

Analysis of the Online Breakout of ‘Black Myth: Wukong’ from the Perspective of Network Communication: Postprint

Authors: Xiao Bocheng

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Abstract

【目的】 This study aims to investigate the phenomenon of Black Myth: Wukong’s breakout success from the perspective of network communication, analyzing the underlying reasons for its success and its practical implications. The research scope encompasses the game’s cultural depth, production quality, network marketing strategies, and cultural export effectiveness, seeking to reveal its impact on and enlightenment for cultural dissemination in the digital era.

【方法】 This study adopts the case study methodology, conducting an in-depth analysis of the key factors contributing to its successful breakout by systematically examining the entire process of Black Myth: Wukong from its initial debut to its generation of global attention, in conjunction with network communication theory. Simultaneously, through statistical data analysis and content analysis, it quantitatively evaluates the game’s dissemination effectiveness on network platforms and audience responses.

【结果】 The research findings demonstrate that Black Myth: Wukong’s successful breakout is attributable to its profound cultural depth, high-quality game production, network marketing strategies, and successful cultural export practices. The game skillfully integrates traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern game design concepts, creating a unique Eastern fantasy world that has captured the attention and admiration of global players. Furthermore, its official marketing strategy is precise and effective, fully leveraging the power of social media and network platforms to achieve rapid information diffusion and deep penetration. Additionally, the game has enhanced the influence of Chinese games on the international stage through cross-cultural communication.

【结论】 This study finds that the successful breakout of Black Myth: Wukong provides valuable enlightenment for the innovative development of the cultural and arts industry and the exploration of cultural export pathways. It reveals that we

should actively embrace new technologies and new media to promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese culture and world cultures. Simultaneously, it also emphasizes the importance of the coordinated advancement of cultural innovation and cultural communication for building cultural confidence and achieving cultural self-strengthening. This study aims to provide beneficial reference for the integrated development of the gaming industry and cultural industry through in-depth analysis of *Black Myth: Wukong*'s network breakout phenomenon, and to promote the international dissemination and exchange of Chinese culture.

Full Text

Analysis of *Black Myth: Wukong*'s Online Breakthrough from the Perspective of Network Dissemination

Xiangtan University, Xiangtan, Hunan 411105

Abstract

[Objective] This study investigates the online breakthrough phenomenon of *Black Myth: Wukong* from the perspective of network dissemination, analyzing the reasons behind its success and its practical implications. The research scope encompasses the game's cultural heritage, production quality, online promotional strategies, and cultural export effectiveness, aiming to reveal its influence on and implications for cultural communication in the digital era. **[Methods]** This study employs case analysis methodology, meticulously tracing *Black Myth: Wukong*'s journey from its initial debut to its rise as a global sensation. By integrating network communication theories, it conducts an in-depth analysis of the key factors contributing to its successful breakthrough. Simultaneously, through data statistics and content analysis, it quantitatively evaluates the game's dissemination effectiveness and audience response across online platforms. **[Results]** The findings demonstrate that *Black Myth: Wukong*'s successful breakthrough stems from its profound cultural heritage, high-quality game production, effective online promotional strategies, and successful cultural export practices. The game skillfully integrates traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern game design concepts, creating a unique Eastern fantasy world that has captured the attention and affection of global players. Its official promotional strategy was precise and effective, fully leveraging the power of social media and online platforms to achieve rapid information diffusion and deep penetration. Furthermore, the game enhanced the influence of Chinese games on the international stage through cross-cultural communication. **[Conclusion]** This study reveals that *Black Myth: Wukong*'s successful breakthrough provides valuable insights for the innovative development of cultural and artistic industries and the exploration of cultural export pathways. It demonstrates the importance of actively embracing new technologies and media to facilitate exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and world cultures. The study also empha-

sizes the significance of synergistic advancement between cultural innovation and cultural communication for building cultural confidence and achieving cultural self-strengthening. Through in-depth analysis of *Black Myth: Wukong*'s online breakthrough phenomenon, this research aims to provide beneficial references for the integrated development of the gaming and cultural industries, and to promote the international dissemination and exchange of Chinese culture.

Keywords: Network dissemination; Cultural integration; Technological innovation; Cultural confidence; *Black Myth: Wukong*

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The *Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through 2035* proposes "implementing the digitalization strategy for the cultural industry, accelerating the development of new cultural enterprises, cultural formats, and cultural consumption models, and strengthening digital creativity, online audio-visual, digital publishing, digital entertainment, online performances, and other industries." Against this backdrop, the gaming industry, as a shining star in the digital entertainment sector and in its capacity as the "ninth art," profoundly influences the landscape of cultural communication. *Black Myth: Wukong*, as a game work that deeply integrates diverse cultural resources, has sparked widespread social repercussions and heated discussions online since the release of its promotional and test videos, propelling issues such as "Chinese culture," "cross-cultural communication," and "cultural export" to the forefront of public discourse. Its successful "breakthrough" stems from the creative transformation and utilization of profound cultural resources, transcending literary, musical, architectural, and other artistic domains to demonstrate infinite possibilities for cultural integration and innovation. Examining *Black Myth: Wukong* and its derivative videos from the perspective of network dissemination not only reveals its cultural communication mechanisms and effects in the digital era but also provides valuable insights and references for the innovative development of cultural and artistic industries and the exploration of cultural export pathways. This process concerns not only the expansion of cultural products' international influence but also represents an important practice for promoting Chinese cultural confidence and facilitating exchanges and mutual learning with world civilizations.

1. *Black Myth: Wukong's* Successful “Breakthrough”

1.1 Debut and Showcase of *Black Myth: Wukong*

Since its initial debut, *Black Myth: Wukong* has stunned the global gaming community and broader audiences with a series of meticulously planned gameplay test videos. From its first appearance in August 2020 to its subsequent stunning showcase in August 2021 enhanced by Unreal Engine 5 technology, these two releases demonstrated not only the game’s astonishing visual quality and smooth operational experience but also wove visual and auditory feasts for viewers through cinematic-level narrative techniques. Each gameplay demonstration felt like a trailer for an upcoming Eastern fantasy blockbuster, captivating countless gamers and non-gamers alike. As development progressed into 2022, *Black Myth: Wukong* once again ignited the enthusiasm of players and audiences with a dual release of a six-minute gameplay story video and an eight-minute gameplay test video. These two videos not only maintained the high production standards of their predecessors but also took significant strides in narrative depth and character development, expanding discussion topics from pure gameplay experience to speculation and interpretation of complex plots and in-depth exploration and heated discussion of traditional Chinese culture. This cross-domain cultural resonance undoubtedly won the game unprecedented attention [1].

In terms of data, *Black Myth: Wukong's* official promotional videos have achieved remarkable results globally. On YouTube, two official gameplay demonstration videos released by the globally renowned gaming media outlet IGN quickly surpassed ten million views, becoming hot topics both within and beyond gaming circles. Meanwhile, various gaming news websites and self-media bloggers joined the dissemination efforts, further expanding the game’s influence through reposting, analysis, and secondary creation. In China, Bilibili, as an important hub for video content, also witnessed the popularity of *Black Myth: Wukong*. From 2020 to 2022, each year’s video release triggered viewing frenzies, particularly the two preview videos released in 2022, which both reached ten-million-level viewership within just one month of release. This achievement is rare not only in gaming circles but also demonstrates its transcendence of gaming boundaries to become a cultural phenomenon of national concern.

Following the release of the game trailer, its unique Eastern aesthetic charm rapidly spread through cyberspace, attracting the attention of numerous netizens worldwide. Overseas audiences were captivated by the game’s meticulously designed scenes, character modeling, and costume details, which sparked heated discussions and sharing online. Through social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, they actively posted their viewing experiences and engaged in real-time interactions with netizens from around the world, jointly exploring the profound cultural heritage and unique aesthetic values presented by *Black Myth: Wukong*. This cross-regional and cross-cultural exchange based

on network dissemination not only greatly broadened the game’s audience reach but also promoted understanding and respect among people from different cultural backgrounds [5]. Netizens freely expressed their views and shared insights online, creating collisions and integration of diverse cultures. In this process, *Black Myth: Wukong* was disseminated not only as a game but also as a window for cultural exchange, allowing more people to appreciate the charm of Eastern culture.

The immediacy, extensiveness, and interactivity of network dissemination provided strong support for *Black Myth: Wukong*’s successful “breakthrough.” It broke the boundaries of traditional media, enabling cultural communication to transcend geographical and temporal constraints and achieve rapid global dissemination and sharing. Simultaneously, network dissemination also provided new ideas and opportunities for the deep integration of the gaming and cultural industries, driving the innovation and development of cultural products [2]. In this process, the game’s cultural value, artistic charm, and technical strength were fully demonstrated and recognized, laying a solid foundation for its successful launch.

1.2 Background of *Black Myth: Wukong*’s Breakthrough

Black Myth: Wukong’s successful “breakthrough” lies not only in its exceptional game quality and technological innovation but also in its skillful integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern game design concepts, creating an Eastern fantasy world that feels both familiar and novel. In this process, the game’s potential as a cultural communication medium was fully tapped. It not only broke barriers between gaming circles and other cultural fields but also promoted exchanges and mutual learning between domestic and international cultures, contributing to the prosperity and development of global culture [3].

Black Myth: Wukong represents not only a high level of domestic game production technology but also a profound cultural exploration and expression. Using the classic character “Wukong” from the Chinese literary masterpiece *Journey to the West* as its prototype, the game reshapes an Eastern fantasy world that remains faithful to the original spirit while brimming with innovative elements through modern game design concepts and advanced graphics rendering technology. Players can experience not only thrilling battles and the joy of puzzle-solving exploration but also deeply feel the charm of traditional Chinese culture, such as the elegance of poetry, the grandeur of classical architecture, and the magnificence of traditional costumes.

It is worth noting that *Black Myth: Wukong*’s “breakthrough” phenomenon is not accidental. On social media and online platforms, the game’s trailers, demo videos, and other derivative content spread rapidly, attracting audience groups from different countries, regions, and cultural backgrounds. These audiences include both veteran gaming enthusiasts and ordinary netizens curious about

Chinese culture. Through comments, reposts, and shares, they actively participated in discussions about *Black Myth: Wukong*, forming cross-cultural online exchanges and dialogues [4].

2. Analysis of Reasons for *Black Myth: Wukong*'s Online Breakthrough

2.1 Profound Cultural Heritage

Black Myth: Wukong, as a monumental game work that profoundly pays homage to *Journey to the West*—the pioneering masterpiece of Chinese mythological fiction—demonstrates the production team's unique ingenuity. The team not only inherits the rich content and brilliant ideas of *Journey to the West* but also, under the high praise of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, uses the “Journey to the West story” and “Journey to the West sentiment” as its spiritual cornerstone to open a new chapter in modern gaming and cultural inheritance. The team deeply mines the treasure trove of Chinese classical poetry and allusions, skillfully integrating these brilliant cultural heritages into game design to showcase unparalleled Chinese cultural charm. Using *Journey to the West* as their blueprint, they conduct meticulous analysis and interpretation while employing rich imagination and deconstructive courage to transcend from the dimension of personal cultivation (“knowing oneself”) to the cosmos (“knowing the world”), ultimately settling on the grand perspective of compassion for humanity (“knowing all beings”). They provide refreshing reinterpretations of the original work's characters—human, monster, deity, and Buddha—and the journey to obtain the scriptures.

Particularly noteworthy is the plot interlude released in 2022, which uses “half a lifetime drifting through mountains and seas, a solitary boat” to symbolize the loneliness and resilience of the character's journey, and “why is it that hearts which beat as one never last long” to express the depth and impermanence of emotions. The exquisite diction, with allusions in every line, rigorous logic, and superior quality further deepen the game's cultural heritage and emotional resonance. While retaining classic settings, *Black Myth: Wukong* skillfully integrates contemporary reflections, making its background, characters, themes, and copywriting all present distinct contemporary characteristics and profound philosophical thinking, stimulating enthusiastic discussions and infinite imagination among audiences regarding plot development and innovative pathways [6]. This game is not only a tribute to and innovation on the cultural treasure of *Journey to the West* but also a model work of perfect integration between traditional Chinese culture and modern gaming art.

2.2 High-Quality Game Production and Online Promotion

Black Myth: Wukong was developed using Unreal Engine 5, a choice that brought unprecedented graphical performance and technical strength. Unreal Engine 5 is renowned for its powerful rendering capabilities, efficient physics

simulation, and realistic lighting effects, enabling *Black Myth: Wukong* to reach unprecedented heights in visual presentation. The game's official promotion was also exceptionally well-executed. Officially released trailers and gameplay demonstration videos attracted significant attention with their exquisite visuals and stunning effects [7]. These videos not only showcased the game's distinctive gameplay and story content but also created a strong atmosphere and emotional impact through clever editing and soundtrack selection, stimulating players' desire to purchase. Additionally, the production team actively engaged with players through social media, gaming forums, and other channels, collecting feedback to continuously optimize game content and promotional strategies, maintaining high popularity and topicality throughout the promotion process [8].

2.3 Successful Online Practice of Cultural Export

In *Black Myth: Wukong*'s online breakthrough process, the power of network dissemination cannot be underestimated. It not only accelerated the game's rapid rise domestically but also facilitated a successful practice of cultural export, significantly enhancing the influence of Chinese games on the international stage [9]. *Black Myth: Wukong* fully utilized global online platforms such as social media, gaming forums, and video-sharing websites for extensive and in-depth promotion. These platforms transcend geographical limitations, enabling game information to spread rapidly worldwide [10]. By posting exquisite game screenshots, stunning gameplay demonstration videos, and in-depth game analysis articles on these platforms, the production team successfully captured the attention of global players, stimulating their curiosity and desire to explore.

In the process of network dissemination, word-of-mouth communication and community effects played crucial roles [11]. *Black Myth: Wukong* won the love and praise of numerous loyal players through its high-quality production and unique gaming experience. These players shared their gaming experiences and feelings through social media, gaming forums, and other channels, creating a positive word-of-mouth effect. They also spontaneously organized community activities such as strategy sharing and cosplay, further expanding the game's influence and audience reach.

3. Realistic Reflections on *Black Myth: Wukong*'s Dissemination

3.1 Premise: Enhancing Cultural Confidence

China possesses rich cultural heritage. Amid the wave of globalization, the online breakthrough phenomenon of *Black Myth: Wukong* game videos serves as a clear stream, demonstrating to the world the powerful strength and unique advantages of Chinese cultural innovation and communication [12]. This game skillfully integrates the essence of traditional culture with modern gaming technology, using new media forms such as short videos to transcend language and

geographical boundaries, allowing global audiences to experience the unique charm and infinite appeal of Chinese culture. Therefore, continuously seeking and enhancing cultural consciousness holds immeasurable value for contemporary China. It is not only key to handling the relationship between tradition and modernity, as well as foreign and local cultures, but also an important force in promoting Chinese culture to the world and participating in global cultural governance. In future development, we should continue to deepen our understanding and practice of cultural consciousness, demonstrating the unique charm and profound heritage of Chinese culture to the world with greater confidence.

3.2 Core: Breaking Through Promotion Paths

Black Myth: Wukong's breakthrough in promotion and network dissemination can be considered a revolution in the gaming industry, with its successful strategies setting a benchmark for future endeavors. First, in terms of promotional strategy, *Black Myth: Wukong* adopted a combination of precise positioning and broad coverage. The production team accurately grasped the interest points and expectations of target audience groups, using meticulously planned trailers, concept art, and gameplay demonstrations to strike directly at players' hearts and stimulate their desire to explore and purchase. Simultaneously, they fully utilized high-end platforms such as global gaming exhibitions and award ceremonies for face-to-face showcases and exchanges, further expanding the game's influence and visibility [13].

Furthermore, in the creation of promotional content, *Black Myth: Wukong* demonstrated extremely high artistic standards and cultural depth. The production team focused not only on the exquisite presentation of game visuals but also invested considerable effort in copywriting, soundtrack selection, and video editing, striving to make every promotional material a work of art that conveys the game's spirit and cultural connotations. This deep excavation and meticulous refinement of promotional content enabled *Black Myth: Wukong* to stand out among numerous games and become a hot topic among players [14].

More importantly, throughout its network dissemination process, *Black Myth: Wukong* maintained close interaction and communication with players. The production team actively responded to player feedback and suggestions, continuously optimizing game content and experience. They also encouraged players to share their gaming insights and creative works, further enriching the game's cultural ecosystem and community atmosphere through UGC (user-generated content) [15]. This player-centered interactive communication model not only enhanced players' sense of belonging and loyalty but also laid a solid foundation for the game's sustainable development and word-of-mouth dissemination.

3.3 Experience: Achieving Cultural Self-Strengthening

As globalization accelerates, foreign cultures have powerfully entered China's cultural market through games and their derivatives, profoundly demonstrating

that China is facing and continuously striving to break through the critical bottleneck of “cultural self-strengthening.” The synergistic advancement of cultural innovation and cultural communication is not only the cornerstone of building cultural confidence but also the necessary path to achieving the goal of becoming a cultural powerhouse [16]. Although *Black Myth: Wukong*, a game still in development, has received mixed evaluations from various sectors, its innovative attempts and the widespread dissemination of its game videos have undoubtedly created waves in cross-cultural communication, winning extensive attention and acclaim. Its successful “breakthrough” not only exemplifies the vivid practice of cultural self-strengthening but also marks another milestone in the deep integration and innovative development of games and culture, providing valuable inspiration for cross-industry integration between other industries and the cultural industry.

From the perspective of current cross-cultural communication effectiveness, *Black Myth: Wukong*'s series of videos far surpass many games and even works from other industries in terms of influence, becoming a clear example of cultural self-strengthening that transcends national borders. This achievement represents not only an active exploration of deep integration between the gaming industry and cultural innovation but also indicates that the future development of the digital entertainment industry requires persistent efforts from more innovative game design teams like this [17].

China's cross-cultural communication endeavors urgently need the active participation and support of the “ninth art”—the emerging cultural form of electronic games. The construction of a culturally strong nation cannot be separated from the deep integration and joint innovation between games and other diverse fields and culture. Through the universal language of games, we can more effectively tell Chinese stories, disseminate Chinese culture, promote exchanges and mutual learning among world cultures, and jointly advance the prosperity and development of global culture.

Black Myth: Wukong is not only a model of successful game development but also a vivid practice of Chinese cultural confidence and cultural communication innovation [18]. Based on profound cultural heritage and through high-quality game production and online promotion, it successfully transcended gaming circles to become a global cultural phenomenon. This process not only demonstrates the rise and strength of China's gaming industry but also opens new pathways for the international dissemination of Chinese culture. Looking ahead, we anticipate the emergence of more works like *Black Myth: Wukong* that, with a more open and inclusive mindset, promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and world cultures, jointly building a diverse, symbiotic, and harmoniously developing global cultural ecosystem, and contributing to the goals of cultural self-strengthening and building a culturally strong nation.

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Author Bio: Xiao Bocheng (2001—), male, from Loudi, Hunan, master’s student, research direction: new media studies.

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