

Marketing of games--Take Genshin Impact for example

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Abstract. Genshin impact is an open-world game that was released in September 2020 and has attracted a lot of foreign fans in the months since its launch. It has been included in the list of national key cultural export projects and is a successful case of Chinese cultural export. This article focuses on the capabilities of Genshin Impact's operating company and why the game is so popular with gamers. A game and its company are not perfect, so this article will also mention the problems of game promotion, solutions and suggestions. Now Chinese culture is going to the world, more and more people like Chinese culture and want to know more about Chinese culture. Therefore, this paper also discusses the cultural exchange and cultural transmission in Genshin. Combined with the epidemic situation in the world and considering that many people are unable to travel, this game shows the characteristics of combining culture and travel on the whole.

Keywords: Marketing of games; Genshin Impact; Chinese element; Open World Games; Cultural Communication.

1. Introduction

With the maturity of the industry itself and the efforts of the practitioners, the online game industry has entered a new stage of development, and the industry form and the game form of all parties have undergone significant changes. Chinese online game market has entered the mature period, the competition tends to be fierce [1]. Data show that in 2020, the actual sales revenue of China's game market was 278.687 billion yuan, up 20.71% year on year, and the actual sales revenue of overseas market reached 15.450 billion dollars, up 33.25% year on year. Under the social background of epidemic prevention and control at home, the game industry has become a value-added point of cultural economy. As Chinese games continue to go abroad, the influence and popularity of many game industries abroad are also expanding. Among them, the 47th report of China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) specifically mentioned the open world adventure games represented by Genshin Impact, which creatively combined open world mechanism with online and mobile games to bring novel game experience to domestic and foreign players [2].

2. The operating company of Genshin

2.1 In the early days of the company

This article will take the original Genshin Impact as an example, and first introduce its operating company - MiHoYo (shown in figure 1). In 2005, CAI MiHoYo, Liu Wei and Luo Yuhao, who all have animation dreams, gathered on the campus of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Because of their similar interests, they devote themselves to making anime websites and games in their spare time. With the dream of filling the empty in the domestic animation market, they decided to start a business together. In the early days, it was difficult. They decided to give up The Three Kingdoms, Wuxia themed games that have been proven in the market, and also turned down other investors' invitations to raise money [3]. They want to make a difference on their own. And also want to be the best at what they love to do. At the beginning of the business, they lived a hard and frugal life. But with the strength of their unity, they did it for three years. If it hadn't been for the three of them working together and having the same dream, there might not be the MiHoYo. During the toughest times, Liu Wei, one of the founders, wore many hats, even serving as a customer service officer. He constantly communicates with users every day, looking for shortcomings in the product itself. After a lot of polishing, Honkai

Impact 2, the second generation of the game, made the MiHoYo game shine. People are finally seeing MiHoYo's efforts and quality games, and more and more people are looking forward to their games. Over the next seven years, MiHoYo has produced outstanding works in the domestic animation and game industry such as Honkai Impact 3, Pending Event Book, and Genshin Impact. These Chinese original game IP has won the love of domestic users, while related consulting has also been logged in overseas and is favored by many players.



Fig.1 The company's logo

2.2 The most popular game in this company

Of all the games MiHoYo has played, Genshin Impact is arguably the most loved and played by both domestic and international players. From the official launch of Genshin Impact in 2020, to 2021, there are countless players at home and abroad. But such an open world game is not without some controversy. For example, some players may feel that Genshin is still plagiarized. It was very similar to the Nintendo game Breath of the Wild, which caused quite a stir when it was first released [4]. However, if you look closely, you will find that Genshin Impact's game production and content are independently done by MiHoYo from beginning to end, and their own characteristics are still distinct. There are many original parts in the game, such as 'Liyue' with strong Chinese elements. The integration of Chinese style into games is also an innovative way to spread culture. This is still a realistic step forward for domestic games. Such a work shows that China's game market has achieved a great leap forward, and let the world see the possibility of China's game market.

2.3 The new technology in the company

In recent years, with the rapid development of high-speed network technology such as 5G and optical fiber, cloud gaming has become an inevitable trend in the development of the industry. Standing at the top of the game industry, MiHoYo created the first commercial mobile cloud game in China -- Cloud Genshin Impact. Cloud gaming has a number of unique benefits, such as the ability to provide stable graphics output regardless of device configuration. Secondly, cloud games are realized by using mobile phones to perform remote screen casting technology. Playing games with mobile phones does not require too much function, which avoids problems such as the game will make phones hot[3]. And since the Genshin Impact is open-world, they need to travel to many places. Cloud Genshin Impact solved the problem of slow loading bars. With the test of Cloud Genshin Impact, MiHoYo will also explore more Cloud game service models and present diversified service content.

In addition to the experience of cloud gaming technology, MiHoYo has created a virtual character called "Lumi"(show in figure 2). While Lu Ming is not the first virtual character, MiHoYo used new motion capture technology to make the character's muscles and skin feel more realistic. On May 15, 2020, the Lu Ming's video was released. Its delicate and smooth visual impact not only reflects the strong technical creativity of the company, but also reflects the goal of the company to pursue high technology to drive high-quality products.



Fig.2 Virtual character Lumi

MiHoYo has made a name for himself not just in gaming, but in other areas as well. Back in 2018, the company established the Inverse Entropy Studio (AI team), which is made up of doctors and senior industry experts. MiHoYo AI team also signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Ruijin Hospital to jointly build the MiHoYo Joint Laboratory of the Encephalopathy Center of Ruijin Hospital to jointly carry out research in the field of brain science by combining their respective advantages in the field of information technology and medical clinical research.

3. Why is Genshin Impact so popular and what is the marketing strategy behind it.

With more and more online game products going abroad, the influence and popularity of Chinese game industry in the world are also expanding. Chinese culture talks to the world in the way of games, which can effectively convey the spirit of Chinese culture. Avoid misunderstanding and prejudice caused by cultural estrangement, so as to enhance the country's cultural soft power.

3.1 Chinese culture in the game

The cultural communication and cultural integration in Genshin Impact game makes the world better perceive Chinese culture.

Genshin Impact's worldview is made up of seven countries that are inspired by the real world. There is "Mondstadt" based on medieval Europe, "Inazuma" based on Japan and, of course, "Liyue" based on China [5]. In the eyes of the world players, there are many games with Western worldview and Japanese cultural elements, and the rich Chinese elements in the Glaze Moon area will undoubtedly make the world players' eyes shine. Among them, the real Chinese culture and natural history show the uniqueness and inclusiveness of Chinese culture, and its deconstruction and shaping of the spiritual core of Chinese culture will leave players with a deep understanding and game experience.

There are three ways Genshin Impact represents Chinese culture in its games.

3.1.1. The diet

Now food is also becoming a symbol of the region. Many of the dishes have evolved from traditional Chinese cuisine. And dishes are also recorded in the detailed production method, with realistic drawing and vivid description, caused many players imagination, let a person salivate. This, coupled with a gameplay that allows players to collect their own ingredients to make delicious food,

makes people interested in recreating the food in the game. It also stimulates people's interest in exploring food.

3.1.2. Costume

As a game with different characters from different countries, Genshin Impact incorporates cultural symbols from different countries into the characters' costumes. For example, the popular Genshin character Zhong Li acts as the guardian of the Liyue, and the elements designed on his clothes are all related to the dragon robes of ancient emperors. And the disc buckle on the front of the gown absorbs the elements of the mandarin jacket, and the dragon scale design on the tail integrates the Chinese dragon totem culture[6]. The origin of the design on the reverse side of the long shirt is the traditional auspicious pattern of our ancient times -- Fang Sheng pattern and Hui pattern, a symbol of inexhaustible beauty (as shown in Figure 3). The symbol and character of Zhong Li has a strong implication of traditional Chinese culture, which may be the reason why this game is so popular abroad.

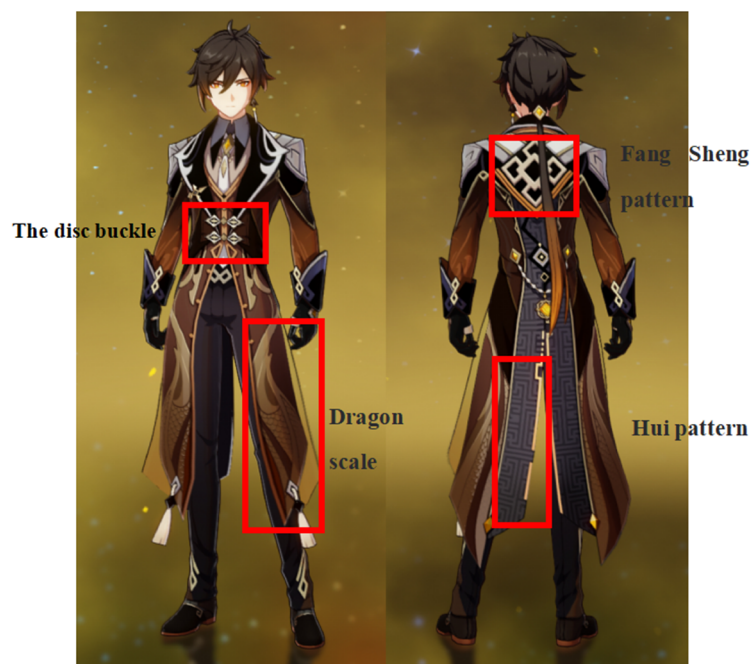


Fig.3 Design Elements and Lines of Clothing

3.1.3. The scenery

The countries in Genshin are all prototypes of the real world, so many of the landscape buildings are designed to resonate with the real world. For example, Liyue's Jueyun Karst takes Zhangjiajie, a beautiful city in China, as the prototype and shapes a fantasy game scene in the game. Let Chinese players have a sense of belonging, and let overseas players refreshing.

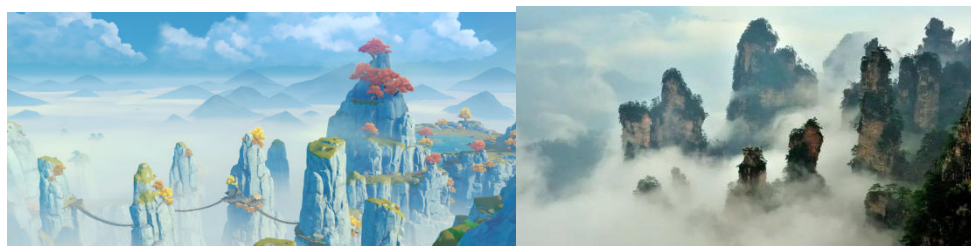


Fig.4 Comparison of Jueyun Karst in the Game (Left) and Zhangjiajie (Right)

3.1.4. The game characters

For online games, character modeling design is of great appeal to players. Good characters tend to enrich the visual senses of the game and produce shocking artistic effects, so as to improve the

immersion of the game. In Genshin there is such a drama artist, named Yun Jin. She performed a Peking Opera performance of the Goddess Splitting View in the game. It combines many traditional cultural elements, such as Peking Opera and shadow puppets, with excellent production and ingenious design. On the basis of traditional instrument performance, it combines western orchestral music and rock music in the form of Jingge, which makes people more fascinated, and retains Chinese Peking Opera segments and intonations globally [7]. Therefore, when this character was released, it aroused many reactions from players both at home and abroad. It even makes many foreigners love Chinese opera. The reason why this role can be a surprise, because the team behind the serious polish, grasp every detail. In order to ensure the opera's culture and accuracy in singing, Genshin's creative team specially invited Yang Yang, a Chinese first-grade actor and gonghuadan, to dub the role. With such a dedicated character, it's easy to see how much MiHoYo put into the game. "Game" has become a bridge of cultural exchange, realizing the transformation from "game conversation" to "cultural dialogue"[8].

3.2 Combination of games,music and tourism

Since 2020, the epidemic has continued to affect people's normal life. People can't go out and enjoy the scenery of the world. Genshin Impact, on the other hand, uses beautiful landscapes to show the cultural landscape of different countries and regions. To some extent, it satisfies the vision of most people who want to walk in different countries in the world. In addition, the Genshin Impact is an open world game, some places on the map can be visited, there is a photo function for players to commemorate the scenery. In addition, there are online functions, can experience with other players to experience the fun of the game. Not only can let domestic people at home can also enjoy foreign scenery and experience foreign, but also can let foreigners feel Chinese culture.

Map music in games often goes hand in hand with its map scene. Proper map music can always depict the scene in the game, achieve the unity of hearing and vision, and bring better game experience to game players [9]. For example, in Genshin there are often battles to be fought, and the music of the battle's changes depending on the region. At the same time, battle music is often very passionate and uplifting. Different regions of each country will have a very distinctive music, through the combination of game pictures and music, people will be more yearning for the scenery. In the music of the three city-states in Genshin, players can feel Mondstadt, the capital of freedom sung by bards, Liyue, which has experienced thousands of years of vicissitudes and has a strong Oriental flavor, and Inazuma, which is full of cherry blossoms and the beauty of sorrow. When the player hears the music again, he can recall the beautiful scenery, which also reflects the charm of the music.

Secondly, the original god can be welcomed by many foreign players. Because the foreign mobile game market boutique is not much, Genshin just filled the vacancy. Mobile games in China is indeed more boutique, foreign lags behind a lot. So more and more foreigners like the original god, and Mihayu's cloud gaming technology, Genshin Impact is growing in the foreign market.

4. The problems of promotion

Although the Genshin Impact as a game is very successful, also by many players love. However, it is inevitable that there will be some problems in the early promotion of the game.

4.1 The time of PV publicity

The first beta test of the original deity was on June 21, 2019, while the original deity's PV was released around June 10, 2019. It's probably normal for a game to have PV time ahead of beta time, after all, PV is one of the best ways to advertise. However, this theory does not work with the original gods. Because, after people watched PV, they found that it was plagiarized. It's easy for a Zelda player with a passion, or a follower, to dismiss it as a copy and not want to learn more about the game. This has led to an exodus of players [10].

Therefore, the PV of Genshin Impact itself does not have too big mistakes or shortcomings, and the loss lies in the time of issuing this PV. If this PV is placed in the period of private or even public beta, then even though many people misunderstand, there will be facts as the basis. Genshin Impact is very different from Zelda from the moment the player enters the second country. Players who have already played the game will see the game more rationally, and there will be more and more voices to resist the followers of the original God. This creates a virtuous circle, and people will have a clearer understanding of the game.

Regardless of whether the original god plagiarized or not, in terms of promotion methods, the original God put PV time is not worth others to learn, and other game companies and individuals should take this as a warning.

4.2 Lack of attention to the player's feelings

As Nintendo's heavyweight IP, Zelda has been around for at least two, if not three, generations. From FC in the 1980s, to the GBA console, and now to the PC and Nintendo SWITCH, Zelda series has been seen. Most players have a preconceived idea of their favorite game. When they see something similar or partially similar to their favorite game, they will more or less feel that the new game is a copy of my favorite game or that the game is similar to my favorite game.

One of MiHoYo's missteps this time around is to seriously ignore the feelings and thoughts of Zelda players. While even a similar PV can cause discomfort, Genshin's PV is a close copy of the Zelda. Maybe MiHoYo doesn't want to piggy-back on Zelda's popularity, or maybe he's just paying tribute to Zelda through PV as a player. And as a game company doing this kind of open world game, you wouldn't be unaware of a big IP like Zelda. You wouldn't be so blatant as to put out a Zelda lookalike PV. However, most players don't think too much about it the first time or at all. By the time MiHoYo wants to clarify himself, the "war" and debate between different players will have been heard in the circle, and it is unlikely that many protesting players will care about a game company's belated behavior.

In short, feelings is not a simple issue, it shows the importance of other game companies, respect for other series, and respect for game players. If MiHoYo really thought about the emotional issues that PV might bring, they should have been careful about how it was made.

4.3 Impact on the industry as a whole.

As China's first open world game, its success and failure will have a big impact on the creation and release of similar games in the future. Obviously, after a series of twists and turns, many players and even producers have become reluctant to play such games. Such reputation and influence, the game itself has its own problems, and the original god incident caused by the impact can not be ignored. In the future, the development of two-dimensional open mobile games will be hindered in attracting players due to the original God event.

Although the Genshin Impact didn't get a great response at first, the content and gameplay of the Genshin Impact's own game were not problematic. Now, Genshin's game has more fans, and it's getting better. And it went outside of China to let the world see it and love it. Feedback on the outcome of a game should not be provided by the player alone, but by the game manufacturer as well, it should be actively sought out by the player, and timely feedback should be provided so that the game can run for a long time and with high quality. MiHoYo can continue to gather and cultivate a group of creative and international vision of cultural and creative industry talents. The opportunities afforded by The Times to Chinese cultural and game enterprises and MiHoYo's ideal of becoming a world-class animation and game enterprise are calling the entrepreneurs of MiHoYo to forge ahead and reach new heights.

5. Conclusion

These are some of the successes and failures of Genshin Impact's overall marketing. All in all, Genshin Impact, as a Chinese-made game, has taken Chinese gaming to the next level, opening up new horizons for gaming and showing that China can make good games. It also shows that not only one game can do well, but other Chinese manufacturing can also do well. Of course, the success of a game also depends on a good company. The success of Genshin Impact has allowed MiHoYo's technical prowess and creativity to be seen around the world, making Chinese games even better. But everyone will make mistakes, and MiHoYo made a number of small promotional blunders in the early days of Genshin Impact that nearly brought the game to its knees. But as long as the difficulties are overcome, there will be a bright future.

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