An Analysis of Game Art Capturing the Japanese Cultural Heritage

Loh, Qiao Yin; Noorhayati, Saad

The Design School, Faculty of Innovation and Technology, Taylor's University

qiaoyin.loh@sd.taylors.edu.my;
noorhayati.Saad@taylors.edu.my

—

25 Aug. 2023

—

thedesignschool.taylors.edu.my/kreate

Abstract *In light of the growing popularity of educational games, this article aims to examine how game art can play an educational role in capturing the player's curiosity about cultural heritage. Research has shown that traditional teaching methods are still frequently employed in schools, which typically lack aesthetic visual engagement, causing difficulty for students to maintain their attention spans. Studies from previous literature have proven that gamification and play-based learning increase students' interest in a subject's context and speed up their memorisation of facts. This is accomplished by making players feel like they are a part of the virtual world when they are captivated by the visual elements of cultural heritage recreations. Based on mixed-method research using observational studies and surveys, findings showed that the general audience favoured a photorealistic art style, which could be applied to upcoming games with cultural content. The results suggest that game art influences how players learn about cultural heritage. Further research is required to determine the guidelines for developing effective game art in an educational game.*

Key words: *Art Style, Cultural Heritage, Educational Game, Game Art, Learning*

Introduction

According to Nguyen (2021), the appearance of a game is the players' top priority as they give players a preview of how it will look like. Technology has broadened a range of artistic choices that give a distinctive aesthetic to the environment and character art in a game. The author also mentioned the usage of game art in some games as a tactic to entice players into learning educational matters. In the context of this article studying cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible aspects of it can be recreated in an attractive manner for all age groups by combining fun with learning (Chaisriya et al., 2022). Ćosović (2019) claims that game is an effective medium for introducing knowledge regarding cultural heritage to younger generations and therefore promoting cultural heritage. The author claims that game art has the potential to increase an individual's interest in learning by utilising human's innate behaviour of liking appealing visuals.

The article is a summarised content of the researcher's dissertation on different types of art styles and their influence on the player's cultural heritage learning experience. Therefore, the scope of research in the article is narrowed down and will only be discussing how game art plays an educational role in sparking the player's curiosity about cultural heritage.

Problem Statement

According to Xiong et al. (2020), game art offers players a chance to have a glimpse of the gameplay context ... ...evant topic. The public is encourag... ...ration for its visual components. One of the methods of raising awareness of heritage places is through visual interaction (Sainio, 2022). In short, players can be introduced to a surface-level understanding of Japanese mythology, historical era, landmarks and folklore by observing the aesthetic visuals of the video games, such as character art, environment art, prop art and the VFX in a game.

However, there is a lack of pedagogical structure and limited historical accuracy that can lead to misinformation in most game art as their core is for entertainment purposes instead of educational purposes (Hanes & Stone, 2019), therefore the potential of game art is not fully explored yet. Games are still not suitable to be a standalone learning tool and the majority think that learning through traditional methods is more reliable since gamified learning is still not widely acknowledged by formal educational systems, especially in low and middle-income countries (Ćosović & Brkić, 2020). Therefore, the article aims to