

Research on the Cultural and Economic Effects of the Game Touken Ranbu Online

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Abstract

The development of the Game Touken Ranbu Online has enhanced people's enthusiasm about history. At the emergence of the game, no one would have thought it would bring as much impact on Japanese sword history as on culture in the future. At the same time, it motivates the development of game-related industries, such as animation, musicals, stage plays, movies and so on, which has achieved satisfactory cultural effects and tremendous economic reward.

Keywords

Touken Ranbu Online; Purchasing Power; Peripheral Industries; History.

1. Introduction

Ubiquitous in world today, mobile games have become an important way of life, leisure activities and entertainment for many people. A well-designed game can satisfy its edutainment, meet the entertainment needs of "fans" and bring considerable economic benefits to game developers and operating companies. How much the fans would dedicate to the game entirely depends on how much they love it. In order to keep these players, the companies will run a variety of online and offline activities, which would bring different kinds of game peripheral products into the market, including hand, badge and so on. With the appearance of peripheral products, the characters that players like in virtual games become tangible things that can be seen and felt in reality, which can greatly promote the players' desire to make purchases, as well as bringing more economic benefits to the game companies.

2. The Emergence of the Game 'Touken Ranbu Online'

'Touken Ranbu Online' is a female-to-web game developed by Japanese game developer and operator DMM and game production company Nitro+. Released on DMM website on January 14, 2015, the game is backgrounded in 2205 AD, when the player was selected by the government, enabled to wake up the sword and guard the history. The "sword man" is anthropomorphized from the sword, in contrast with the revisionist intervening history intentionally. This game has become a popular web game among Japanese women as soon as it is launched due to factors such as character settings, background music, and voice actors. In 2016, the company launched this mobile game "Sword Ran-Pocket" (Japanese mobile version), whose computer web version and mobile version can interoperate. The national service version was officially launched in 2017 and attracted a large number of domestic female game players. According to statistics, domestic players initially focused on the game's character setting, clothing style, weapon style and so on. For instance, the Japanese national treasure sword with the lowest shipping rate - Mikazuki Munechika, as the earliest blade, is featured with a unique bend, which is one of the Japanese swords of the shape as well as one of the "Five Swords of the World". It is considered to be the most beautiful sword in the world's Top Five swords.

It has the reputation of "the most famous of the famous". The "three-day month" originates from the fact that the knife has many crescent-shaped (also known as the three-day moon) blade. In the game, Mikazuki Munechika clothing is the most gorgeous of all the anthropomorphic swords. He wears a dark blue kimono, with the same gorgeous pattern as the blade, and the clothes on the chest were decorated with a three-day-old knife emblem. There is a new moon in the eyes. Under the painter's sand pen, the three-day moon is close to the most beautiful sword, which is also close to the official avatar on Twitter. Many players are so deeply influenced by the game as to begin to pay attention to the history of Japanese swords in their lives. Therefore, a well-designed good game can not only reflect the player's feeling of "experience" and "substitute", but also embody such elements as regional culture and national culture in the context of the game, character costumes, weapons and equipment and so on, all of which allow people to feel the great charm of culture in leisure and entertainment.

3. The Peripheral Industry Promote the Development of the Game ‘Touken Ranbu Online’

Why ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ is called a PPT type of game by many players is that it does not move like other characters in other games, and all characters are still static images. People who have experienced ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ generally believe that this is a Buddha game which can be clicked by a finger without using their brain. According to past experience, a simple game without a 3D form or interaction between the players does not survive for a long time. To make matters worse, the game designer and the official also set limits to certain interfaces within the game. Nevertheless, ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ has broken the popular recognition, since the game has been around for more than three years, and it is still active in the game market, which shows the powerful ‘Life’ in this game, because it has greatly benefited from the continuous introduction of merchandises around the game. The official also markets a variety of derivative products to familiarize people with this game. At the very beginning, such items as photographs of game characters, formula books, comic books and novels, are readily available. The "Musical Drama of Touken Ranbu Online" on October 30, 2015 and the "Stage Play of Touken Ranbu Online" on May 3, 2016 make great success on stage, which also sparks the production and performance of musical ‘2.5 Ci Yuan Touken Ranbu Online’. It has been performed in France and China over recent years, and attracted rave reviews. Overseas fans expected them to come back to perform again, and they say that they will go for the live show. After that, the game official of ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ launches two animations: ‘Touken Ranbu Online - Flower Balls’ in 2016 and ‘Blowing Touken Ranbu Online’ in 2017, which can attract the fans of animation to this game to play. ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ will produce a movie of the game in the near future. It seems natural for an animation to be turned into a movie, like what has become of ‘Spider-Man’, ‘Batman’, ‘The Avengers’ and etc, whose producers will choose actors from films and television serials, rather than the stage actors. As a card type of web game, ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ might be an exception in the filmdom, which is a big challenge for this game, with all the stage actors taken from ‘Touken Ranbu online’. This would make the fans of this stage play less offended and even help officials to propagandize it. Finally, the continuous development of the second creation of this game, ‘Touken Ranbu Online’ has spawned numerous fans, who greatly promote the development of the game and ensure the retention rate of players.

4. The Cultural Effect of ‘Touken Ranbu Online’

Nowadays, many games are created and designed based on history, famous works or mythology and so on, *Touken Ranbu Online* being no exception. In terms of plot, the game requires players to refer to historical information related to it and incorporate historical swords into a team to trigger the plot. For example, in the famous Ikeda incident in history, only the swords associated with this incident including California Light, Big and Conservative, Horikawa Kunihiro, Harmony and Choso Akotoru's, and Choso Akotoru's were chosen to be put into their own troops to trigger the Ikeda Incident and start

the plot. The reason is that these swords are used by the new members of Ikeda House, and the plot coincides with historical record. With the increasing popularity of the *Touken Ranbu Online*, players are no longer satisfied with the personification of the swords after playing for a period of time in the game, but want to see the physical appearance of the sword. There is a sword called candlestick cutting Guanzhong, which attracts a large number of fans because of dubbing actors and game characters. Fans spontaneously went to the Tokugawa Museum to inquire about the whereabouts of the candlestick cut Guanzhong. The sword was burned in 1923 in the Guandong fire and it was once thought to be lost. The excessive number of inquiries help the museum to find the sword when they inspected the artifacts and posted the news on the official website that the sword is still existent in the world, and it is repaired. Many fans donated 3 million yen to the Tokchon museum after learning the news. The museum used the donation to make a candlestick cut in the production of the compound. In 2017, the original and the replicas were on display. The number of visitors is more than 5 times larger than that in the past, most of whom were women. "It's not just a visit, but a meeting with the sword. I've been here for over 10 times", said a player who has been visiting the candlestick. On April 4, 2018, the curator of the Chinese Embassy in Japan and his wife came to Tokugawa Museum for a friendly communication and took a photo at the candlestick in front of the exhibition. Ahsu Shrine, where the sword fireflies were stored, was unaccounted for after the Pacific War. It was believed to have fallen into the sea. In 2015, Ahsu Shrine made replicas of fireflies in a crowd funding way. In less than one day, the donation reached the intended amount, ending up with 820%. In 2016, the replicas of fireflies were completed. Not before long, an earthquake of magnitude of 7.3 struck the Kumamoto region in Japan, and the Ahsu Shrine was literally destroyed. Kumamoto Shrine cooperated with *Touken Ranbu Online*, using the characters Fireflies for the Ahsu Shrine to pray. Fireflies are 120 cm tall in the game, roughly the height of a child. It uses a big TaiDao of 135 cm tall, while the characters stand on the Tan of Tai Dao during the battle of the game. It is assumed that fireflies are dropped into the sea, hence the erosion of the blade. The crowd funded peripheral products are also encouraged by the characters in the game. With the cooperation between the government and the Shrine, the physical sword was repaired by means of crowd funding. In the making of fireflies, the government set an example, and the director of Nitro, the game production company, took the lead in providing huge support. Recently, Kyoto State, Japan The museum and *Touken Ranbu Online* game will hold a "特別展 京みやこのかたな一匠のわざと雅のころ" This activity will display some archetypes of the national treasure swords in *Touken Ranbu Online*, and there will also be 5000 interactive limited tickets, which have the picture of two national treasured swords---Three Days Moon Zong Near and Cuts the Long Valley Part. All of these show the great role of the game in promoting people's understanding of history and culture.

5. The influence of 'Touken Ranbu Online' in China

'Touken Ranbu Online' is also very popular in China. Among the genius works of the game, those of Mikazuki Munechika outnumber all the rest, mainly due to the difficulty in collecting the sword, the beautiful appearance of the characters, the good-looking features, and the recognition of the most beautiful sword. In the animation exhibition, there are many of his fellow people's peripheral products for sale, and fans have to play the role of Mikazuki Munechika. This reflects the influence of this game on its players. After the game 'Touken Ranbu Online' was launched in the national service, the number of official Weibo fans reached 120,000. In 2017, the second part 'The End of the Sky' of 'Touken Ranbu Online', the third part "Three-hundred Years of the Sisters" and the "2017 Sword Dance Festival" in the form of concerts at the end of the year came to the domestic performance. The tickets are really hard to come by. The game official conducted a domestic survey, whose results showed that the largest number of players belong to 18-24 age group. Many domestic players were paying attention to this game after the Chinese mobile game version is launched in 2017, reflecting young people's attention to mobile games. Due to the popularity of computers and the rapid development of the

network, many domestic and foreign game manufacturers are not limited to online promotion, and will also carry out promotions on major websites. In addition to recommending this game by friends and classmates who have already played this game, many people started to play this game because of its profile and recommendation that is seen in major application markets and social networking sites which drives them to download the demo.

In the meanwhile in China, a game about Chinese weapons was also produced - "Dream Collection". It is a woman's mobile game developed by the perfect world. Seeing the Chinese martial arts culture as the origin, the character setting relies on the anthropomorphism of ancient weapons, and uses a new way to interpret the legends of the rivers and lakes in the Chinese martial arts culture. This game was originally started with 3D vertical painting, character setting and voice actor. After the game was launched, many people compared it with the 'Touken Ranbu Online' and found that the most attractive player, the style, and the actors such as the voice actor are set both in the game "Dream Collection" and 'Touken Ranbu Online'. Even in terms of dubbing staff, "Dream Collection" is superior to 'Touken Ranbu Online'. For domestic games, domestic players are more willing to pay. However, in terms of the feelings of confrontation between characters, 'Touken Ranbu Online' excels "Dream Collection". It is clear that at the beginning of 'Touken Ranbu Online' "player" is the person appointed by the government to protect history, but "Dream Set" did not explain the player's assignment at the beginning. The sense of substitution is also an extremely important part for the players. 'Touken Ranbu Online' is much better than "Dream Collection" in terms of substitution. In this respect, domestic games need to be strengthened. The advantage of the 'Touken Ranbu Online' is that the fresh activity of the characters is not the cliché of the cool masses, but everyone is very lively and has their own story. The official will give you a small clue about this sword, and the rest will be up to the players, who know only the name of the sword from the game, and then spontaneously search for historical information about the sword and go to the museum for investigation according to different characteristics such as clothing, height and family emblem. Due to the limitations of the major objective reasons, some domestic players cannot go abroad to watch the performances of the game-adapted dramas. Most of them will go to the DMM official to buy related peripheral products to support their favorite swords, or ask the players who can go to Japan to watch the performances. The survival of a game is based on the player's money. In this sample survey, 150 people out of a total of 172 were found to have invested in this game. 9 people spend at least 300 yuan a month on this game. In the derivative industry of the game, all the investigators have spend money, and the monthly expenses in the derivative industry are mostly within 100 yuan. The maximum of 2,000 or more is for 5 people. Players who invest in money generally believe that this is the best way to support the original. The vast majority of domestic players will also choose to spend money on this, and there are a few special cases. In Japan, it is normal that people are more aware about copyright. In our domestic environment, however, everyone's awareness of intellectual copyright is weak, and domestic knowledge of copyright protection still needs to be improved. In the game market where there is money to go, money investment is the best support for game companies.

6. Conclusion

Touken Ranbu Online has a great impact on the public. On the one hand, it has enhanced our attention to history. Through the form of the game, we will dig deep into history, understand history, look for every sword in the historical battle and know the history status of the sword at that time. And it also promotes the history-related industries in the world. In the modern history of Japan, after passing the decree of abolishing swords, with the appearance of decorative knives, the number of people forging swords has been on decrease. The industry of forging swords is at the verge of extinction. The success of *Touken Ranbu Online* game indirectly draws the public's attention to forging swords industry and gives a fillip into such industries. On the other hand, it has brought along the development of

game-related industries, attempted and opened up new fields, such as animation, stage plays, and movies, and has also played a significant leading role in other games.

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Breathe of life to the national treasure Kunozan Toshogu Shrine. Swords Restoration Project ~ True Sword ship is Truth. ~

https://youtu.be/q9_JzH3OkkQ

DMM Official Website:

<https://www.dmm.com/en/>

Dream Collection Official Website:

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