

Analysis of the Dilemma and Countermeasures of Intercultural Communication of Online Games: A Case Study of “Genshin Impact”

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ABSTRACT

In the era of new media under the background of globalization, the online game industry, as a brand new media form, is also an entertainment cultural product. Different from the traditional official media, which relies on grand narrative cultural output in external cultural communication, it has its own necessary cultural attributes. As a big country of online games in China, online games have their own rich artistic atmosphere and must have the game cultural attributes. This paper analyzes the current obstacles encountered in the cross-cultural communication of domestic games, and takes "Genshin Impact" as an example to analyze the reasons for its success, and finally puts forward enlightenment for further reference and reference of domestic games.

Keywords: online games; cross-cultural communication; cultural discounts; Genshin Impact

1. Introduction

Under the trend of globalization of new media, the rise of social media, network media and other forms of new media has not only brought about great changes in worldwide communication, but also brought more diversified communication channels and opportunities for Chinese culture to go global. As a brand new form of media, the online game industry itself has a strong cultural atmosphere and necessary game cultural attributes. Against the backdrop of China's policy to

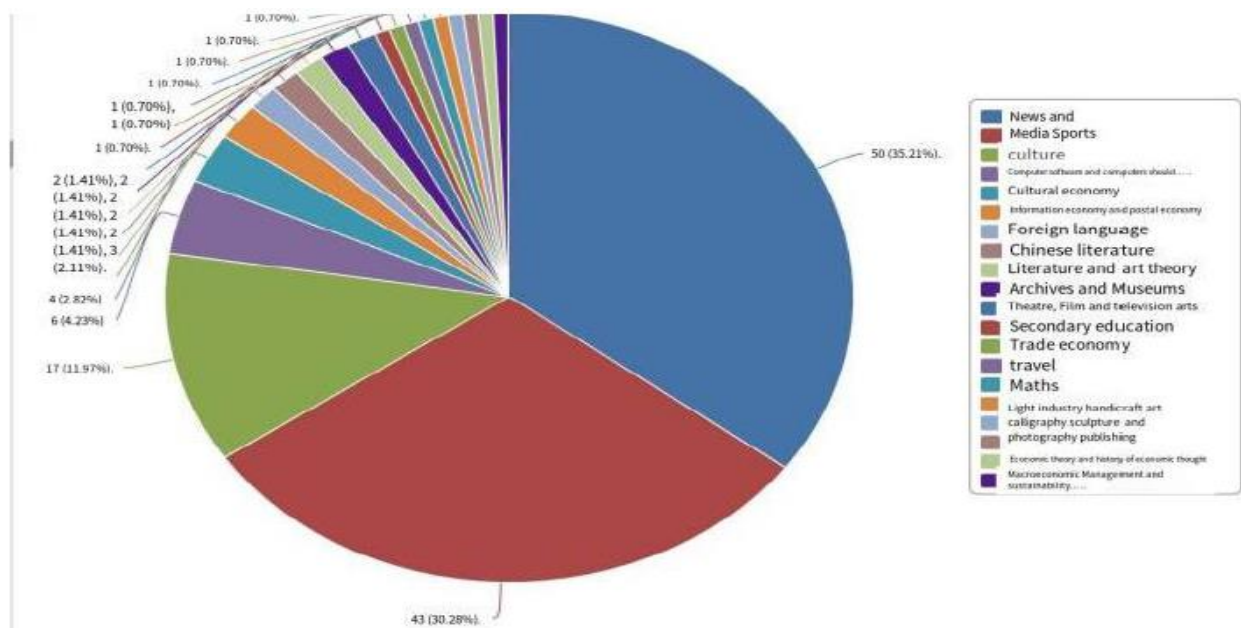
support the high-quality development of the country's cultural export base, Yuan Shen earned \$239 million on the App store and Google Play in October 2020, becoming the world's most popular mobile game. On April 13, 2021, Anxin Technology released the ranking of overseas revenue of Chinese mobile games, of which the overseas revenue of Yuan Shen was close to 116 million US dollars. In September 2021, "Genshin Impact" reached the top of the total flow of 47 countries, and the total flow of more than 100 countries reached the top three excellent results. The "Genshin Impact" will also be included in the national cultural export key project from 2021 to 2022 on July 27, 2021. 1There are many games that try to go to sea, but either fail to sink in the sand, or not satisfactory, only "Genshin Impact" has achieved brilliant results, becoming a representative of the success of the game at sea. This paper analyzes the predicament of cross-cultural communication of online games and the factors of success of "Genshin Impact", so as to provide reference and reference for China's online games going to sea.

2. Literature review

2.1. Overview of the history and current status of cross-cultural research on games

Using the term "cross-cultural games", the author conducted a topic search on CNKI, and found a total of 79 related articles, including 45 academic journal articles, 27 academic dissertation articles and 4 other articles.

Fig.1 Document volume trend analysis chart



Data source: CNKI

In terms of subject direction, the retrieved articles mainly focus on news and media and sports (e-sports), accounting for 35.21 percent and 30.28 percent respectively.

Based on the visual analysis of the retrieved articles, the author roughly divided the retrieved articles into three categories: the status quo of cross-cultural output of games, the dilemma under the status quo of cross-cultural communication of games, the development strategy, and the research category of cross-cultural communication according to the different perspectives of scholars on cross-cultural research of games. The current situation of cross-cultural game output can be referred to the "China Game Industry Report from January to June 2021" released by the Game Working Committee of China Audio and Digital Association (GPC) and China Game Industry Research Institute in recent years. "From January to June 2021, the actual sales revenue of China's self-developed games in overseas markets will reach 8.468 billion U.S. dollars, up 11.58% year on year, and the growth rate is higher than that of the domestic market." According to the analysis, in recent years, Chinese games have achieved very good results in foreign markets, and games have increasingly become a new type of important carrier for Chinese culture to spread abroad and promote Chinese culture. In the academic journal "Development Status and Prospect of Games in Cross-cultural Communication", He Yuqing introduced the obstacles to cross-cultural communication of games from the perspective of difficulties in cross-cultural communication of games, which can be divided into obvious homogeneity of games, lack of depth of cultural connotation, serious cultural discount phenomenon, and scarcity of professional talents with academic training. And the upgrading of the training difficulty of relevant talents. In the academic journal "The Status quo, Path and Thinking of China's digital game external communication", He Wei proposed that China's games should cooperate with China's development strategy from the perspective of national strategy and operation industry chain. In the academic journal Analysis of Cross-cultural Communication of Electronic Games, Liu Jiwen introduced the interaction of cross-cultural communication of games through virtual symbols. This paper holds that for game players, games are built on a large and rich virtual symbol system. Therefore, it can enable players to have various forms of interaction and realize colorful cross-cultural communication.

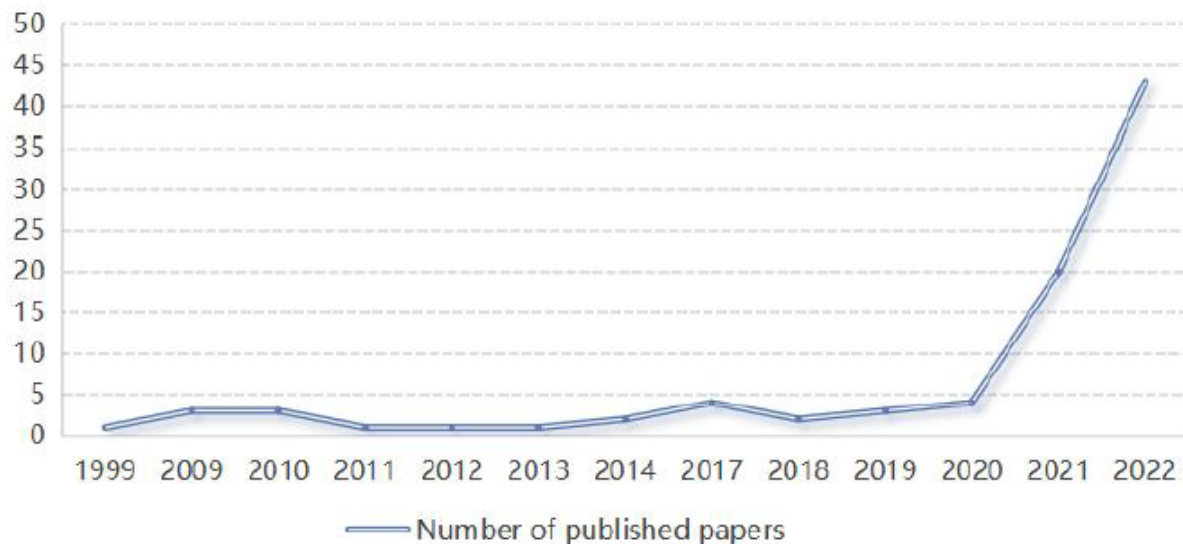
2.2 An overview of the history and current status of research on "Genshin Impact"

The author conducted a topic search on CNKI with the word "Genshin Impact", and found a total of 93 related articles, including 43 academic journal articles, 17 academic dissertation articles and 28 newspaper articles.

Through the visual analysis of the retrieved articles, we can see that since the game has gradually entered the academic field since its public beta in 2020, people are paying more and more attention to the game. The number of articles related to the game has increased from one to

three per year at the beginning to 43 per year. From the trend chart, it can be seen that in the next few years, the academic research heat of the game "Genshin Impact" will continue to rise.

Fig.2 Overall trend analysis chart of the number of published documents



Data source: CNKI

Through the author's review, most of the retrieved articles are about the economic research of the "Genshin Impact, or the cultural communication of the game coincides with the news and communication category. Therefore, the author will study the retrieved articles from the economic and cultural aspects. For example, in the report "American players spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the 'Genshin Impact', How does the game harvest Users?" in the context of the cross-cultural export development of domestic games combined with the current epidemic environment, the author analyzed the production advantages of the "Genshin Impact" to strengthen its competitiveness. The daily local news report "The Genshin Impact game raked in 1.8 billion US dollars a year, How much can it earn when it is made into an animation?" From the perspective of sustainable development of games, I believe that the purpose of a game should not only focus on the current economic benefits, but also focus on the content itself for future development. "Wen Hui Po" on February 22, 2022, the 001st edition of the game "Genshin Impact" music circle pink boom, Chinese elements into traffic code "from the perspective of music combined with the interaction of foreign players on YouTube to draw the conclusion that more and more game music is demonstrating the beauty of Chinese music and cultural confidence. Huang Xiangchu, in the academic journal "Exploration of the Cultural Innovation Mode of Domestic Games -- Taking" Yuan Shen "as an example, believes that an excellent online game can better inherit and spread traditional Chinese culture by reducing cultural

discounts in a way of cultural closeness.

To sum up, the current academic research direction on cross-cultural communication of games mainly focuses on music, culture and values; A systematic and comprehensive analysis of the difficulties and reasons for the success of cross-cultural communication of games is of enlightening significance to this topic. However, most of the existing articles are old and lack the support of excellent cases. At present, the research on "Genshin Impact" mainly focuses on its economic benefits, IP building and cultural export strategy, but there are some limitations in terms of the depth of academic theory. Therefore, this paper will take "Genshin Impact" as a case to further explain and propose improvement inspiration from the perspective of cross-cultural communication of games.

3. China's network game cross-cultural communication predicament

3.1. Over-reliance on channels leads to homogenization of games

"Homogenization" is a process of qualitative assimilation, which refers to the convergence of qualities that distinguish things from each other." In recent years, as more and more games have been developed, the borrowing and imitation between these games has become more and more obvious. In Wang Chengyu's academic journal, Analysis of Homogenization Characteristics of Domestic Original Games, the homogeneity of domestic games is characterized by the modularization of interface layout, the similarity of prop functions, the conceptualization of character modeling, and the similarity of game plots. Take mobile games as an example. Nowadays, mobile games are the main direction of major game manufacturers. With the diversification and facilitation of mobile phone functions, the audience groups exposed to mobile games have gradually expanded, so mobile games have become the hardest hit area of homogeneity games. For example, after the player searches for the game "Xiaoxiao" on the page, various versions of elimination games will be displayed on the page; And when players search for Fairy tale mobile games, there will be more Fairy tale role-playing mobile games, but the introduction is not different, and the gameplay is also very small. In the eyes of ordinary players, mobile games seem to be inseparable from the two major channels of Android and Apple, many game manufacturers in the preliminary planning of the future of the game, channel and channel tax is an indispensable part, or even a part that needs to focus on planning. "Channel tax" is the game manufacturers in order to let the game can be successfully launched in the channel, must reach cooperation with the channel, but with the rapid development of the game industry, "channel tax" has gradually increased, many enterprises spend a lot of time, manpower, material resources and financial resources to produce the game, and finally in the release process will be charged a high channel tax. In this context, many small game enterprises can not be more firm in the face of the risk of being rejected by the market, so it is necessary for enterprises to consider

more comprehensively, and even decide to reduce the cost of game production or the risk to face. Finally, some enterprises choose the types and styles of games that have been accepted by the market, which is also the reason for the emergence of a large number of homogenized games. However, such a situation not only reduces the enthusiasm of game research and development and innovation, but also affects the players' playing experience of the game.

3.2. Lack of communication appeal leads to cultural discounting

The concept of a "cultural discount" was first explained in a 1988 paper by Colin Hoskins and R. Mirus, "Why the United States Dominates the International Market for Television Programs." The author summarized its content by saying that any cultural product, including games, has its content derived from a certain culture. Therefore, when the audience chooses a cultural product, from the perspective of product attractiveness, they will be more inclined to choose the more familiar cultural products, and have a certain rejection of unfamiliar cultural products. This is the reason why cultural discount occurs. In reality, language differences, cultural backgrounds, and historical traditions may all lead to cultural discounts.

The biggest difficulty in the international dissemination of Chinese culture is to overcome the differences between different cultures and values, so that Chinese culture can be understood and accepted by overseas audiences. China has a long history and has accumulated many fine cultures from ancient times to the present. In this context, the development space of the richness and dissemination of domestic games is very broad. Nowadays, most domestic games also include foreign markets into the list of development objects, but the development progress of domestic games is not ideal in terms of the current degree of development. In the process of investigation, the author found that most of today's domestic games depict too much Chinese culture in the process of going to sea, and the integration with foreign background and culture is very rare. Most of today's domestic games want to go to sea, but they have not solved the cultural differences and the innovative integration between different cultures. Instead, they present an almost unfamiliar cultural background to foreign audiences, which greatly reduces the appeal of domestic games to audiences of different cultures, resulting in the limited extent of domestic games going to sea.

3.3. The low cost of production leads to low quality games

Currently, the professional standard in China's game production sector is generally subpar, and the causes underlying this status quo are complex, with the low cost of product production being regarded as a key factor. In contrast to developed countries in Europe and the United States, the average investment cost of Chinese games is significantly lower. Although there are also high-quality games such as "Genshin Impact" and "King of Glory" on the market, they represent only

a minority. The majority of games have limited investment budgets, leading to considerable disparities in aspects such as game modeling, graphic quality, game optimization, and gameplay diversity compared to those with high investment. Such low-quality games often lack sustained appeal and innovation. Once the buzz fades, they are promptly forgotten by players. For instance, the recently popular "Sheep a Sheep" game attracted a large number of players in the short term. However, due to its simplistic game content and lack of depth in gameplay, it ultimately ended up being neglected. The phenomenon of low-quality games resulting from this low investment not only affects the gaming experience of players but also severely constrains the international competitiveness of domestic games. Due to poor game quality and lack of sustainability, players often lack the willingness to play for an extended period, resulting in insufficient user stickiness. This is also one of the crucial reasons why many domestic games have mediocre performance when entering overseas markets. In the international arena, facing fierce competition from high-quality games from around the world, our low-quality games frequently struggle to stand out and fail to attract the attention and affection of overseas players. Therefore, increasing investment in game production and enhancing the quality of games have emerged as urgent issues that need to be addressed by the game production industry in China.

4. The cross-cultural communication strategy of "Genshin Impact"

This part analyzes the successful strategies of cross-cultural communication based on the difficulties mentioned above, combined with the successful domestic game "Genshin Impact".

4.1. Weakening channel dependence and reducing game homogeneity

At present, mobile games have become the hardest hit area of homogenized games, and through the analysis of the author, weakening the game's dependence on channels is one of the important means to eliminate the uniformity of games. And now facing the problem of channel tax, some domestic game manufacturers have opened another channel, that is, another path. For example, "Genshin Impact" did not choose the traditional channel, but chose a new platform TapTap, and put energy into product research and development, innovation and production, and now the development status and prospects of "Genshin Impact" are very ideal. The success of "Genshin Impact" also proves that choosing this path can reduce the dependence on channels, and also achieve real cost reduction, and truly realize the mutual cooperation and complementarity between channels and game enterprises. Of course, these are more powerful and excellent technology of the game manufacturers, the reality is that most of the game manufacturers have to continue to be controlled by the channel business, this is the best way for them to survive. In order to control cost input and reduce research and development costs, it is not surprising to make a large number of homogenized mobile games through "skin change", just to accumulate capital. However, with the emergence of many high-quality games, game players also have their

own appreciation of mobile games, and are no longer based on the promotion of channels to make choices, most of the high-quality games have their own fixed audience, and the audience as the center of the game players continue to expand, the development of homogeneous games has been precarious, no longer have the development advantage. From the "Genshin Impact" launched half a year to dominate mobile games and catch up with the "King of Glory" momentum can be seen, the influence of channels is gradually being replaced by content as king. The quality of the game is strong and the content is good, it will improve the possibility of being accepted by the market, and it will no longer over-rely on the publicity and promotion ability of the channel. Therefore, the author believes that one of the important means to reduce the frequency of homogenization is to weaken the dependence on channels and pay attention to product content.

4.2. Creative use of cultural symbols to enhance cultural recognition

According to Saussure's semiotic theory, human communication symbols can be roughly divided into linguistic symbols and non-linguistic symbols. This theory provides a powerful basis for understanding the new communication medium of video games. As an important form of contemporary culture, video games have created a vast and creative virtual symbol system. In this system, players can achieve deep cross-regional and cross-cultural communication through various forms of interaction, such as role-playing, task completion, and social interaction. This communication method not only enriches people's cultural experiences but also greatly promotes the breadth and depth of cross-cultural communication.

In the cultural dissemination of electronic games, Chinese cultural symbols and images, with their profound cultural depth and unique aesthetic value, have become elements that game companies are eager to incorporate. Take "Genshin Impact" as an example. This game did not simply pile up Chinese cultural elements. Instead, it used meticulously designed game plot and interactive experiences to enable players to enjoy the game's fun while naturally feeling the charm of Chinese culture. The game's beautiful scenes, professional music production, and Chinese-themed dissemination symbols all form a visual and auditory cultural dissemination system. This type of symbolic content production and dissemination not only achieves innovative expression of traditional Chinese culture in the new media era, but also provides powerful support for China's cultural dissemination. It makes cross-cultural communication more colorful and allows audiences from both China and abroad to enhance their understanding of Chinese culture in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, break down cultural barriers, and thus enhance the global appeal of Chinese stories, enabling Chinese culture to shine even more brightly on the world stage.

4.3. Increase the cost input and pay attention to the quality of games

Game quality is the future development direction of the game industry. Different from other domestic homogenized type of games, behind the success of "Genshin Impact", Mihayou's investment is inseparable. According to statistics compiled by netizens on the Reddit forum based on Mihayou's official information, the company spent an initial budget of \$100 million (about 673 million yuan) and an annual cost of \$400 million (about 2.692 billion yuan) for the Genshin Impact.

In addition, Mihayou also claimed that the "Genshin Impact" budget will be increased from \$100 million per year to \$200 million per year (about 1.346 billion yuan), and the development cost of "Genshin Impact" will reach \$500 million (about 3.365 billion yuan) by September 2022. This figure puts it ahead of Star Citizen as the most expensive game ever developed. As a result, Protogod is an industry leader in terms of overall style and richness of content, and it's well crafted that makes it stand out among free-to-play games. Refined and mature game level is what Miha You pursues and gives players the best game experience. "Genshin Impact" integrates core elements such as exploration, cultivation and combat, which is in line with the current mainstream players' preferences at home and abroad. Grasping the user's interest point is a particularly important link in cultural export, because cultural export is a two-way acceptance process.

5. The inspiration of "Genshin Impact" to the cross-cultural communication of other domestic games

5.1. Raising the approval threshold to ensure that innovative games are given priority to go to sea

At present, China's game industry has achieved rapid development, but the relevant protection policies have not kept up with the speed of development of the game industry, blindly encouraging games to go to sea and leading to the decline of the threshold of sea games, so that many game companies only to make money crazy production of homogenized games, which is also a reason for the serious homogenization of domestic games. In the face of the serious problem of homogenization, the relevant domestic examination and approval units should raise the threshold of examination and approval, encourage innovative games to give priority to the sea, promote game manufacturers to produce high-quality games, and reduce the root cause of shoddy homogeneous games. In addition, in the highly competitive overseas game market, the state can use its relevant capabilities to link outstanding enterprises in the game industry together, promote innovation and cooperation among outstanding enterprises, provide certain guarantees in terms of economy and talent training, and give various supports to excellent domestic games that have achieved results in overseas markets. To provide solid support for domestic games in the process of going overseas.

5.2. Focus on game innovation and integration to improve the ability of Chinese culture communication

"Cultural confidence is a basic and lasting force in the development of a country and a nation." Nowadays, major domestic game enterprises take overseas markets as one of the ways to develop games in order to maximize benefits. However, at the same time, the key purpose of domestic games going overseas is to transfer Chinese culture to overseas players through the combination of games and cultural content, so that overseas players can come into contact with and understand Chinese culture insubtly. However, how to let foreign players be influenced by Chinese culture in the process of playing, and gradually accept the culture they are not familiar with, this is now the relevant enterprises need to solve the problem. After the analysis and research of the game "Original God", the author believes that it can start from the aspect of game innovation and integration, so that players can first access to the content they are familiar with, and then accept and identify with the new culture. Take Original God as an example, the world view of the game is based on the "seven kingdoms" of the Tiwat continent, and each country corresponds to a type of overseas culture. For example, "Rice Wife" is based on Japan, "Riyue" is based on China, and "Xumi" is based on Egypt and India. When players go to one of the countries or regions, the architectural style, background music, and NPC attire of the region are also consistent with the culture of the real country it represents. This can increase the player's sense of familiarity with the game and increase the sense of belonging to the game itself, and then experience and feel other different types of culture on this basis, which is the game innovation strategy of "Original God", which integrates different cultures into the game. Therefore, overseas players are not completely unfamiliar with the cultural content of "Original God". After the release of the mission to play the game at the same time, with "glass moon" as a map representing Chinese culture, no matter in the main story of the game or in other play experiences are essential areas, players will directly experience and understand the Chinese culture, in the process of play to improve the ability to spread Chinese culture.

5.3. Increase the training of game production talents to create a good game environment

In the current environment of the overall game industry, the development prospects of game-related industries are very promising. However, under the influence of some traditional industries, the stability and development of the game industry are partly questioned, and they are not part of the current mainstream employment scope. Under this influence, some practitioners with excellent abilities choose to leave the game industry, which also causes the loss of some talents. In the case of the national game policy environment and the development environment of the game industry need to be improved, solving the problem of how to retain talents, discover talents and cultivate talents has become the top priority for the game industry to obtain better development. Talent is the key to the better development of every industry. Especially for the

game industry, the game industry needs more talents with technical, innovative, integrated and other aspects. With the rapid progress of science and technology and the gradual rise of China's international status, Through what way to let people all over the world understand and identify with Chinese culture is imminent. As one of the easiest ways to spread culture, how to make excellent games that can go to sea and integrate Chinese culture, the mining and training of talent resources is an indispensable and important link that needs to be improved as soon as possible. The author believes that we can start from colleges and universities, broaden their professional reserves, increase their professional equipment, and attract all kinds of talents to enter colleges and universities for professional learning in games. In addition, emphasis should be placed on the training of translation talents to narrow the barriers between different languages and let overseas players experience the breadth and depth of Chinese culture through language and other aspects. Finally, we should put emphasis on the introduction of overseas talents, improve the policy of introducing foreign talents, and promote the cultural and technical exchanges between China and foreign countries. On the basis of not losing Chinese culture, the game should be as close to the overseas culture and life background as possible, so as to increase the overseas audience. The integration of different cultures requires constant innovation and collision. If a domestic game wants to go to sea successfully, it needs to innovate in technology and content and be in line with the international pace, which requires the domestic market to connect the past and the next. The "upper" needs to ensure the maintenance of the development environment of the current game industry, while the "lower" needs to explore and cultivate talents to a certain extent. In this way, we can promote the cross-country communication of culture through games.

6. Conclusion

Nowadays, online games have become an important entertainment industry, which is integrated with science and technology and culture, and has distinct cultural attributes. Its value has been valued in various fields and levels. According to the report on China's Game Industry in 2022, the current game market in China has reached 2658.84 trillion yuan, with 664 million users. Despite the complex and changeable international situation in 2022 and the general downward trend of the market, the report still fully affirmed the value and future development of China's game industry. In 2022, the United States, Japan and South Korea will remain the main target markets for Chinese game companies. In the foreign revenue composition of domestic mobile games, the United States accounted for 32.31%, Japan accounted for 17.12%, and South Korea accounted for 6.97%. The proportion of other regions also showed an increasing trend, which shows that Chinese overseas companies continue to expand their efforts in emerging markets.

With the development of China's game industry, more and more games will be launched in the future. In the case of the gradual saturation of domestic games, the development of overseas markets has become the choice of many game companies. In this kind of environment, the

function of game culture communication will become increasingly prominent. Therefore, game enterprises should actively expand overseas markets, strive to innovate when launching games, and reduce the appearance of homogenized games. Excavate the essence of Chinese culture and integrate it into the game reasonably to enhance the cultural recognition in the process of game communication; Increase investment in game quality, and actively cope with the fierce competition with similar foreign enterprises; The continuous innovation and development of game technology, its spillover effect is beneficial to the combination of digital and reality; Game products pay attention to the inside and connotation of Chinese culture, highlighting the vitality of innovation and creation. It is expected that there will be more high-quality games similar to "Genshin Impact" in China in the future, so that overseas players can more recognize Chinese culture.

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