

The Value Reconstruction of Traditional Culture in the Modern Game Industry: A Case Study of Black Myth: Wukong

Yunuo Dai

Gaston Day School Shanghai
Shangde, Shanghai, 200120, China
nicole dai080519@163.com

Abstract:

In the digital era, the deep integration of traditional culture and modern industries has become a crucial issue for cultural inheritance and development. Black Myth: Wukong, one of China's most internationally successful games in 2024, embodies abundant traditional Chinese cultural elements and has attracted wide public attention. Adopting a literature review approach combined with case analysis, this study takes Black Myth: Wukong as an example to explore the mechanisms of value reconstruction of traditional culture in the modern game industry. The findings reveal that traditional cultural symbols, through modern reinterpretation, innovative dissemination models, and the integration of technology and culture, generate a threefold pathway of value creation, thereby achieving the transformation from cultural capital to economic capital. The game industry provides new expressive forms for traditional culture, constructing unique cultural identity through immersive experiences and cross-media representation. This study offers a renewed theoretical perspective on the modernization of cultural heritage, providing significant reference value for both the development of the gaming industry and the innovation of cultural industries.

Keywords: Traditional Culture, Game Industry, Value Reconstruction, Black Myth: Wukong

1. Introduction

With the advent of the digital era, the adaptive integration of traditional culture and the gaming industry has become a key topic of discussion. The phenomenal success of Black Myth: Wukong in 2024 demonstrates the vast potential of deeply integrating tradi-

tional culture with game industry, offering a valuable case for investigating the transformation of cultural value in the digital age.

Academic research on the integration of traditional culture and the game industry has diversified. Wu examined Black Myth: Wukong from the perspective of interactivity and immersion, emphasizing the

game's role in cultural communication [1]. Chen, drawing from the perspective of cross-media poetic construction, systematically analyzed the game's use of visual design, sound effects, and narrative structures [2]. Liu explored the innovative expression of martial arts culture in digital games using *Honor of Kings* as a case study [3]. Bai analyzed *Genshin Impact* from multiple dimensions—including market strategies and game quality—unpacking the mechanisms of cultural value dissemination in the global market [4].

However, existing research remains limited in several respects. First, few studies have focused specifically on *Black Myth: Wukong*, particularly lacking a comprehensive analysis of the full process of value reconstruction of traditional culture. Second, insufficient attention has been given to the concrete mechanisms and pathways through which cultural capital is transformed into economic and social capital. These gaps leave room for this study.

Therefore, this paper employs literature review and case study methods, with *Black Myth: Wukong* as the focal case, to investigate the mechanisms of value reconstruction of traditional culture in the modern gaming industry. By analyzing the experiences of *Black Myth: Wukong*, this research deepens the understanding of integration models between traditional culture and gaming, offering practical implications for game developers and cultural industry practitioners, and contributing to the sustainable development of traditional culture in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Traditional Culture's Value Reconstruction

The theoretical foundation of the value reconstruction of the traditional culture is rooted in the development of cultural value theory. Cultural capital can, under certain conditions, be transformed into economic and social capital. In the context of digitalization, traditional culture, as a unique form of cultural capital, can be redefined and released through modern technological processing and packaging.

Zhang and Wang argue that the success of *Black Myth: Wukong* represents the construction of a new form of cultural productivity, illustrating that through innovation and high-quality development, traditional culture can transition from potential to realized value [5]. Wei examined the "Paper-cut Wonderland" project, showing how subcultural

or "second-dimension" aesthetics empower traditional culture, providing new avenues for development and innovation in digital contexts [6].

The value reconstruction of traditional culture in the modern context is not merely a formal innovation but a process of symbolic reproduction. It preserves the core of traditional culture while imbuing it with new expressive power and influence through contemporary digital languages.

2.2 Current Research Status

Digital games, as emerging cultural communication media, have attracted significant academic attention regarding their integration with traditional culture. Xu demonstrated through *Genshin Impact* that symbolic game expressions can overcome language barriers and facilitate global cultural dissemination [7]. Zhang et al. suggested that *Black Myth: Wukong* achieved cultural value transformation through comprehensive upgrades in labor, tools, and objects [8]. Pang et al. emphasized that dynamic interactive environments and integrated cultural expressions are key to cross-cultural value transformation [9].

However, most existing studies focus on individual game features or specific cultural elements, lacking a comprehensive analysis of the entire process from the extraction of cultural symbols, the digital translation, to the value realization. Moreover, there is limited exploration of the specific mechanisms through which traditional culture is achieved the transformation of cultural capital into economic, social, and symbolic capital. These gaps justify the construction of a systematic theoretical framework for traditional culture value reconstruction in this study.

3. Case Analysis: Cultural Value Reconstruction in *Black Myth: Wukong*

3.1 Modern Interpretation and Reshaping of Traditional Cultural Symbols

3.1.1 Digital Translation of Mythical Symbols

Black Myth: Wukong demonstrates a unique approach to digital translation of mythical symbols. Drawing from the classic *Journey to the West*, the game employs modern digital technologies for reinterpretation. Sun Wukong's iconic image is transformed from a purely literary symbol into a visually compelling, modernized digital character through 3D modeling, motion design, and environment

creation [2].

The “Seventy-two Transformations” skill system converts abstract concepts into tangible gameplay mechanics. Players can transform into the Golden Cicada to evade attacks or a giant ape to deliver area-of-effect damage. Environmental designs, such as Flower-Fruit Mountain and Water Curtain Cave, use global illumination technology to create ethereal landscapes, while the architectural aesthetics of the Great Thunderclap Temple reflect Tang Dynasty design principles. This digital translation retains cultural meaning while endowing traditional culture with enhanced expression and engagement, transforming it from static text into interactive cultural media [3].

3.1.2 Cross-Media Visual Aesthetics

The game’s visual aesthetics showcase the fusion of traditional culture and modern technology. By digitally reproducing cultural symbols, the game evokes strong cultural identification and resonance among domestic and international audiences [10]. *Black Myth: Wukong* pursues a “realistic restoration” design philosophy. For example, the Dou-gong brackets of Shanxi’s Hanging Temple are modeled according to Song Dynasty building manuals, and the character costumes reference Dunhuang murals and Ming Dynasty attire, capturing historical textures.

This contrasts with games like *Genshin Impact*, which adopt simplified, anime-inspired interpretations of Chinese architecture. The difference reflects two cultural dissemination strategies: the former lowers cultural barriers through popular aesthetics, while the latter enhances cultural depth via faithful restoration. Western media have praised *Black Myth: Wukong* for enabling a genuine understanding of classical Chinese aesthetics.

3.2 Innovations in Cultural Communication

3.2.1 Complex Narrative Structures

The game employs a complex cinematic narrative to modernize the expression of traditional culture. Its narrative is structured around the six senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind) and integrates Buddhist concepts of the “Five Poisons” (greed, anger, arrogance, ignorance, doubt). For instance, the “Black Wind Mountain” chapter illustrates “greed” through the story of a monk and the Black Bear Spirit, while the “Yellow Wind Ridge” chapter explores the destructiveness of “anger.”

Side quests deepen cultural insights. In the Country of the Bhikkhus, a king sacrifices children to pursue immortality,

critiquing the obsession with eternal life. In the Spider Cave, the fate of spider spirits reflects historical gender inequities. Environmental storytelling—such as the ruined Flower-Fruit Mountain—further enhances immersion. This interactive, non-linear storytelling transforms players from passive recipients to active participants, optimizing cultural transmission in both depth and engagement.

3.2.2 Immersive Mechanisms of Cultural Identification

The game fosters cultural identification through immersive experiences. Advanced physics engines and haptic feedback systems allow players to sense weapon impacts realistically, transforming traditional martial arts artifacts from textual descriptions into perceptible experiences. Environmental interactivity, elements of walking on wooden temple floors or opening doors with creaking hinges, enhances the sense of presence. This immersive design strengthens cultural recognition and provides an effective pathway for the transmission of traditional culture [11].

3.3 Value Creation through Integration of Technology and Culture

Black Myth: Wukong illustrates the integration of technology and culture generates new value and an industrial ecosystem [12]. For example, the Seventy-two Transformations skill system translates Sun Wukong’s mythical abilities into interactive gameplay, enabling players to experience philosophical ideas such as “all beings can transform.” Advanced 3D modeling and motion capture make these skills visually stunning and engaging.

The fusion of technology and culture elevates product quality and user experience while creating new avenues for cultural value realization. Traditional culture, once static, is now dynamic, interactive, and commercially viable, demonstrating the vast potential and value of technology-culture integration.

4. Theoretical Mechanisms and Significance of Traditional Culture Value Reconstruction

4.1 Transformation from Cultural Capital to Multi-dimensional Value

The case of *Black Myth: Wukong* reveals a systematic process of value reconstruction. First, it preserves core cultural symbols while innovating form, transforming Sun Wukong into a modern hero that embodies rebellion,

growth, and philosophical reflection.

Second, technology acts as a bridge, converting decoded cultural symbols into playable digital content. The Unreal Engine 5 enables the transformation of static cultural symbols into dynamic, immersive experiences, turning “observing culture” into “experiencing culture.”

Third, complex narratives and immersive design establish participatory dissemination. Players become active agents in cultural transmission, sharing experiences and generating social capital through social media. This dual transformation into economic and social capital forms a positive cycle, offering a replicable business model for sustainable cultural development.

4.2 Practical Implications

4.2.1 For Game Developers

Explore core cultural values rather than merely utilizing cultural symbols. Assemble interdisciplinary teams combining technology experts, cultural scholars, and designers to ensure both cultural authenticity and technical excellence. Balance technological sophistication with cultural depth to achieve both economic success and cultural impact.

4.2.2 For Cultural Industry Practitioners

Enhance digital literacy to present traditional culture in interactive formats. Adopt cross-media strategies and collaborate with gaming, film, and animation industries. Engage young audiences using familiar language and appealing digital experiences to transmit cultural value.

4.2.3 For Policy Makers

Establish support systems for the development of digital cultural development. Encourage interdisciplinary talent cultivation in higher education. Protect intellectual property rights for cultural products. Promote international cultural communication by using games as tools for cultural exchange.

5. Conclusion

This study, using *Black Myth: Wukong* as a case, illustrates the integration of traditional culture with the digital game industry to create new pathways of value reconstruction. Through symbolic translation, technological integration, and industrialization, traditional culture is transformed from cultural capital into economic capital. The game industry provides novel expressive and dis-

play-oriented platforms, constructing unique mechanisms of cultural identification.

As digital technologies continue to advance, the fusion of traditional culture and the modern digital game industry will become increasingly diversified. The gaming industry, as a key medium for cultural dissemination, will play a crucial role in the innovation, transmission, and internationalization of traditional culture.

This study has limitations: it adopts a single-case study design (focusing on *Black Myth: Wukong*) and the game itself is relatively new. Long-term effects on cultural transmission and sustainability remain uncertain. Future research could involve comparative studies across multiple games and examine the impact of emerging technologies, such as AI and VR, on the digitalization of traditional culture. At the same time, it can further analyze the differences in management models of different game companies and provide management practice references for “commercialization of cultural resources” for cultural and creative enterprises.

References

- [1] Wu, F. (2025). Empowering traditional culture dissemination through digital games: A case study of *Black Myth: Wukong*. *Southern Journal*, 06, 88–90, 97.
- [2] Chen, S. (2025). In-depth analysis of cross-media poetic construction in *Black Myth: Wukong*. *Journal of Heilongjiang University of Technology (Comprehensive Edition)*, 25(03), 81–84.
- [3] Liu, Y. (2024). Role analysis of innovative expression of traditional martial arts in digital games: A case study of *Yun Ying* and *Zhao Huaizhen* in *Honor of Kings*. *Popular Literature and Arts*, 15, 205–207.
- [4] Bai, X. (2025). Research on the export status and countermeasures of Chinese online games: A case of *Genshin Impact*. *China Management Information*, 28(11), 88–91.
- [5] Zhang, R., & Wang, Y. (2024). Constructing new cultural productivity: Insights from *Black Myth: Wukong*. *Film Literature*, 24, 18–23.
- [6] Wei, Z. (2025). Second-dimension aesthetics empowering traditional culture inheritance: Insights from “Paper-cut Wonderland”. *Wenhui Daily*, 005.
- [7] Xu, M. (2025). Inheritance, integration, and breakthrough: External dissemination of traditional culture in Chinese domestic games, a case study of *Black Myth: Wukong*. *New Media Research*, 11(03), 86–92.

- [8] Zhang, T., Ruan, R., & Jiang, N. (2025). Transformation and leap of new quality production factors in the game industry: Insights from Black Myth: Wukong. *Journal of Sichuan Administrative College*, 1–9.
- [9] Pang, H., & Zhang, K. (2024). Civilization exchange and mutual learning perspective: Black Myth: Wukong empowering Chinese digital culture abroad. *News Enthusiast*, 12, 19–23.
- [10] Chen, X., & Xu, K. (2025). Analysis of complex narrative and cultural connotations in Black Myth: Wukong. *Television Studies*, 03, 63–66.
- [11] Qiu, Y., Tian, Y., & Shen, X. (2025). Construction of national image cognition through domestic digital games: A case study of Black Myth: Wukong. *New Media Research*, 11(01), 8–12, 26.
- [12] Wang, W., & Feng, R. (2025). First-release economy promoting smart city construction: A case study of the “technology + culture” model in Black Myth: Wukong. *Journal of Tonghua Normal University*, 46(05), 31–41.