





GENSHIN IMPACT'S ROLE IN PRESERVING CHINESE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: Genshin Impact, a popular video game, has attracted attention for its success in integrating elements of Chinese Cultural Heritage into its world design. This study aims to to describe the integration of Chinese cultural heritage (CCH) in the world design of Genshin Impact, while assessing its success in encouraging players' interest in visiting China. This study used a qualitative methods approach through literature studies, surveys, and in-depth observations. The results analysis showed that Genshin Impact successfully integrated various aspects of Chinese Cultural Heritage, such as traditional architecture and natural beauty into the stunning world design; most players felt the beauty of Chinese culture in the game and expressed interest in visiting the locations that served as inspiration in the game. The findings of this study suggest that Genshin Impact has great potential as a cultural promotion tool. By presenting Chinese Cultural Heritage in an engaging and interactive format, the game succeeded in arousing players' curiosity and encouraging them to learn more about Chinese culture. In addition, Genshin Impact can also contribute to increased tourist interest in China.

Keywords: game; cultural heritage; culture; tourism

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Introduction

Tangible cultural heritage encompasses the physical expressions of culture, such as artifacts, monuments, buildings, and other objects that carry historical, artistic, or cultural value. These items are often passed down through generations, serving as visible markers of a community's identity, values, and traditions (Cesaria et al., 2020).

Additionally, tangible cultural heritage plays a vital role in cultivating a sense of pride and belonging within communities. It is often safeguarded by international organizations like UNESCO to ensure its preservation for future generations. Such heritage not only enhances cultural tourism but also serves as an educational tool, helping younger generations connect with their history and heritage. By preserving tangible heritage, societies maintain continuity with their past, fostering cultural diversity and understanding in an increasingly globalized world.

The preservation of tangible cultural heritage is essential for maintaining cultural identity and promoting diversity. It strengthens the bond between communities and their past, encourages a sense of belonging, and supports cultural exchange and understanding (Zhenrao et al., 2021). By safeguarding these artifacts and monuments, we ensure that they are not lost to time and continue to enrich the lives of future generations. Moreover, tangible cultural heritage can significantly promote tourism, economic development, and social cohesion.

Promoting Chinese Cultural Heritage (CCH) presents several challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the rapid modernization and globalization, which can lead to the neglect or destruction of traditional artifacts and monuments (Zwegers, 2022). As cities grow and younger generations pursue modern careers, there is a risk that CCH could be undervalued

or forgotten. Additionally, the commercialization of CCH may result in its exploitation or distortion, undermining its authenticity and cultural significance.

The digital era, alongside the challenges of rapid modernization and globalization, adds an additional layer of complexity to the promotion of Chinese Cultural Heritage (CCH). The widespread use of mass media, social media platforms, and online content has significantly changed how cultural heritage is experienced and understood. While this opens up new possibilities for global visibility, it also poses risks of simplifying or distorting CCH, often focusing on entertainment or profit at the expense of its authenticity. For example, cultural elements might be presented in a way that ignores their original context or used purely for commercial purposes, diminishing their deeper cultural significance. This leads to a weakening of the richness of CCH, making it more difficult for future generations to fully appreciate its history and importance. Therefore, while digital technologies can help broaden access, they must be managed carefully to ensure that CCH is promoted in ways that honor and protect its original context.

Another challenge stems from the lack of awareness and appreciation of CCH among the public, both domestically and internationally. Many people are unfamiliar with Chinese historical and tourism destinations. This lack of understanding can hinder efforts to preserve and promote CCH. Additionally, the protection and preservation of CCH often require substantial financial resources, which may be limited in certain regions or communities (Yuan et al., 2022). Government funding, while essential, may not always be sufficient to meet the needs of CCH preservation initiatives.

Genshin Impact, a widely popular open-world action role-playing game de-

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veloped by miHoYo, has emerged as an unexpected yet effective platform for promoting Chinese cultural heritage (CCH). Through its immersive world-building, captivating narrative, and diverse character roster, the game seamlessly integrates elements of traditional Chinese culture and natural beauty, introducing them to a global audience in a manner that is both engaging and accessible. One of the key ways Genshin Impact promotes CCH is through its meticulously crafted world design. The game's expansive landscapes, inspired by various regions of China, showcase stunning natural beauty, ancient architecture, and vibrant cultural traditions. Such as, in the Liyue district as a design model sourced from the ancient Chinese district, with artistic references to China's Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, the area of the Huanglong Landscape, the Guilin landscape, the Fenghuang Ancient District, and the Hanging Temple in Shanxi district. This visual design features traditional Chinese architecture, such as pavilions, temples, and gardens, as well as iconic landmarks like the Jade Harbor and the Jade Chamber. These virtual representations not only serve as visually stunning backdrops but also offer players the opportunity to explore and appreciate the intricacies of Chinese architectural styles (Shi et al., 2024).

Beyond its visual appeal, Genshin Impact also incorporates Chinese intangible cultural heritage elements into its gameplay and narrative. Characters in the game often possess unique abilities and backstories tied to specific cultural traditions. The game also features various festivals and events inspired by traditional Chinese celebrations, such as the Lantern Rite and the Moonchase Festival. These in-game events allow players to experience the festive atmosphere, participate in cultural activities, and learn about the significance of these traditions (Chang et al., 2023). Genshin Impact has the potential to serve as a powerful medium for cultural promotion.

To fully understand the game's impact on promoting Chinese cultural heritage, it is crucial to analyze how these elements are incorporated into its world design.

Methodology

This study aims to describe the integration of Chinese cultural heritage (CCH) in the world design of Genshin Impact, while assessing its success in encouraging players' interest in visiting China. A qualitative research approach was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena (Dawadi et al., 2021).

The research design used is descriptive. The stage focused on collecting qualitative data through literature studies, surveys, and in-depth observations of the world design of Genshin Impact. The survey was conducted on October 15 - October 17, 2024 via Google Form. Through a survey of 64 Genshin Impact players aged 17-22 years. This survey measures players' perceptions of the appeal of Chinese culture presented in the game, and the extent to which they are encouraged to visit China directly as a result of the playing experience. The geographical parameters to the respondents were used by the researcher to determine Genshin Impact players because they were related to the interaction with their geographical space. This qualitative data is used to build a conceptual framework related to the integration of Chinese cultural heritage (Herda et al., 2023).

Result

Role-playing games (RPGs) have captured the hearts of many gamers. RPGs are essentially a manifestation of a culture that relies heavily on visuals (Thifaldy & Belasunda, 2024). As such, people have begun to view RPGs as a cultural phenomenon that reflects the socio-cultural dynamics of today. One prominent example is *Genshin Impact* which has achieved immense popularity. The game has topped the download list on both the App Store and Play Store (Cao & Yang, 2024). This achievement shows how much cultural influence RPGs have in today's society.

Genshin Impact's success in captivating its players is attributed to the meticulous attention paid to the background details of the game world. The world background design in Genshin Impact plays a crucial role in creating an immersive and culturally rich gaming experience (Tasya & Untari, 2024). Every detail, from the architecture of buildings, natural landscapes, to the smallest decorative elements, is carefully crafted to create a distinctive and authentic atmosphere for each region in Teyvat. The world's backdrop serves not only as a canvas for players' adventures, but also as a window that opens their eyes to the rich culture that inspired the design (Utomo et al., 2022). In other words, the world background is a visual narrative that tells a story about the history, traditions, and values of the people in the region. Through a background design rich in detail and symbolism, Genshin Impact manages to create a world that feels alive, breathing, and full of meaning (Sianipar & Poerbowati, 2024).

One of the cultures displayed in Genshin Impact is Chinese culture. Liyue, one of the world's largest companies in Genshin Impact, has a background design that celebrates the richness of Chinese culture. From the architecture of buildings inspired by ancient pagodas and traditional houses, to natural landscapes featuring towering mountains, flowing rivers, and terraced rice paddies, all are powerful visual representations of the beauty of nature and the wisdom of man in China. In addition, other cultural elements such as calligraphy, sculptures and ornaments are also scattered throughout Liyue, giving it

a very authentic feel (Chang et al., 2023).

Liyue is inspired by the cultural heritage of ancient China, including traditional architecture such as pagodas, traditional houses, and famous landmarks like the Jade Harbor and the Jade Chamber. Additionally, its natural landscapes are also influenced by iconic locations such as Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, Huanglong Scenic Area, and the ancient town of Fenghuang. The heritage period primarily aligns with the Ming and early Qing Dynasties, renowned for their exquisite architectural artistry and cultural traditions.

Traditional Chinese architecture showcased distinct characteristics in its design, materials, and functionality during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and the early Qing Dynasty (J. Li, 2024). In the Ming Dynasty, architecture was marked by intricate wooden structures, curved roofs adorned with brightly colored ceramic tiles, and a highly symmetrical layout. Buildings from this period often emphasized social hierarchy, with palaces, temples, and burial complexes like the Ming Tombs serving as key examples. Decorative elements such as dragon carvings and floral motifs frequently appeared, symbolizing power and beauty.

In contrast, during the Qing Dynasty, architecture continued the traditions of the Ming but incorporated greater influence from Manchu culture (Yang & Zhang, 2023). Its distinctiveness lay in the use of vibrant colors such as red, yellow, and green, as well as more complex ornaments, reflecting a closeness to nature and spirituality. Multi-tiered roofs adorned with small statues, including mythical creatures and protective deities, became hallmarks of Qing buildings. Large temples and gardens, such as the Summer Palace and the Forbidden City, became symbols of the grandeur of Qing architecture. Moreover, the surrounding landscapes were designed to create harmony with the environment, by the principles of Feng Shui.

The design of the Liyue region in Genshin Impact captures the essence of these characteristics through pagoda-style buildings, wooden structures with curved roofs, and decorative ornaments rich in symbolism (Xie, 2024). Landscapes such as towering mountains and flowing rivers also reflect the deep aesthetic and spiritual values of Ming and Qing architecture. Thus, players can virtually experience the historical richness and unique designs of these two dynasties.

Genshin Impact, as a popular video game, does not only provide entertainment, but also acts as an effective educational medium. The game indirectly introduces players to the richness of Chinese cultural heritage through captivating visual representations and engaging narratives (Q. Li & Li, 2023). By showcasing various cultural aspects such as traditional architecture, performing arts, and local traditions, Genshin Impact succeeds in arousing players' curiosity to learn more about Chinese culture.

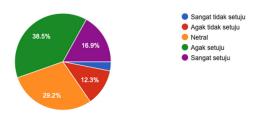


Figure 1. Genshin Impact influence to increase interest in Chinese culture (Source: Personal research documentation)

A survey of 65 Genshin Impact players showed that most respondents (55.4%) agreed that Genshin Impact had increased their interest in Chinese culture. This indicates miHoYo's success in utilizing stunning visuals and in-depth narrative to introduce players to various aspects of Chinese culture. It also shows that Genshin Impact has great potential as an in-

formal educational tool. *Genshin Impact* can be a gateway for players to learn more about various aspects of Chinese culture by presenting cultural information in a fun and easily digestible form.



Figure 2. Liyue Genshin Impact in game (Source: genshin.hoyoverse.com)

Liyue, a region in the Chinese-inspired game Genshin Impact, conveys a rich and inclusive cultural feel. Carefully, miHoYo designed the city of Livue to represent various aspects of life in China. The buildings' architecture, the city's layout, and the background music that uses traditional Chinese instruments are all carefully crafted to create an immersive and authentic experience for players (Feng, 2024) The creation of Liyue took a duration of twelve months and the history of its design is sourced from ancient China, with references from artistic to China's Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, the Scenic area in Huanglong district, the Guilin landscape, the Fenghuang Ancient district, and the Hanging Temple in Shanxi district (Cai et al., 2023). These settings have been positively received, praised as symbols of Chinese culture in the game.



Figure 3. Scenery in Fenghuang ancient town hunan china (Source: wikipedia.com)

Through exploration in Liyue, players will feel as if they are traveling to China. They will be exposed to various Chinese cultural symbols and elements presented visually and audibly. This experience will indirectly increase players' awareness and appreciation of China's rich culture. More than just a visual display, Liyue's background design also reflects the values and philosophy of life of the Chinese people.

In addition to the visual and auditory representation of Chinese cultural symbols, Livue's design in Genshin Impact also embodies core Chinese values such as harmony, respect for nature, and the importance of family and tradition. The architecture, landscapes, and even the way characters interact with the environment subtly communicate the Chinese philosophical ideals of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. For example, the tranguil settings, where nature and human-made structures coexist peacefully, reflect the Taoist principle of harmony between humanity and the natural world. Festivals and rituals seen in the game further highlight the deep cultural respect for ancestral traditions and the cyclical nature of life. By immersing players in these thematic elements, Livue not only becomes a place of exploration but also a vessel for conveying the enduring cultural and philosophical wisdom that has shaped Chinese society for centuries.

To create an enthralling fantasy world, the *Genshin Impact* development team took a creative approach by adapting, rather than simply copying, real-world elements (Greting et al., 2022). Instead of creating perfect replicas of actual locations, the team chose to extract the essence of beauty and unique characteristics from various places in China, and reconstruct them into an original fantasy world. The creative process involved traveling directly to scenic locations in China for inspiration (J. Li, 2024). This integration process results in visuals that are authen-

tic yet distinctive.



Figure 4. Comparison of ingame and real-world visuals
(Source: genshin.hoyoverse.com)

The close collaboration between mi-HoYo and the Chinese government has created a unique synergy in promoting tourism. Not only limited to presenting stunning visuals in the Genshin Impact game, miHoYo has also successfully integrated icons in the game with real tourist locations in China. This has created a beneficial effect for both parties. With such detailed and interesting visual representations in the game, tourist interest in these locations has increased. This was utilized by the Chinese government by building a Genshin Impact-inspired portal monument in the real world. This is a special tourist attraction for game players in particular and also for the general public. One form of application can be found in Zhangjiajie National Park, Hunan, China which is the visual inspiration for the Livue area.



Figure 5. Genshin Portal in Zhangjiajie National Park (Source: genshin.hoyoverse.com)

Genshin managed to elevate the beauty of China in the eyes of global players. This is especially true for Liyue who stands as an example of China and its culture in the eves of the world. The availability of Genshin Impact on various platforms such as the App Store, Play Store, Play Station, and other consoles supported the creation of a large player base and a tight-knit community worldwide, thus expanding its reach far beyond the borders of China and making it extremely popular around the world (Wang, 2024). For players from those regions who are unfamiliar with China and its people, Genshin Impact has increased their curiosity about the country, its wonderful cultural heritage, and the beautiful scenery it offers. Genshin's wide player base is also a great market for introducing Chinese tourism. The game's visuals have also attracted players to visit real-world locations.

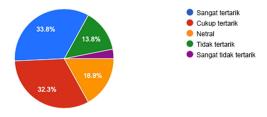


Figure 6. Interest level in visiting *Genhin Impact*'s real locations in China (Source: Personal research documentation)

The survey results show that *Genshin Impact* has great potential in encouraging tourists to visit China. A total of 66.1% of respondents expressed interest in visiting the locations that inspired the game. This figure indicates that the stunning visual representations in *Genshin Impact* have succeeded in arousing players' curiosity to explore China's natural beauty and cultural richness firsthand.

Discussion

The results of this study show that Genshin Impact successfully integrated many Chinese Cultural Heritage elements into its world design. A analysis of the game world design reveals a deep integration in various aspects, including building architecture, festival celebrations, and character costumes. The architectural designs, such as pagodas and traditional wooden houses with curved roofs, reflect influences from the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Festival celebrations within the game, like the Lantern Rite, are inspired by real-life cultural events such as the Chinese Lantern Festival, which further immerse players into the traditions and cultural depth of China.

These Chinese Cultural Heritage elements are not merely decorative but also serve as a narrative tool that enriches the player's overall experience. For instance, the game's region of Liyue is not only a visual representation of Chinese landscapes but also tells stories of cultural values, folklore, and historical symbolism. The character costumes also include elements derived from traditional Chinese clothing, such as Hanfu and other ethnic garments, enhancing the authenticity and depth of the game world. Through these details, Genshin Impact creates a strong sense of immersion while educating players about Chinese traditions in a subtle yet effective way.

Genshin Impact has managed to promote Chinese culture in a very effective way through the use of visual artifacts, costumes, customs, and architecture that are thick with Chinese nuances. One way the game incorporates Chinese culture is by introducing artefacts inspired by ancient objects, such as statues and ceramics, and important symbolism in Chinese cultures, such as dragons, which symbolize strength and luck. The costumes of the characters, such as Zhongli wearing traditional Chinese style clothes and Keging wearing hanfu, highlight the typical Chinese aesthetic elements, while giving players an idea of conventional clothing rich in cultural significance. In addition, the story in Genshin Impact is also loaded with values and customs that are strongly tied to Chinese culture, such as the Liyue festival which is reminiscent of major festivals in China, as well as characters who have a strong spiritual background, referring to Taoism and Buddhism, the two main philosophical schools that developed in China. The scenery and architecture of the world in Genshin Impact, especially in the city of Liyue, are heavily influenced by traditional Chinese architectural design, with the use of curved roofs, lanterns, and dragon statues, as well as natural elements that reflect the balance between humans and the environment, which is an important value in Chinese philosophy. Through all these elements, Genshin Impact not only offers an immersive gaming experience, but also manages to introduce Chinese culture to a global audience, bringing elements of a rich and deep cultural heritage into a captivating gaming world.

Survey of players confirmed these qualitative findings, with most respondents stating that they felt the beauty and cultural richness of the game world influenced by Chinese heritage. Players highlighted their appreciation for the attention to detail in the design, noting that it allowed them to engage more deeply with the game. Many players felt that the in-

tegration of cultural elements enhanced their emotional connection to the game's setting and story, making their play experience more meaningful and enjoyable.

Furthermore, the survey showed a positive correlation between players' understanding of the integrated Chinese Cultural Heritage and their interest in visiting China. This suggests that the game not only entertains but also serves as a medium for cultural diplomacy, encouraging players to learn more about China's rich history and culture. By showcasing Chinese heritage in an interactive and accessible format, *Genshin Impact* successfully fosters cross-cultural appreciation and curiosity, leaving a lasting impression on its global player base.

Genshin Impact success in combining entertainment with cultural promotion highlights the significant potential of culture-based visual games as an innovative medium for tourism attraction. By presenting a meticulously crafted virtual world rich in cultural details, the game offers players an immersive experience that transcends traditional entertainment. Regions like Liyue, inspired by Chinese heritage, showcase architectural wonders, traditional festivals, and scenic landscapes that closely resemble real-world locations. These details not only capture the imagination of players but also ignite curiosity about the cultural and historical roots that influenced the game's design. As a result, Genshin Impact has effectively transformed culture into a dynamic and interactive element of gameplay, engaging audiences worldwide.

Such culture-based visual games have proven to be particularly effective in engaging the younger generation, a demographic that is increasingly drawn to digital and interactive content. Through gameplay, players are introduced to cultural heritage in a way that feels organic and enjoyable, as opposed to academic or

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formal approaches that can sometimes feel detached. Elements such as festivals, traditional costumes, folklore, and architectural styles are seamlessly integrated into the game environment, turning learning into a fun and immersive experience. By blending entertainment with cultural education, Genshin Impact bridges the gap between younger audiences and historical traditions, fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity that might otherwise be overlooked in the modern digital era.

Beyond their educational value, these games serve as powerful tools for promoting tourism. When players explore visually stunning game environments inspired by real-world locations, they often develop a desire to visit these places in person. This virtual-to-real-world connection not only encourages tourism but also drives economic growth for local communities, as culture-based tourism becomes an increasingly viable and attractive option for travelers seeking meaningful and authentic experiences. Furthermore, the development of culture-based visual games creates opportunities for collaboration between game developers, cultural organizations, and tourism authorities. By leveraging the global appeal of gaming platforms, these stakeholders can ensure broader and younger audiences are exposed to cultural heritage in engaging and innovative ways. Such games hold the potential to preserve and promote cultural traditions while simultaneously opening new pathways for tourism, economic development, and cross-cultural exchange. The implications of this research need to be relevant research on the role of Genshin Impact in preserving other Cultural Heritage.

Conclusion

Genshin Impact's success in combining entertainment with cultural promotion highlights the significant potential of culture-based visual games as an innova-

tive medium for tourism attraction. By presenting a meticulously crafted virtual world rich in cultural details, the game offers players an immersive experience that transcends traditional entertainment. Regions like Liyue, inspired by Chinese heritage, showcase architectural wonders, traditional festivals, and scenic landscapes that closely resemble real-world locations. These details not only capture the imagination of the players but also ignite curiosity about the cultural and historical roots that influenced the game's design.

Such culture-based visual games have proven to be particularly effective in engaging the younger generation, a demographic often drawn to digital and interactive content. Through gameplay, players are introduced to cultural heritage in a way that feels natural and enjoyable, rather than academic or formal. Elements like festivals, costumes, folklore, and architecture are integrated seamlessly into the game, turning learning into an engaging experience. This gamified approach to cultural education makes heritage more accessible and relatable to global audiences, fostering appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures among players who might otherwise be unfamiliar with them.

Beyond their educational value, these games also hold great potential as promotional tools for tourism. When players explore visually stunning game environments inspired by real-world locations, they are often motivated to visit these places in person. For example, fans of Genshin Impact have shown increased interest in destinations like Zhangjiajie National Forest Park and other cultural landmarks in China that influenced the game's design. This connection between virtual exploration and real-world tourism can significantly boost local economies, as culture-based tourism becomes a new avenue for attracting travelers seekMarina Wardaya¹ Gracelyn Elizabeth² Lovjoyla Belinda Lennial³ Fenia Fedora Wijaya⁴ Selena Cheryl Willyam⁵

ing authentic experiences.

Further development in this field could drive the growth of the culture-based tourism industry, providing opportunities for collaboration between game developers, cultural organizations, and tourism boards. By leveraging the popularity of games as a platform, cultural promotion can reach broader and younger audiences, ultimately fostering cross-cultural exchange and economic benefits. Investing in culture-based visual games not only preserves heritage but also reimagines its role in modern society, transforming how cultural education and tourism are experienced in an increasingly digital world.

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