digital environments, traditional modes of symbolic export are insufficient for fostering deep intercultural engagement. Digital games, with their interactivity and immersive narratives, offer a distinctive medium for global cultural communication. By embedding cultural meanings within gameplay and narrative structures, games enable players to experience values through participation, thereby reducing linguistic and cultural barriers.

The global success of Chinese games such as Black Myth: Wukong signals a shift from surface-level cultural export toward value-oriented intercultural integration.

However, existing research remains dominated by the cultural adaptation paradigm, which emphasizes localization to reduce cultural discount but risks diluting cultural subjectivity. Adopting a transcultural communication perspective, this study views games as dynamic semiotic systems and examines how cultural re-creation, rather than mere adaptation, can enhance the effectiveness of games in the international dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture.

2. Establishing the Historical Context and Strategic Significance of the Study

2.1. Dual Drivers of National Strategy and Contemporary Trends

The prosperity and development of the cultural industry have become one of the core strategic components of national modernization. The 2025 Government Work Report explicitly emphasized the need to “improve the cultural industry system and market system, and accelerate the development of new cultural formats,” providing top-level design and policy guidance for promoting the continual global expansion of Chinese cultural IP and enhancing international influence. In the current era of deep integration between globalization and digitalization, digital technologies function as disruptive forces that, through new concepts, new formats, and new models, are comprehensively embedded across economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological domains, profoundly reshaping human modes of production, lifestyle, and civilizational exchange. Amid this historical wave, China's excellent traditional culture, with its profound historical accumulation and strong ideological resonance, has encountered a historic opportunity for innovative transformation and international dissemination. Accordingly, exploring how to harness digital technologies to activate the modern vitality of traditional culture and build a cultural communication system that integrates both indigenous characteristics and global perspectives has become a matter of profound strategic significance.

2.2. Dual Carriers of Cultural Innovation and Global Dissemination

With the deep advancement of the national digital cultural strategy, China's digital publishing industry, as a new cultural format, has experienced rapid development, and its capacity for international dissemination has continuously strengthened. Within this domain, game publishing—as a key component of digital publishing—has demonstrated especially outstanding performance in overseas markets. As a phenomenon-level title, *Black Myth: Wukong* won the 2024 “Best Action Game” and “Players” Voice” awards at the most influential global game awards ceremony (The Game Awards), breaking through globally in both the gaming and cultural arenas. The field of games has unequivocally emerged as a significant vehicle for the external dissemination of Chinese culture. According to the cultural research report by the Cultural and Creative Committee of the Audio-Visual and Digital Publishing Association of China, as many as 98% of game enterprises have

integrated elements of China's excellent traditional culture into product design, indicating that the phenomenon of "games carrying culture" has evolved from an isolated occurrence into an industry-wide norm. The overseas expansion of the game industry plays an indispensable and pivotal role in facilitating the global outreach of China's excellent traditional culture.

2.3. Unique Efficacy of the Game Medium and the Necessity of Research

As a medium that combines strong interactivity, high immersion, and community-oriented features, games can effectively transcend linguistic and cultural barriers and achieve deep dissemination from "cultural perception" to "emotional identification" through "playable narratives." Therefore, systematically investigating the mechanisms and strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of games in the international dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture is not only a scholarly response to the national cultural development strategy but also an urgent practical necessity for addressing cultural discount and improving dissemination efficacy. Such research holds profound practical significance and theoretical value for constructing China's discourse and narrative systems.

3. Conclusion on the Chinese development of dissemination

Chinese games have undergone a clear paradigm evolution in the international dissemination of China's excellent traditional culture. Early dissemination took the form of symbolic output, characterized by unidirectional regional export. Represented by the Xuanyuan Sword series (1990), this phase focused on the digital presentation of cultural symbols such as mythology and history, primarily targeting the culturally proximate East Asian "Sinosphere," and remained limited by cultural proximity and shallow reception.

The subsequent adaptation phase marked a shift toward engagement with cultural discount. The release of *Qin: The Warring States* (2002), distributed by a Western mainstream publisher, signaled China's first attempt to enter core Western markets through bidirectional adaptation and localization strategies. Guided by cultural discount theory (Hoskins & Mirus), this phase sought shared semantic spaces for cross-cultural communication but often relied on accommodation-oriented modification.

With the rise of online and mobile games, dissemination further evolved into an immersive phase characterized by long-term operation. Titles such as *Fantasy Westward Journey* constructed stable cultural ecosystems through continuous updates, enabling sustained engagement and progressively deepening players' cultural cognition from symbolic perception to immersive understanding.

More recently, Chinese games have entered a transcultural transmission phase centered on value integration rather than adaptation. By embedding indigenous

values within globally resonant narrative frameworks and world-class technological standards, games such as Genshin Impact and Black Myth: Wukong transcend symbolic translation and achieve a shift from cultural export to intercivilizational dialogue.

4. Commentary

Existing research on the international dissemination of Chinese culture has largely operated within the paradigm of cultural adaptation, prioritizing the reduction of cross-cultural barriers while often neglecting cultural subjectivity. Grounded in cultural discount theory (Hoskins, 1988), early studies emphasized localization strategies to enhance overseas acceptance, treating cultural difference primarily as communicative resistance and adaptability as the key indicator of dissemination effectiveness.

Empirical research has shown that such accommodation-oriented approaches frequently weaken or strip away Chinese cultural elements, resulting in dissemination that remains at the level of surface symbolism. As Guoming Yu argues, cultural discount is not inherent to culture itself but arises from structural losses in encoding and decoding; however, its practical application has often been reduced to minimizing discount rather than reconstructing cultural cores. Scholars such as Kaiyu Li further critique this approach for reinforcing center periphery power structures and reducing cultural exchange to a compromise-driven output process. Consequently, excessive reliance on cultural adaptation limits creative transformation and hinders emotional resonance and identity formation. In response, recent scholarship advocates a transcultural communication paradigm centered on cultural recreation, which embeds indigenous values within globally accessible narrative structures through multimodal expression, technological empowerment, and participatory interaction. The global reception of *Nezha Conquers the Dragon King* illustrates the practical potential of this approach, demonstrating how traditional cultural cores can be rearticulated to achieve cross-cultural emotional resonance.

References

- [1] Hoskins C, Mirus R. Reasons for the U.S. dominance of the international trade in television programmes. *Media, Culture & Society*, 1988, 10(4): 499 – 515.
- [2] Kress G, van Leeuwen T. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- [3] Jenkins H. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- [4] Ryan M L. *Narrative across media: The languages of storytelling*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.