



Local and Global Cultural Interaction: Representation in Asian Video Games as a Medium of Cultural Communication

^{1*}Yurina Gusanti

¹Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

*Correspondence: yurina.gusanti.fs@um.ac.id

Received: 14-04-2025 | Revised: 14-05-2025 | Accepted: 2-06-2025

Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of cultural representation in video games on players' perceptions in the context of globalization. Using a qualitative approach and literature study, this research analyzes relevant literature on how video games integrate cultural elements from various countries and affect players' views of other cultures. Data is collected from various articles, journals, and books discussing themes such as cultural representation, globalization, and player interaction in video games. The results indicate that video games function as a medium that enables players to engage with foreign cultures through visual elements, narrative, and gameplay. Furthermore, the study finds that video games can introduce cultural elements previously unknown to players, while simultaneously shaping their perceptions of those cultures. These findings provide new insights into how video games can serve as a tool for expanding intercultural understanding, reducing stereotypes, and enhancing cultural dialogue in the era of globalization. The implications of this research suggest that video games have the potential to create spaces for more inclusive and profound cultural exchange. The study also opens opportunities for further research examining the social and cultural impacts of video games, particularly in the context of globalization's influence on the gaming industry and players' perceptions of foreign cultures.

Keywords: Cultural Representation, Video Games, Globalization

Introduction

The advancement of technology in the video game industry has brought profound transformation in the way humans interact with the digital world (Verma, 2024). However, amid rapid progress, significant challenges arise concerning how this technology can be adapted and developed harmoniously with diverse local cultural values (Hossain & Fahad, 2024). An approach that prioritizes respect for local wisdom and cultural identity becomes essential so that technological innovation not only pursues technical progress but also



contributes to the enrichment and preservation of human culture in the era of globalization (Erna Mena Niman, 2019; Ngafifi, 2014; Nur Hidayat et al., 2024). Social and cultural life within societies often contrasts with the ways technology is adopted and disseminated, especially in terms of video game technology (Hossain & Fahad, 2024). Video games, often viewed as global products, are frequently perceived as imports misaligned with local cultural values and may even threaten existing traditions (Das et al., 2017). Nonetheless, many argue that video games hold the potential to introduce and develop local cultures (Hossain & Fahad, 2024; Ibrahim & Abu Hmaid, 2017).

Generally, it is widely held that video game technology, while attractive and rapidly advancing, carries values conflicting with local beliefs or cultures, as games often emphasize capitalist or individualistic values contrary to the collective life of Asian societies (Doerr-Stevens, 2015; Games, 2020; Šisler, 2023). The introduction of video game technology into Asian societies is often not accompanied by sufficient technological literacy, making it difficult for people to utilize and optimize games as cultural media (Jarrah et al., 2023). Furthermore, in some cases, communities lack readiness to accept and integrate game technology into their lives due to both infrastructural limitations and differences in understanding between technology and local culture (Hossain & Fahad, 2024). Thus, the presence of video game technology does not always align with the character of the societies expected to adopt it, particularly regarding cultural representation within the games.

Research on Asian video games has so far inadequately addressed the incompatibility issues between game technology and local cultural values. Many studies approach the topic linearly, without considering deeper social and cultural implications. Previous studies tend to focus on the impact of technology on human life but pay less attention to fundamental problems concerning the relationship between technology and local culture. Three research trends can be outlined: First, studies emphasizing the analysis of technological impact on human life, such as how video games affect socio-cultural aspects (Lum, 2021; Baek & Lee, 2021; Hoffman, 2023). Second, studies analyzing the negative impacts of technology on society, for instance, the influence of video games on social behavior or mental health (Muhammad et al., 2023; Syuntyurenko, 2022; Williams et al., 2022). Third, research concentrating on literacy issues around technology adoption, especially regarding how to operate digital devices for gaming (Barthold, 2020; Holopainen et al., 2023; Faizal et al., 2022). From these

trends, it appears the issue of social and cultural character in video game technology adoption remains underexplored. Meanwhile, cultural representation in video games closely relates to how communities adopt these technologies. Moreover, it is crucial to consider how local culture can enrich or even influence the content and aesthetics of video games. Therefore, expanding existing research to deeply explore the interaction between video game technology and local culture is necessary.

This paper aims to complement existing research deficiencies by deeply analyzing how the social and cultural character of a society influences the adoption and representation of video game technology. The ability to adopt video game technology is strongly influenced by cultural and religious factors within a society. Societal perceptions of video game technology and how this technology is viewed in their cultural context require further analysis. Based on this, three main questions are proposed. First, how prepared is the digital infrastructure for adopting video games in a society? This includes how well communities can access and utilize the digital technologies required to play video games. Second, how do social character and inequality within a society affect the adoption and perception of video game technology? This refers to how social disparities can limit access to gaming technology or influence people's views on the values and purposes of this technology. Third, how does local culture influence the adoption and application of video game technology, particularly in terms of aesthetics and cultural representation? This question concerns how local culture, including beliefs and traditional values, can affect how video games are designed and accepted by society. Answering these questions provides deeper insight into how video game development policies and strategies can be tailored to socio-cultural needs and how such adjustments can influence the global acceptance of video game technology.

This study argues that the incompatibility between video game technology and local societies cannot be separated from fundamental differences between societal characteristics and the nature of the technology itself. Societies often have a collective and traditional orientation toward life, which may conflict with the individualistic values often present in global video games. Video games, as technology, are oriented toward efficiency and entertainment, potentially threatening communal principles prevalent in many Asian societies. For example, video games often emphasize personal achievement and individual competition, conflicting with values prioritizing communal life in Asian

communities. Therefore, adopting video game technology requires supportive infrastructure readiness and social engineering for better acceptance. Technology also demands a more egalitarian social structure to ensure equal access, as social inequality can exacerbate disparities in technology adoption. Simultaneously, prevailing social values must be adjusted to meet adoption needs, including how to play and the content presented in video games. Thus, success in adopting and applying video game technology in Asia requires social engineering considering local cultural aspects and efforts to sustain aesthetic and cultural representation within the global digital context.

This research adopts a qualitative research design grounded in a systematic literature review approach, aiming to build a conceptual understanding of cultural representation in video games within the context of globalization. The analysis was conducted by synthesizing secondary data obtained from scientific publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and research reports relevant to the intersection of video games, digital culture, and globalization dynamics. A comprehensive literature search was carried out across major academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar to ensure the depth and credibility of the sources. The publication timeframe was limited to the period from 2013 to 2024 to capture the latest developments in theory and practice related to cultural representation in video games. The search strategy used specific keywords such as "cultural representation", "video games", "globalization", "digital culture", and "cultural identity" (Chandra Susanto et al., 2024). Literature selection was based on clear inclusion criteria: (1) thematic relevance to cultural representation in video games and the influence of globalization; (2) scientific credibility of the authors and publication media; (3) the literature's contribution to conceptual and empirical insights in digital culture studies. Publications not focused on cultural or representational aspects within video games were excluded to maintain analytical focus (e.g., Medias et al., 2022). For the analysis of the selected literature, thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring conceptual patterns, key issues, and gaps in related studies. This analysis process was guided by a theoretical lens considering factors such as globalization, localization, and cultural politics as key to interpreting the role of video games in shaping cultural identity in the digital realm and reflecting broader sociocultural dynamics. This conceptual framework guided both the literature selection and the critical and valuable interpretation of the research findings.

The Role of Local Culture in Shaping the Aesthetics of Asian Video Games

The interaction of local cultures in shaping the aesthetics of video games in Asia offers a compelling study of how regional characteristics influence visual storytelling, game mechanics, and narrative structures within the industry. As video games gain increasing popularity among global audiences, understanding the infiltration of local cultural influences into these creations allows for a deeper appreciation of their subtleties. Asian countries, with their unique traditions, mythologies, and artistic sensibilities—particularly China, Japan, and Korea—contribute richly to video game aesthetics, transforming them into canvases that reflect their cultural narratives while reaching a worldwide player base. It is important to recognize that video game aesthetics are not limited to local values alone but are also shaped by global dynamics. As noted by Šisler, game characteristics emerging from various regions are formed not only by local culture but also through interactions with global media practices and technologies (Šisler, 2018)(Badad Alauddin et al., 2025). Video game productions such as "Genshin Impact," developed by the Chinese company miHoYo, exemplify how traditional Chinese aesthetics blend within immersive gaming environments, captivating international audiences (Serada, 2024). The Liyue region in this game draws inspiration from China's geographical and cultural heritage, featuring a distinctive artistic style that combines classical Chinese architecture with natural landscapes (Serada, 2024). Such visual and narrative choices aim to evoke cultural memories among local audiences while educating foreign players about Chinese culture, reflecting a growing trend where games serve as cultural vehicles (Chen, 2013).

Examining the nuances of cultural hybridization within gaming reveals that local influences extend beyond China to other parts of Asia, notably Taiwan and Japan. The consumption of "kawaii" games in Taiwan, for instance, exhibits significant cultural resonance with Japanese aesthetics, where games emerge as accessible entertainment marked by friendliness and simplicity (Chen, 2013; Gackenbach et al., 2016). This cultural backdrop situates these games within the broader Asian market dynamics, where aesthetic choices mirror regional preferences that prioritize engaging and visually appealing experiences. Therefore, it can be asserted that aesthetic characteristics in games often function as bridges linking local cultures with the international gaming landscape.

Discussions on cultural representation in video games involve addressing the often-controversial socio-political dynamics underlying these expressions. For example, Chen's exploration of cultural differences between Eastern and Western player behaviors illustrates how gaming experiences elicit distinct reactions based on regional contexts (Chen, 2013). These interpretative differences are further complicated by existing racial stereotypes and perceptions, as seen in the racial treatment of Asian players in online game environments. Emerging dialogues around the isolation of "Asian servers" due to cheating assumptions highlight the complex intersection between racial discourse and gaming culture (Tomlinson & Srauy, 2021). Such biases can influence game aesthetics by reinforcing certain visual representations while marginalizing others, contributing to a homogenized view of cultural practices in gaming.

Moreover, the incorporation of elements from diverse cultures, including Russian influences in Chinese game narratives, underscores an increasingly rich trend of cultural hybridization within the gaming world (Zihao & Zhang, 2024). By reflecting multiple cultural influences, video games can convey deeper, layered narratives that resonate with players across various demographic and geographic boundaries. Games featuring well-integrated narratives and cultural backdrops often provide richer and more immersive experiences for players, enhancing the overall aesthetic perception of the game and its constructed world. As video games increasingly serve as interactive storytelling mediums, they also become platforms for educational and cultural transmission. The role of video games in promoting cultural heritage aligns with evolving educational trends, where interactive platforms facilitate engagement with local cultural narratives (Dankov & Dankova, 2023). For instance, educational games can be designed to reflect particular cultural narratives, instilling a sense of identity and awareness among young players. This thought aligns with Belyaev and Belyaeva's assertion that video games function as platforms for history and culture education, combining entertainment with pedagogical elements that resonate with local cultures (Belyaev & Belyaeva, 2021).

Deepening the discussion on video game development is an artistic exploration of aesthetics. The evolution from pixel graphics games to high-fidelity visuals reflects a deeper aspiration for artistic expression within this medium, as emphasized by Denson and Jahn-Sudmann in their study on aesthetic contemplation in video games (Denson & Jahn-Sudmann, 2013). This progress allows game designers to embed local cultural motifs within detailed

worlds that players can explore, enhancing cultural appreciation through interactive experiences that transcend traditional narrative limitations (Atkinson & Parsayi, 2020). Furthermore, the role of folklorism in contemporary game music offers insights into how sound design contributes to game aesthetics and cultural immersion. Incorporating folklore into game music enriches narratives and anchors games within culturally recognizable frameworks, enhancing the emotional resonance of gameplay experiences (Stevens, 2020). The deeper interplay between sound and cultural representation exemplifies the multidimensional nature of video game aesthetics, where each element, from graphics to audio, conveys cultural meaning.

With the continuously expanding global gaming market, local cultural aesthetic dynamics remain at the forefront. According to Falkenhayner, aesthetic principles intersect with collective imagination that contextualizes not only game design but also addresses broader cultural themes, integrating humanistic critique into gaming experiences (Falkenhayner, 2021). These aspects are crucial as the industry confronts issues of representation diversity and explores how diverse cultural narratives can coexist in a commercialization-driven landscape. Ultimately, the ongoing dialogue regarding game designers' responsibilities reveals the socio-cultural power embedded in video game creation. As cultural ambassadors, games have the potential to shape perceptions, educate players about local traditions and histories, and encourage reflective thinking about cultural identity and representation. This responsibility grows more critical in an era where games are not merely entertainment but also significant cultural artifacts reflecting broader societal values and aspirations. Therefore, video game aesthetics in Asia are not merely a reflection of technical evolution but, fundamentally, an embodiment of local culture influenced by global interaction and technological advancement. By examining the relationship between local culture and video game aesthetics, we see a complex phenomenon that merges tradition, innovation, and cultural expression.

The Globalization Process and Its Impact on Cultural Representation in Video Games

The process of globalization has profoundly reshaped cultural representations across various media forms, with video games emerging as a prominent medium that integrates diverse cultural narratives. Advances in digital technology and the internet have facilitated the transnational flow of

cultural material, enabling video game developers to incorporate elements from multiple cultures into their narratives and aesthetics. For instance, the fusion of different cultural elements, such as "the blend of Chinese Five Elements and Steampunk," illustrates how globalization creates unique gaming experiences by mixing cultural motifs, advancing creativity, and enhancing player engagement (Hao, 2024). At its core, video games function as a canvas for cultural expression that reflects the dynamic interaction between global and local cultural contexts. Scholars have noted that video games are inherently transnational due to their production practices, player interactions, and textual elements, making them ideal subjects for studying the globalized cultural landscape in contemporary society (Šisler, 2018). This transnational nature challenges traditional perspectives that tend to focus solely on dominant cultural producers, thereby expanding the scope of cultural studies to include the growing gaming industries from regions such as the Middle East and Asia. Digital games disrupt established narratives by allowing players to engage with representations of their own culture as well as others, fostering richer cultural dialogues (Šisler, 2018).

Localization practices further illustrate how globalization influences cultural representation in video games. Content censorship and adaptation to fit the cultural sensitivities of different regions play an important role in this process, affecting portrayals of violence, language, and themes (Jooyaeian & Khoshsaligheh, 2022). This cultural transfer underscores the complexity of video game localization, where preserving the essence of the original game while addressing local sensitivities is a delicate task. Content translation can result in altered gameplay experiences and broader implications regarding which cultural elements are considered acceptable or appealing in various markets. Moreover, the political implications of globalization in video games are increasingly apparent as games become instruments of soft power. Industries from emerging economies, particularly in Asia and Europe, challenge the dominance of game developers from North America and Japan, reshaping cultural landscapes and introducing new narratives into global discourse (Donald et al., 2023). These shifts contribute to diversifying game narratives that convey specific historical and cultural experiences, significantly influencing players' understanding of history, identity, and belonging (Donald et al., 2023). The rise of new players in the video game industry creates alternative discourses that can sometimes counter dominant cultural narratives, offering marginalized perspectives within a landscape traditionally dominated by Western developers.

The representation of historical events in video games reinforces their role as cultural artifacts that bridge players with collective memory. For example, video games can provide insights into historical periods often overlooked in mainstream media, thereby enriching players' understanding of diverse cultures and histories (Hammar, 2016). By engaging with complex narratives and characters, players gain closeness to specific cultural and historical contexts, which can promote greater empathy and understanding of cultural differences (Donald et al., 2023). Thus, the impact of video games as educational tools extends beyond entertainment to encourage critical engagement with historical representation, enriching broader cultural archives.

However, the encounter between video games and globalization raises questions concerning appropriation and representation. Critics have highlighted issues related to how some cultures are depicted, with potential for misrepresentation or stereotypical portrayals that may perpetuate existing biases (Šisler, 2023). Critical analysis of these portrayals is crucial, as they influence players' perceptions and can lead to broader social narratives about often underrepresented groups in mainstream media. This underscores the importance of diverse voices in the development process to facilitate accurate and respectful representation of various cultural identities (Šisler, 2023). In the educational field, video games are increasingly recognized as tools for teaching complex social and cultural themes. Their interactive nature can create conducive environments for learning about cultural diversity, social justice, and environmental issues within gameplay mechanics (Valdés-Argüelles et al., 2024). This educational potential highlights developers' responsibility to leverage video games as media for promoting inclusive narratives that reflect diverse experiences while adhering to ethical representation standards (Valdés-Argüelles et al., 2024). Therefore, integrating social issues into games not only enriches gameplay but also functions as a mechanism for advocacy and cultural awareness.

The cultural impact of video games extends into community development and social interaction among players. Games create social spaces where individuals can connect across cultural and geographic boundaries, building communities that share values and interests (Bourgonjon et al., 2016). The sense of belonging fostered through online gaming communities strengthens cultural exchange and understanding among players from different backgrounds. This interconnectedness evidences the potential of video games to serve as platforms for cultural dialogue, enriching the global cultural canvas while reaffirming local

identities. Furthermore, video games have become recognizable cultural artifacts themselves, representing media that allow players to engage with and reflect on their history and cultural identity (Bontchev, 2015). Museums increasingly provide space for video game exhibitions, acknowledging their importance in cultural documentation and historical storytelling (Zeiler & Thomas, 2020). This recognition positions video games within the framework of cultural heritage, affirming their status as historical artifacts contributing to the narrative of technological and artistic evolution.

As video games evolve, the complexity in representing culture within gameplay mechanics and narratives also grows. Scholars suggest moving beyond simplistic binary views of global versus local, advocating for a nuanced understanding of cultural hybridization that can explain the complicated relationships between globalization and localized cultural expression (Kerr, 2013). This perspective encourages critical analysis of how cultural meanings are negotiated in video game content production, challenging developers to create engaging yet responsible representations. The relationship between globalization and cultural representation in video games is a rich area for academic exploration. Diverse influences—from localization challenges to soft power dynamics—highlight the complex landscape navigated by video game narratives. Critical acceptance of video games as cultural artifacts invites scholars, developers, and players to engage wisely with the representations and narratives they encounter. Future research should deepen this relationship to illuminate pathways toward more equitable and diverse representation in this increasingly globalized medium.

Social Inequality and Access to Video Game Technology in Asian Societies

Social inequality remains an urgent issue in many regions, particularly in Asia, where access to video game technology intersects with broader socio-economic disparities. Video games have become a widespread part of cultural expression among youth, especially in the digital arenas across Asia where this industry is rapidly growing (Jin & Schneider, 2016). The relationship between socio-economic status, digital access, and video game prevalence reveals significant inequalities that reinforce existing disparities. Previous studies indicate that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face limitations in accessing digital technology, including gaming devices, which further affects their engagement with these cultural practices (Ball et al., 2017).

The digital divide is exacerbated by varying levels of infrastructure and technology adoption across different Asian regions (Shair et al., 2022). Countries with more advanced digital ecosystems tend to provide better access to gaming platforms, while those struggling with infrastructural challenges lag behind in internet connectivity and availability of gaming technology (Hossain et al., 2020). For instance, studies show that in economically constrained countries like Pakistan, access to information and communication technology (ICT) is severely limited, resulting in a clear digital divide that impacts various demographic groups (Shair et al., 2022). These implications extend to the realm of video games, where lack of access not only signifies absence of entertainment but also restricts engagement with digital literacy and STEM educational opportunities increasingly linked to gaming (Ball et al., 2018).

Moreover, the cultural implications of gaming and access to technology must be considered. Research indicates that among Asian populations, there is complexity related to identity and coping mechanisms when confronting socio-cultural discrimination, particularly within online gaming environments (Keum & Hearn, 2021). Asians in gaming cultures frequently face unique challenges related to internal perceptions of racial identity and social dynamics existing within gaming communities. These factors can influence the extent to which individuals engage with gaming technology or attempt to incorporate it into their educational or professional pathways. In the educational context, disruptions caused by socio-economic factors can hinder the use of game-based digital learning tools, which are known for their potential benefits in language acquisition and engagement in STEM fields (Wang & Cai, 2021). Young learners, especially from disadvantaged strata, may feel left behind not only in accessing technology but also in benefiting from educational opportunities that leverage games for enhanced learning. Research highlights that exposure to digital games can significantly improve second language learning and reduce anxiety associated with conventional educational settings, emphasizing the relevance of expanding gaming technology access within these groups (Wang & Cai, 2021; "Prevalence and Correlates of Internet Gaming Disorder: A Comparison Between English-Speaking and Chinese-Speaking Adult Gamers," 2022). Democratizing access to gaming technology is therefore crucial to ensure that all students, regardless of socio-economic background, can benefit from educational innovations increasingly integrated into digital games.

The commercialization and marketing of video games in Asian countries also add another layer of complexity. The gaming industry in East Asia has emerged as a major force, generating significant cultural influence that shapes the production and consumption of digital games (Chen, 2022). This cultural hegemony often overlooks the needs of marginalized communities, who may be less involved in lucrative gaming markets due to financial or geographic barriers (Jin & Schneider, 2016). Without targeted strategies to explore how these inequalities may be addressed, the potential of gaming technology as a tool for education and empowerment remains unfulfilled.

Furthermore, generational gaps and educational opportunities compound difficulties in accessing gaming technology. For example, marginalized groups may face barriers not only in technology access but also in the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape, including gaming ("Prevalence and Correlates of Internet Gaming Disorder: A Comparison Between English-Speaking and Chinese-Speaking Adult Gamers," 2022). Efforts to bridge these gaps should incorporate community-based interventions promoting technology literacy and creating supportive infrastructures for diverse populations in Asian societies. Programs facilitating video game access through schools or community centers can provide interactive and engaging environments conducive to learning (Ball et al., 2017). Additionally, psychological factors play a role in the interaction between social inequality and gaming. Emerging data show that video games can serve as coping mechanisms and sources of distress for various demographic groups, including those of Asian descent facing social pressures related to racism and discrimination (Keum & Hearn, 2021). While games have the potential to foster resilience among individuals facing such challenges, they can also perpetuate feelings of marginalization if access to these experiences remains unequal (Huh et al., 2018). Understanding these dynamics can provide insights for policy development aiming to create more inclusive digital cultures within gaming.

The issue of internet gaming disorder also warrants attention in this context. Recent findings highlight the rising prevalence of problematic gaming behaviors among East Asian populations, raising questions about the relationship between socio-economic stress and gaming addiction (Wittek et al., 2015). Excessive dependence on gaming as an escape activity may indicate deeper issues linked to social inequality that necessitate comprehensive

intervention strategies ("Prevalence and Correlates of Internet Gaming Disorder: A Comparison Between English-Speaking and Chinese-Speaking Adult Gamers," 2022). Finally, it is essential to consider the inherent potential of gaming as a tool for inclusive development. Successful initiatives utilizing games for educational and health advancements illustrate how technology can be harnessed to address issues such as mental well-being and academic performance, particularly among underprivileged youth (Hall & Marston, 2016). When practitioners and policymakers consider the impact of gaming in Asian societies, they must adopt a holistic approach aimed at dismantling barriers that perpetuate social inequality and creating a more equitable digital landscape for all.

Digital Infrastructure Readiness and Its Impact on Video Game Adoption in Asia.

The digital infrastructure landscape across Asia plays a pivotal role in shaping the adoption and proliferation of video games. Variations in digital readiness, particularly in terms of internet connectivity and access to technology, significantly influence the population's ability to engage with video games. Most of these infrastructure disparities, especially in Southeast Asia, are linked to the divide between urban and rural areas and uneven technological investments. According to Pradipta et al., there are significant differences in internet coverage and performance across regions, as well as inequalities in the availability of digital financial services and e-commerce infrastructure, indirectly affecting engagement with digital gaming (Pradipta et al., 2023). It is evident that urban areas generally possess superior digital infrastructure compared to rural regions, which in turn restricts rural populations' access to video games and related benefits.

Moreover, digital literacy emerges as a crucial component influencing game adoption across different demographics. Initiatives such as targeted educational programs and infrastructure improvements have demonstrated that enhancing digital skills can lead to increased usage and appreciation of digital content, including video games. For example, efforts in education reform highlighted by Widat and Kurniawan emphasize how integrating technology into educational systems—through digital content development and teacher training—can yield positive outcomes in student engagement levels (Widat & Kurniawan, 2023). This principle also applies to the realm of video games, where

higher digital literacy can result in greater adoption rates as individuals become more proficient in navigating and engaging with gaming technologies.

In the context of video game infrastructure, the demand for robust digital frameworks is further complicated by the need for reliable online multiplayer capabilities. As analyzed by Mirowski and Harper, modern video games require extensive digital resources, especially for multiplayer experiences necessitating continuous connectivity (Mirowski & Harper, 2019). Infrastructure designed to support these demands varies widely across Asian countries, with some having adopted advanced connectivity solutions while others lag significantly. Therefore, the ability to participate in online gaming—particularly competitive formats such as eSports—is heavily dependent on existing digital infrastructure, which in turn influences broader social interactions and game-centric economic activities.

Addressing the socio-economic implications of this infrastructural readiness, it is important to understand the economic potentials within the video game market. Rapid growth of digital infrastructure in many Asian regions has paved the way for a burgeoning industry, particularly in eSports and gaming applications. Factors like increased mobile internet usage and gaming capabilities signal profound shifts in consumer behaviors and industry dynamics, driving trends toward higher adoption rates. Specifically, Iyinolakan discusses how mobile devices have become dominant tools for digital communication, and with network improvements, the gaming industry is anticipated to grow substantially (Iyinolakan, 2024). These patterns highlight the economic potential of gaming as well as the role of infrastructure in enabling widespread gaming adoption across diverse demographic groups. Furthermore, peer influence remains a critical factor in understanding video game adoption within this infrastructure. Research by Li et al. shows that social interactions, especially among peers, affect the likelihood of adopting video games on digital platforms, illustrating the interconnected dynamics of social engagement, digital communities, and technology adoption (Li et al., 2022). Tools such as digital distribution platforms leverage this influence, creating environments where user experiences and peer recommendations significantly shape video game consumption patterns.

With the advent of the pandemic, the relevance of digital infrastructure has grown, as many have turned to video games not only for entertainment but also as a means to alleviate stress and manage emotions. A study by

Sarsenbayeva et al. found that gaming can effectively regulate emotions and reduce stress, suggesting that supportive infrastructure for such digital experiences can play a significant role in mental health management, particularly among youth engaged in gaming (Sarsenbayeva et al., 2020). Consequently, the interplay between infrastructure readiness and the psychological benefits derived from gaming further emphasizes the importance of investing in digital frameworks aimed at increasing user engagement. In summary, digital infrastructure readiness is vital for video game adoption across Asia. Disparities in internet connectivity and digital literacy create a varied landscape affecting user engagement and the economic potential of the gaming industry. Additionally, peer influence exacerbates user behavior related to game adoption, underscoring the need for strategic technology investments to fully realize the gaming market's potential. Continued improvements in digital infrastructure are likely to yield significant benefits not only for the gaming sector but also for broader digital technology adoption in the community.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of globalization's influence in shaping cultural representation through video games. The most significant finding of this research is that video games function not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for conveying complex cultural narratives, blending elements of global and local cultures in unique ways. The study demonstrates how modern games create spaces for cultural hybridization, which in turn enriches the gaming experience and introduces new perspectives on the history, identity, and political roles of specific countries, as seen in the influence of Asia and the Middle East on the global gaming industry. The scholarly contribution of this research lies in the development of a deeper understanding of how video games can serve as dynamic channels of cultural communication. The study also shows how video games, through localization processes and content adaptation, can respond to differing cultural sensitivities across regions. The findings pave the way for further research related to the role of video games in presenting more equitable representations of underrepresented cultures in mainstream media. However, this study has limitations, notably in exploring how each cultural element is translated within games and the long-term impact of these influences on players' perceptions of certain cultures. Additionally, the research does not deeply examine the political impacts of cultural representation

in video games, especially in the context of emerging culture wars concurrent with the rise of the gaming industry worldwide. Therefore, related topics for further study include how cultural representation in video games can influence broader social and political dynamics, as well as how future technological advancements in gaming might expand or restrict spaces for cultural representation. Furthermore, it is crucial to explore in greater depth the effects of globalization on the creation and distribution of games in developing countries, particularly regarding the balance between local and global content.

References

- Atkinson, P., & Parsayi, F. (2020). Video games and aesthetic contemplation. *Games and Culture*, 16(5), 519-537.
- Ball, C., Huang, K., Cotten, S., & Rikard, R. (2018). Gaming the system: The relationship between video games and the digital and STEM divides. *Games and Culture*, 15(5), 501-528. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412018812513>
- Ball, C., Huang, K., Rikard, R., & Cotten, S. (2017). The emotional costs of computers: An expectancy-value theory analysis of predominantly low-socioeconomic status minority students' STEM attitudes. *Information Communication & Society*, 22(1), 105-128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2017.1355403>
- Belyaev, D., & Belyaeva, U. (2021). Video games as a screen-interactive platform of historical media education: Educational potential and risks of politicization. *Perspectives of Science and Education*, 52(4), 478-491. <https://doi.org/10.32744/pse.2021.4.32>
- Bontchev, B. (2015). Serious games for and as cultural heritage. *Digital Presentation and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage*, 5, 43-58. <https://doi.org/10.55630/dipp.2015.5.3>
- Bourgonjon, J., Vandermeersche, G., Wever, B., Soetaert, R., & Valcke, M. (2016). Players' perspectives on the positive impact of video games: A qualitative content analysis of online forum discussions. *New Media & Society*, 18(8), 1732-1749. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815569723>
- Chen, C. (2013). Is the video game a cultural vehicle? *Games and Culture*, 8(6), 408-427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412013493349>
- Chen, L. (2013). What's the cultural difference between the west and the east? The consumption of popular "cute" games in the Taiwanese market. *New*

- Media & Society*, 16(6), 1018-1033. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813497555>
- Chen, L. (2022). The rise of the East Asian gaming industry: A value-added chain among the East Asian game companies during 2000–2010. *Global Media and China*, 7(1), 24-42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20594364221074422>
- Dankov, Y., & Dankova, A. (2023). Educational video games as tools for raising awareness of the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. *Digital Presentation and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage*, 13, 219-228. <https://doi.org/10.55630/dipp.2023.13.21>
- Denson, S., & Jahn-Sudmann, A. (2013). Digital seriality: On the serial aesthetics and practice of digital games. *Eludamos Journal for Computer Game Culture*, 7(1), 1-32. <https://doi.org/10.7557/23.6145>
- Donald, I., Webber, N., & Wright, E. (2023). Video games, historical representation, and soft power. *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 15(2), 105-127. https://doi.org/10.1386/jgvw_00075_1
- Falkenhayner, N. (2021). Futurity as an effect of playing Horizon: Zero Dawn (2017). *Humanities*, 10(2), 72. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h10020072>
- Gackenbach, J., Yu, Y., Lee, M., Zhou, Z., & Yu, G. (2016). Gaming, social media, and gender in Chinese and Canadian cultures. *Gender Technology and Development*, 20(3), 243-278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971852416660650>
- Hall, A., & Marston, H. (2016). Games for health in the home: Gaming and older adults in the digital age of healthcare. In *Games for Health* (pp. 1-9). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01904-8_55-2
- Hammar, E. (2016). Counter-hegemonic commemorative play: Marginalized pasts and the politics of memory in the digital game *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry*. *Rethinking History*, 21(3), 372-395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2016.1256622>
- Hao, M. (2024). A fusion of Chinese Five Elements and Steampunk in enhancing the gaming experience. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 41(1), 116-122. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/41/20240664>
- Hossain, M., Weng, W., Bhattacharya, S., Mazumder, H., & Faizah, F. (2020). Digital health divide in South Asia: Ethical concerns, challenges, and recommendations. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/qxecj>
- Huh, J., Koola, J., Contreras, A., Castillo, A., Ruiz, M., Tedone, K., ... & Schiaffino, M. (2018). Consumer health informatics adoption among underserved

- populations: Thinking beyond the digital divide. *Yearbook of Medical Informatics*, 27(01), 146-155. <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0038-1641217>
- Iyinolakan, Y. (2024). Nigerian esports and video gaming as the next economic frontier. *Journal of Emerging Sport Studies*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.26522/jess.v10i.4551>
- Jin, D., & Schneider, F. (2016). The dynamics of digital play in Asia. *Asiascape Digital Asia*, 3(1-2), 5-15. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340045>
- Jooyaeian, E., & Khoshsaligheh, M. (2022). Translation solutions in professional video game localization in Iran. *Games and Culture*, 17(7-8), 1054-1074. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120221077726>
- Kerr, A. (2013). Space wars: The politics of games production in Europe, 215-231. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137006332_16
- Keum, B., & Hearn, M. (2021). Online gaming and racism: Impact on psychological distress among Black, Asian, and Latinx emerging adults. *Games and Culture*, 17(3), 445-460. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120211039082>
- Li, Y., He, J., Liu, C., & Ping, Y. (2022). Peer influence in the adoption of video games. *International Journal of E-Business Research*, 18(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijebr.309399>
- Mirowski, A., & Harper, B. (2019). Elements of infrastructure demand in multiplayer video games. *Media and Communication*, 7(4), 237-246. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v7i4.2337>
- Pradipta, Y., Abdullah, A., & Suhendi, S. (2023). Seizing opportunities: the race toward digital banking in ASEAN. 343-353. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-144-9_34
- Sarsenbayeva, Z., Tag, B., Shu, Y., Kostakos, V., & Gonçalves, J. (2020). Using video games to regulate emotions. 755-759. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3441000.3441035>
- Serada, A. (2024). Who speaks the fan? Deconstructing the constructed language of Jade Empire. *Cyberorient*, 18(1), 40-72. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cyo2.45>
- Shair, W., Waheed, A., Kamran, M., & Kubra, N. (2022). Digital divide in Pakistan: Barriers to ICT usage among the individuals of Pakistan. *Journal of Economic Impact*, 4(3), 196-204. <https://doi.org/10.52223/jei4032206>
- Šisler, V. (2018). Virtual worlds, digital dreams, 59-84. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190859329.003.0003>

- Šisler, V. (2023). Theoretical and methodological framework for studying video games and orientalism. *Cyberorient*, 17(2), 4-56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cyo2.38>
- Stevens, J. (2020). Child of the elder blood: A semiotics of folklorism in the soundtrack of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. *Games and Culture*, 16(5), 538-556. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412020914701>
- Tomlinson, C., & Srauy, S. (2021). Beware Asian servers: Racialized perceptions of cheating and skill among video game players. *AOIR Selected Papers of Internet Research*. <https://doi.org/10.5210/spir.v2021i0.12252>
- Valdés-Argüelles, C., Gutiérrez, A., & Muñoz, M. (2024). Gender perspectives on educational contributions to the study of video-gaming: A baseline feminist genealogy. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 14(3), 916. <https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.2621>
- Wang, Z., & Cai, Y. (2021). Digital game-based tools for EFL learners in Asian countries. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210617.101>
- Widat, F., & Kurniawan, R. (2023). Transformation of tajweed learning management through digital method approach. *Managere Indonesian Journal of Educational Management*, 5(1), 26-35. <https://doi.org/10.52627/managere.v5i1.212>
- Wittek, C., Finserås, T., Pallesen, S., Mentzoni, R., Hanss, D., Griffiths, M., ... & Molde, H. (2015). Prevalence and predictors of video game addiction: A study based on a national representative sample of gamers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 14(5), 672-686. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-015-9592-8>
- Zeiler, X., & Thomas, S. (2020). The relevance of researching video games and cultural heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 27(3), 265-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1762705>
- Zihao, W., & Zhang, Z. (2024). Cultural code: The fusion of Russian culture in Chinese gaming worlds. *TPHuO*, 105(3), 168-170. <https://doi.org/10.18411/trnio-01-2024-155>
- Das, P., Zhu, M., McLaughlin, L., Bilgrami, Z., & Milanaik, R. (2017). Augmented reality video games: New possibilities and implications for children and adolescents. *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction*, 1(2), 8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/mti1020008>
- Doerr-Stevens, C. (2015). "That's not something I was, I am, or am ever going to be:" Multimodal self-assertion in digital video production. *E-Learning*

- and Digital Media, 12(2), 164–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753014567221>
- Erna Mena Niman. (2019). Kearifan lokal dan upaya pelestarian lingkungan alam. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Missio*, 11(1), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.36928/jpkkm.v11i1.139>
- Games, D. (2020). Ethnicity, religiosity and SME innovation outcomes: Some insights from a Muslim ethnic group. *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 16(4), 430. <https://doi.org/10.1504/WREMSD.2020.109971>
- Hossain, S. A., & Fahad, A. A. (2024). Mainstreaming video games: A cultural response. *International Journal of Emerging Trends in Social Sciences*, 16(2), 32–41. <https://doi.org/10.55217/103.v16i2.781>
- Ibrahim, B., & Abu Hmaid, Y. (2017). The effect of teaching mathematics using interactive video games on the fifth grade students' achievement. *An-Najah University Journal for Research - B (Humanities)*, 31(3), 471–492. <https://doi.org/10.35552/0247-031-003-006>
- Jarrah, S., Al-Salman, S., & Haider, A. S. (2023). Video games localization into Arabic: Gamers' reactions to localizing PUBG and Free Fire. *Journal of Social Computing*, 4(1), 74–93. <https://doi.org/10.23919/JSC.2023.0004>
- Ngafifi, M. (2014). Kemajuan teknologi dan pola hidup manusia dalam perspektif sosial budaya. *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi dan Aplikasi*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v2i1.2616>
- Nur Hidayat, N. A. S., Septian, R. N., & Herlambang, Y. T. (2024). Sosial media dalam masyarakat sebagai konsep nyata determinisme teknologi. *UPGRADE: Jurnal Pendidikan Teknologi Informasi*, 1(2), 73–80. <https://doi.org/10.30812/upgrade.v1i2.3715>
- Šisler, V. (2023). Theoretical and methodological framework for studying video games and Orientalism. *CyberOrient*, 17(2), 4–56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cyo2.38>
- Badad Alauddin, M., Fitri, D., & Apri Wenando, F. (2025). Tradition to technology: The transformation of Indonesian culture in the social media era. *Asian Journal of Media and Culture*, 1(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.63919/ajmc.v1i1.16>