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Online Public Opinion Report on the Domestic AAA Game “Black Myth: Wukong”

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Abstract

Abstract At present, global cultural competition is becoming increasingly intense. Domestic cultural products face difficulties in “breaking the circle,” and “going overseas” to attract fans encounters challenges such as cultural maladaptation and cultural discount. Against this backdrop, domestic cultural products represented by Black Myth: Wukong have transcended traditional narratives, successfully “breaking the circle,” “going overseas,” and “shining brightly” through Chinese elements, exquisite production, and compelling stories, achieving both critical acclaim and commercial success in overseas cultural markets, thereby demonstrating the charm of Chinese culture. Simultaneously, in the process of international dissemination, Black Myth: Wukong has also encountered some non-negligible challenges that warrant serious attention.

Full Text

Public Opinion Report on the Chinese Video Game “Black Myth: Wukong”

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Abstract

Currently, global cultural competition is intensifying, with Chinese cultural products facing challenges in breaking into mainstream audiences domestically and encountering cultural discounting when expanding overseas. Against this backdrop, Chinese cultural products like *Black Myth: Wukong* have broken through traditional narratives. By incorporating Chinese elements, delivering high-quality production, and telling compelling stories, they have successfully broken into mainstream audiences, expanded overseas, and achieved remarkable

success. These works have garnered both critical acclaim and commercial success in international cultural markets, showcasing the appeal of Chinese culture. At the same time, during its international dissemination, *Black Myth: Wukong* has encountered some significant challenges that demand serious attention.

Keywords

China; Video Games; Black Myth: Wukong; Public Opinion; International Communication; Chinese Culture; Traditional Culture; Cultural Exports; Cultural Discount

On August 20, 2024, *Black Myth: Wukong*, a AAA game meticulously developed over six years by Chinese game developer Game Science, was officially launched. The game quickly became a bestseller on major gaming platforms such as Steam and WeGame, receiving enthusiastic acclaim from players worldwide and sparking widespread discussion across major social media platforms both domestically and internationally.

1. Praise for Production Quality

Black Myth: Wukong's visual quality and artistic style are widely regarded as reaching international top-tier standards, delivering a powerful visual impact to players. Simultaneously, the game's combat system and gameplay design have garnered broad recognition from players, with particularly diverse enemy design and rich skill combinations significantly enhancing its playability [1]. The globally renowned video game review site IGN awarded *Black Myth: Wukong* a high score of 8 out of 10 (with 10 being the maximum score—author's note), praising it as “an excellent action game with brilliant combat and exciting bosses” [2]. The UK's *The Guardian* described *Black Myth: Wukong* as the “most exciting” video game of summer 2024 [3]. Australia's *The Conversation* noted that *Black Myth: Wukong* “has not only broken gaming records but may also drive a critical shift in the global balance of technological power” [4]. ZOL.com.cn reported that *Black Myth: Wukong* reached ten million copies sold within three days. On the Steam platform, the game achieved a peak concurrent player count of 2.4 million and received over 90% positive reviews [5]. A top Zhihu respondent, “Cheng Sir's Dad,” observed: “Among gaming enthusiasts, conversations are no longer dominated by ‘Where are you in GTA?’ or ‘The world-building in Sekiro and Elden Ring is really well done,’ but rather by ‘Have you beaten Black Myth? Collected all the gourds? Can you defeat Erlang Shen?’” [6]

2. Appreciation for Chinese Cultural Elements

The narrative of *Black Myth: Wukong* originates from the Chinese classical literary masterpiece *Journey to the West*, with its settings meticulously recreating numerous traditional Chinese ancient architecture, stone carvings, and sculptures from locations such as Shanxi, Zhejiang, and Chongqing. Before and after the game's launch, multiple local culture and tourism departments “claimed”

their attractions that “appeared” in the game online, causing netizens’ interest in these locations to surge and search popularity to skyrocket. Meanwhile, under the influence and momentum of *Black Myth: Wukong*, the “guofeng” (Chinese style) track has once again become a favorite in the investment market, with industry insiders believing that 2025 will be an opportune time for investment in guofeng games [7]. An article published on Sohu.com pointed out that *Black Myth: Wukong* “is not just an action role-playing game (ARPG), but a cultural feast. Through storytelling with profound cultural depth, this game allows global players to experience the unique charm of Chinese stories” [8]. *The Diplomat* magazine noted: “*Black Myth: Wukong* demonstrates that China’s cultural soft power is no myth” [9]. *The Asia Times* website argued that *Black Myth: Wukong* showcases China’s cultural confidence [10]. The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore released a research report asserting that *Black Myth: Wukong* contributes to enhancing China’s soft power [11].

3. Criticism of the Development Team

Criticism has primarily focused on controversies surrounding “misogyny” and “female denigration,” which have ignited debates both abroad and domestically. Internationally: IGN published two articles in November 2023 [12] and June 2024 [13] accusing Game Science, the developer of *Black Myth: Wukong*, of having a sexist culture and multiple key developers of “denigrating women.” While the first article caused little stir, the second triggered significant negative public sentiment [14]. Feature stories about *Black Myth: Wukong* published by *Rolling Stone* [15] and *Variety* [16] both cited IGN’s articles and criticized Game Science. A feature report by *The New York Times* not only hyped the “feminism” controversy but also raised “censorship” issues, accusing Game Science of attempting to suppress “negative discourse” regarding politics, video game industry policies, and other topics [17]. Domestically: Weibo saw a flood of criticism against Game Science and calls to boycott *Black Myth: Wukong*, while Douban featured numerous one-star reviews targeting the game. Previously, a domestic “feminist” organization “dug up dirt” on Game Science, accusing its logo of being indecent, senior executives and key developers of repeatedly making vulgar statements on social media, and team members being almost exclusively male. The organization also “excavated” the Tencent game *Asura* project team, Game Science’s predecessor, revealing that it had performed vulgar programs at Tencent’s annual meetings and that its recruitment announcements contained sexual innuendos and body discrimination [18].

IGN France Incident

On June 8, 2024, IGN France posted on X, questioning Sun Wukong’s design: “Putting the golden cudgel in your ear, isn’t that a bit risky? That’s not a cotton swab!” After receiving criticism from netizens, IGN France deleted the tweet and issued an apology [14].

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