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A winning formula? A critical analysis of the influences in the current Western and Eastern gaming industries.

By

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Abstract

This dissertation is looking into identifying any significant characteristic in either the Western or Eastern side of the current Video Games industry which may have profound effects on the success and popularity of a game. In addition this dissertation will explore a variety of topics ranging from cultural and historical backgrounds, to game development opportunities and also prolific influencers in the industry.

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1. Introduction

In a time where the world is more connected than ever with the use of ever-changing technology and travel capabilities which the gaming industry prides itself at being at the forefront with its rising popularity and the capability to traverse different cultures with ease.

In all walks of life there has been competition and comparisons. Video games are no different. They are always being compared to one another, whether that be copies sold, player base or rating. One theme that has popped up constantly over the years is the East / West divide within the industry. Both players and developers are trying to understand the underlying differences between the two culturally different sides of the industry. Nowadays with information being readily available using the power of the internet, people are now exploring the reasons to find out if there is even a difference at all?

Video Games affect each person in a different way and has the power to bring out a unique reaction and experience to every player however some similarities can be identified within each worldwide region. Without being stereotypical and generalising the whole world into countries where you can dissect the industry by purely sales figures alone however if you delve deeper into what we think is the 'games industry'. You can see that there are now smaller subcultures developing, integrating and forming around the larger cultures in the native countries while also being able to connect people from other countries.

There may be differences between the two sides of the markets however one thing doesn’t change, the fact that they are both infatuated with each other. It may feel like the other side of the world however this is something that connects them together.

Both the east and the west have different views of each other when it comes towards the gaming industry however in a new technological age both developers and consumers are now beginning to explore other cultures to broaden their understanding. This can only be for the better with new developers creating games than traverse over their own culture and can appeal to people around the world.
1.1. **Project Aim and Objectives**

This study aims to discover any possible traits and trends that could be identify and then applied into the game development process in order for that product to be successful in both markets. What has a prolific effect on the gaming industry? To achieve this aim I will undertake the following objectives.

1. An extensive literature review into cultural aspects and backgrounds to identify any differences across the market presently.

2. Look at what influences game developers around the world.

3. Research company directors and their personal philosophies and determine how much it affects the development process.

4. Compare and analyse sales figures to find any trends in the current market.

5. Conclude the division between the two sides of the market if any to identify any feasible traits for a company to use in order to develop a product which will be critically acclaimed in all areas of the worldwide market.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The topic in question has lead my reading in many different directions. Most aspects when trying to find out about the industry send the reader towards the big two 'parties' driving the industry, Japan and America. These countries are the staple of the industry to the outside world. Many players regard both as the home of video games depending on where they are from in the world. They like to regard each other highly especially when looking back historically over the gaming industry and its lifetime.

When asked the question, “What are the differences between the Eastern and Western industries?” many people across a vast array of cultural, historical and career background who share interest in video games both creator and consumer usually answer the same. Most people put it down to “The West is driven by realism, blood and gore”, while “The East loves cartoon / animé styled games”. While these reason may be true this study will be delving deeper into the topic of video games brings up endless number of possibilities which may answer this question. However with the ever changing lifestyle that the industry is known for, these answers may become redundant in the near future.

2.2. Japanese Video Game Development

Chris DeLeon is a video game designer turned website blogger who spends his time helping other people to get started in the games industry by sharing his experiences. He has benefited from having experienced professionals mentor and tutor him in order to get a good idea in what happens with the industry. Now he keeps up with current events across the world regarding the games industry on his website.

One article in particular that stood out when conducting my research is the post concerning what is Japan doing differently to the West in the development process. Here he goes into detail in highlighting key areas where Japanese video game development differs from its Western counterpart. DeLeon starts off with an anecdote about how to manage to explore this problem by getting in touch with ‘Sato Takayoshi’ who is a game designer that has been in
the industry for a number of years. This interview helped him acquire information about first hand experience that Takayoshi had while working in Japan.

DeLeon (2013) highlights various aspects in the industry such as how companies hiring straight out of college and then keeping their developers for most of their careers. One reason for this is to preserve company secrets from getting to their competitors and the other is a cultural reason of duty and not wanting be a ‘betrayer’. In addition DeLeon (2013) develops this theme further in the sense that because they “hire for life” (DeLeon 2013) meaning they do not need to compete with each other to get their assets front and centre in a game, whereas in the Western industry developers are constantly looking for their next job meaning they have to produce amazing work in order to get noticed by the next potential employer. From this DeLeon (2013) goes onto state how secretive the industry is over in Japan especially when it comes to Nintendo.

Another theme that DeLeon (2013) develops is how Eastern companies were starting to ‘bail’ out of the USA due to their decreasing footholds in the industry. He then talks about personal experiences where he develops the secrecy aspects of the Eastern industry in turns with books about developing game design in Japan. He admits that these books “do not exist” (DeLeon, 2013), even in Japanese.

Following this DeLeon (2013) states that Japanese developers start with their primary focus on camera movement, character movement and control mapping, in order to understand how the player will feel, this in turn gives each game a distinct feel. He then explains how this is different to USA development as most of the games are in one specific state, i.e. First Person or Third Person aspect.

DeLeon (2013) continues by exploring Mark Cerny and his “Cerny Method”. He explains that Mark spent some of his time working in Japan them comparing this to his method bringing up the connection that some of the ideas are made up from influences from both Eastern and Western way of developing games. DeLeon (2013) further backs up the connection by a quote from Shigeru Miyamoto “find the fun”.

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Another theme that DeLeon (2013) highlights in his article is how Japanese game companies differ in the sense that the directors get “elbow deep” (DeLeon 2013) in the design process which would never been seen in Western games companies based on his personal experiences.

DeLeon’s (2013) final theme is geared toward the difference in how characters and assets are created. He states that from past experience Western game companies have a large concept wall where people put their designs in order to compare with one another before they start modelling and texturing, however he found out that Japanese development studios are more interested in what the character or asset will look like when it’s in game and on screen in order to get the players perspective.

To end his article DeLeon (2013) states that for the most part he has been generalising some of the issue he has explored finally ending that this will not apply to all game developers in Japan.


Countries become stereotyped in order to try and simplify the question. Unfortunately, this is too large a question to simplify, with every topic sending you in a variety of directions, sending a researcher deeper and deeper into philosophical, cultural and sociological aspects of life.

A large stigma attached to the gaming industry and the differences between countries is the universal belief around the world that Japan is culturally different from all other nations. This so called 'difference' enables critics and consumers alike from around the world to tag all the weird and wonderful features including video games into one big category which may not be understood by other cultures. This difference, this uniqueness, is explored within Peter N. Dale’s (1986), “The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness”.

Dale (1986), has gone to great lengths in order to collate, compare and analyse a wide array of literature from all over the world referring towards everything Japanese. He discusses Japanese contemporary culture under the name 'Nihonjinron' to determine whether Japanese culture is so much more different than the rest of the world.
“From Greek antiquity down to present times, the orient has exercised a peculiar hold on the Western imagination. If the scorched deserts of Africa were seen as the breeding quarters of death, pestilence and the monstrous, Asia by comparison was a 'land rich in everything', a wealthy, barbarous rival, a secret adversary pregnant with queer contrasts.” (Dale, 1986, PG 1)

He emphasised well that here in the West we have a skewed view of Japan and its cultural identity due to a naïve misunderstanding. This transfers over towards video games in the sense that any game which may feel different to our 'normal' is typical of Japan. Even searching for 'weird' games into a search engine will more than likely take you to an article with a list compiling games from Japan, (Harness, 2014), which could be deemed as 'weird' and setting an example of how Japanese games differ from Western games. However in today's age this is small-minded to think that Japan itself is more different than anywhere else in the world. The Western side of the market puts out a number of 'weird' video games every year but yet doesn't tar itself with the same brush and feels that they are somehow different. (Knapp, 2016)

“The more distant the country, the greater is the temptation to extend the submerged landscape of private fantasy into the hearsay reaches of an exotic geography, to populate it with creatures of the imagination whose existence is otherwise rendered improbable by the dulling pressures of a known and banal reality.” (Dale, 1986, PG 1)

Peter again has summed up the whole notion of 'Japanese uniqueness' in a simple statement that cleverly defines how we look at each other around the world. He states that due to countries being so far away from each other people have stereotypical and naïve view of other countries without experiencing their culture first hand.

2.4. Conclusion

What does this mean? The literature review above shows that there is only a vague and naïve answer to the question regarding the differences between the Eastern and Western video game industries. In addition there is no sure fire way presently to make sure that a game will be a
success and enabled to appeal to people of multiple cultures. This project will now ensure to develop multiple themes highlighted in the objectives.
3. Findings and Analysis

3.1. Introduction

This study will develop some of the identified concepts that appeared while researching previous work on the topic area. It will begin by exploring culture backgrounds that influence both players and developers. In addition it will be looking for game that go the extra mile when being developed to be able to appeal to players from different cultures. Following this it will be looking into larger society driven influences across the world that affects video game development and video game company directors that influence the development process in their own company and other game developers in the industry. Finally, the study will look into video game sales to see whether they provide any insight into what genres are popular around the world and why.

3.2. Cultural Backgrounds

“The contemporary video games industry was largely defined and nurtured in the Western Hemisphere along with significant influences from Japan. As a result, a substantial proportion of games designed and created in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are based on real and contemporary experiences with a largely Western point of view....This has led to many computer games not reflecting wider cultural demographics, despite the industry becoming increasing global. A notable exception to this globalisation has been Japan where countless game titles are produced that are primarily aimed at the domestic Japanese market only. Most of these games will never be localised for western audiences or any other cultures.” (Blossom, A. and Dunning, B. 2015)

Andy Blossom and Ben Dunning have a good grasp when it comes to the games industry which they sum up the state that the games industry has found itself in regarding its cultural identity and its place in the world. As more and more developers are coming into the industry from all walks of life they are bringing new cultural aspects into their games. It seems the westernisation of the games industry is fracturing between cultures and the overall popularity of video games in the western world, with Japan fighting to stay afloat relying on its own personal market in Japan. However this is beginning to change with the recent development in
other eastern countries such as China and South Korea bringing their own personality into the games industry.

One main influence that will not be investigated in this study is the effect that religion has on video games. Many games are influenced by religion due to the fact that it plays a large part in most people’s lives around the world in one way or another meaning that it would affect both the creators in the development process and the players who are buying the games.

3.2.1. ‘Crusaders Kings 2’

(Figure 1: Crusaders Kings 2)

One example of a game which tried to appeal to a multicultural audience is Paradox Interactives ‘Crusader Kings 2’. This strategy game offers players a choice not only between two opposing factions battling against one another which is usually seen within a large array of games but between multiple cultural perspectives, one being Christianity and the other Islam. Players could use this choice to experience the game viewing other cultures and their different aspects which may differ to their own such as class hierarchy, laws and social structures.
Crusader Kings 2 has received high critical acclaim from all over the world since its release in 2012, with many critics praising its depth, diversity and realistic nature of the game. Here we can see that a developer tried and succeeded to innovate and create a game that solely enables the players to choose a cultural background to explore even when they might be able to experience it in real life. This was unheard of at the time with games either having one or the other cultural perspective. The developers show no sign of stopping with their planned expansions which will add more religions to the game those being Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. They have proven that when done right developers can produce games which can be enjoyed by players from all cultures.
3.3. **Artistic Cultural Influences**

There are many different artistic influences around the world that have had a profound effect on the video games industry as a whole. The world is becoming more and more connected through technology this enables people to take inspiration from all walks of life and a variety of cultures that they might not have had personal experience with.

3.3.1. **Manga**

“Manga, or Japanese comics, have traditionally been a significant part of Japanese popular culture. However, Japanese comics do not exist in a vacuum; they are closely connected to Japanese history and culture, including such areas as politics, economy, family, religion and gender. Therefore, they reflect both the reality of Japanese society and the myths, beliefs and fantasies that Japanese have about themselves, their culture and the world.” (Ito, 2008)

Manga has long been ingrained in Japanese history, enabling Japanese artists to show off their creativity. The earliest form of Manga can be dated back to around the 12th century which are known as the “Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga”. These are a famous series of picture scrolls which tell a number of short stories using animals as the protagonists.
Figure 2: Panel from the first scroll of Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga, a monkey thief runs from animals with long sticks. (By Kyoto National Museum)

However some people disagree and feel that Manga originates in later in the Tokugawa Period (1603 – 1867). The Tokugawa clan were the last feudal military government to rule over Japan and brought a reign of peace to Japan for over 250 years. This is where the first form of Manga boomed throughout Japan due to the mass production of woodblock printing.

Woodblock printing had been around for a large period of time before this however due to Japan being in an era of peace, in addition with the Tokugawa army seizing a moveable wood press from Korea just before they came into power enable the mass production of woodblocks which were used for nearly all of Japan’s texts and drawings due to their ease of use and small costs. The small cost and large number of woodblocks enabled publishers to sell to a wide audience as the retail price for the end product was very low and meant that even the common people with not a large amount of money could buy and enjoy the product.

The term Manga was never used until the early 1800's where an aspiring artist named Katsushika Hokusai, produced a series of wood-prints drawn to show the terrible social
conditions that people were forced to live in after the Tempo period (1830-1844). He released a 15 volume wood-print book 'Hokusai Manga', over the span of 64 years 1814 – 1878. His book went onto become a best seller all over the world as people could relate to the characters in his book while also enjoying his artistic talent. This helped to popularise the term 'Manga' and become accepted into everyday life along with 'Giga ukiyo-e' (funny pictures). Along with 'normal Manga' other forms came to light. One in particular which proved to be controversial were 'Shunga' (spring drawings). These were drawings which showed Japanese sexuality and erotica which are thought to be an early form of pornography. However they hardly show any nudity while exaggerating sexual areas of the body to heighten sexual attraction between the characters in the drawings.

Over the Tokugawa period Japan became a very enclosed country and even closed its borders cutting off any interaction with outside countries. This led to a curiosity in the Japanese people and can be seen over recent years with the large western influence in Japan over all walks of life. In 1853, near the end of the Tokugawa period, an American sailor arrived in Japan and with it brought a new wave of western influence which established itself across Japan especially in the Manga community. This can be seen with the rise of moving pictures in Japan which had been popular at the time over in the western world where a budding Manga artist, Rakuten Kitazawa, took this idea and moulded it around Manga aiming it mainly towards children which became a country wide success. He also travelled to the west in the early 1900's where he took a lot of inspiration from comic artists and decided to start drawing Manga using a large colour palette. In addition he created the 'Tokyo Pakku' which was the first multicolour Manga magazine in Japan which became an instant hit.

Due to the spread of democracy across the western world Japan tried to follow suit in the early 1900's. 'Taisho Democracy' spanned over 1912 – 1926 which gave the Japanese people a large amount of freedom than they were used to. This is one of the periods where Manga would soar with popularity again as artists had the freedom to draw anything they wanted.

With the new democratic government, the Western influence also brought a lot of change to Japan in other ways. The country saw a strong industrial development coinciding with a higher level of education for the Japanese people. Unfortunately this didn't last. In 1925 the
Japanese government grew scared of the freedom of speech that the Japanese people had acquired, leading to the regulation of produced content. This included moving pictures, Manga and other forms of media that hadn't been created by the government. These regulations then turned into censorship laws in 1931 which enabled police to arrest any artists or publishers deemed to be against Japanese identities, such as Christianity, Western influences and any political themes which didn’t agree with the government.

During the Second World War no artist in Japan could draw Manga unless they were working for the government this can be seen with the extensive use of Manga as war propaganda against the West. If any artist drew any other Manga in Japan and didn’t work for the government they were painted as a criminal and put in jail. This all changed at the end of the war when the government were overthrown and this breathed a new breath of life into the Japanese people. At the forefront of the change was Manga. Again it was cheap and easy to mass produce meaning most of the Japanese population could afford to buy Manga. The artists were also free to draw whatever they wanted with their new found freedom of speech.

After the war Manga only increased in popularity, especially in Japan. A number of Manga artists were now becoming a household name due to the variety of stories and level of skill that they were able to bring into their comics. One name in particular stands out above the rest. Osamu Tezuka, known throughout the world as the 'God of Manga' in the artistic community has long been compared to Walt Disney with his mastery over not only Manga, but animation, cartoonist and film production. He was born in 1928 and grew up in the warring period, this had a large impact on him and his work because he vowed to teach peace and respect through his Manga. He uses a variety of techniques in his Manga that he acquired from film such as close-ups, changing frames and points of view. One of his early works released in 1947 using these techniques sold over 400,000 copies in Japan which at that time was a massive success.
The success of New Treasure Island helped to cement Tezuka as the staple Manga artist of his generation however his next production in 1952 would propel him into the history books. Tezuka's next production would be the infamous 'Astro-boy' which became a cult success across the world. Astro-boy has so much popularity as a Manga that it was developed into an Animé in 1963 which was the first Japanese Animé to be shown on American TV. The massive success of 'Astro-boy' and his other works influenced a variety of other people not solely in the Manga world, Hayao Miyasaki, Stanley Kubrick and Akira Toriyama have all cited they have been influenced by Tezuka as inspiration for their own personal works. He then went onto publishing his Manga in English to reach a wider audience in the 1970's as he felt that the English language was becoming an international language used across the world. This helped his Manga volumes to be more successful in the West, especially in America.

Later on in his life Tezuka's works were started to get used more in elementary text books for children to help them learning the Japanese language.

Towards the turn of the century the Japanese Ministry of Education awarded a prize to Manga which Tezuka was the appointed receiver displaying that they had officially recognised Manga as a true art form meaning that it had the status and recognition than many artists have been wanting for a number of years. This established to the world that Manga wasn't just a
Japanese fad, it was here to stay. In 1999 the Ministry further legitimised Manga as an art form by opening Japan's first School of Cartoon and Comic Art.

At the later stage of the 1990's Manga cafes had popped up all around Japan. These cafe’s enabled readers to have access to a vast amount of Manga volumes for an hourly fee where they could sit down and relax with a new story. These became very popular throughout Japan especially the cities where people had extra income, even starting to replace Karaoke houses. Recently studies have shown that some cafes are now 24 hours meaning that people can stay overnight if they miss their last train home as the cafe provides food and clothing facilities.

With the technological boom Manga has also developed itself to stay up to date with publishers now making Manga volumes available on mobile phones which is a large part of Japan due to having its own mobile culture. Over the course of its history Manga has shown that it can stay relevant and popular even at the worst of times while also having the power to traverse multiple cultures exploding into the Western industry with ease. As of 2005 one out of every three books published in Japan are Manga volumes which shows in itself how popular Manga is in Japan.

More and more game developers especially in Japan are being influenced by Manga in both its stylized imagery and compelling story telling perspectives. Manga is a very large influencer on how video game stories are developed with a large percent of Japanese developers taking influence from all styles of Manga when developing story, characters and action when creating new video games. Wise the rise of Manga over in the West, more and more developers are beginning to read and be influenced along with their Eastern counterparts when it comes to the game development process.

3.3.2. **Animé**

Animé can be construed in two different ways as it has two meanings, the first meaning of Animé is the Japanese word for animating pictures as it is the literal word shortening of 'animation'. The other meaning which is more widely known across the world is describing Japanese animation in general and that characteristics that it has and how it differs from 'normal' animation from other areas of the world such as mature content, highly developed stories and characters with non-conventional proportions.
Animé has had a large influence in the east for many years starting in Japan over a century ago with early animated films such as 'Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors' produced in the 1940's to serve as a Japanese propaganda film over the Second World War period. Following the war a large amount of Animé coming out of Japan was used for propaganda purposes with both Animé and Manga artists being pressured from the government to make sure they don't create any satire against the country meaning Animé had a sharp declining period.

After the war periods in Japan's recent history Anime has gone strength to strength influencing all walks of life across the world and especially in its native Japan. Japanese anime’s are known for their complex storylines that are made not only for children but for adult audiences also, although a large portion of these animé are not meant for children at all and are mainly aimed at the adult population.

The characters are created to be unique and are given a realistic personality to make each individual character more relatable. Japanese animation is typically more advanced than Western animation, fast and sudden movement in Japanese animation is a lot smoother and better quality due to the work put into hand drawing each sequence, unlike Western animations that ‘cut corners’ by using computer generated graphics which cut the quality of the animations.

In recent history Japanese animation has had a wider range than its native Japan being able to use the internet to provide anime for audiences in different countries. It has influenced a variety of things in Western culture, from comics, books, apparel, music, snacks and of course video games. (www.animecommit.com, 2011)

One large aspect in which Japanese animation influences video games are the characters bodies, most of the time in anime they reflect the proportions of a human body, but most anime characters are purposefully modified for older audiences. This is to make the female character more sexualised by exaggerating the bust and slimming the waist. Another aspect that anime is more known for is their exaggerated eye size, this is used to help express different emotions entirely from the eyes. They are also known largely for their unnatural, unique and colourful hairstyles. The movement of the hair is also exaggerated for visual effect and to emphasise the actions and emotions of the character. The hair of anime character differ
from western cartoon. Hair in Western cartoons tend to be natural colours, mainly the lead characters having bright hair to stand out.

![Figure 4: Anime hair colours (Source: TV Tropes)](image)

In addition, the characters in anime have an unrecognisable nationality and can be identified in a variety of cultures. They are thought to be Japanese when created however due to the characteristics of the face other people in the Western market also identify with the characters. This helps anime to cross cultural boundaries around the world.

Anime has quickly picked up steam and is now a large art medium around the world with a variety of courses now specially designed to learn the art form. Since anime resides within Japan it has a lot of influence over the market and its developers due to them living and growing up with anime and it being all around them, be that in the shops or on the TV. Nintendo was the first company to take inspiration from anime and bring it to the mass market in the West with the help of their Nintendo Entertainment System. From there it only got more popular, spawning a number of games directly influenced by anime.

“By the late 90s, anime and videogames had become so intertwined that we ended up with Pokémon, a multimedia phenomenon that quickly spread across the entire globe.” (Lambie, 2011). Pokémon is easily the biggest game which has had influences from anime that has managed to take the world by storm.
However there are also some other subtle hints of anime in Western games. One being “The distinctly Japanese design of robots and mecha, exemplified in such classic series as *Gundam* and *Macross*, is still a common sight in games created by Western studios, from the exotic war machines in the *Command And Conquer* series, to the svelte ships of *Mass Effect.*” (Lambie, 2011). Other more recent games still have the same concept, Titanfall (2014) was directly built around giant robots descending from the sky in order to help fight enemies with the pilot. Titanfall (2014) combines anime styles with the Western genre of First Person Shooter to create a game which can extend over to both sides of the industry.

In addition to normal Japanese anime there is a very popular company which has broken through into the Western market while bringing all the characteristics of typical anime with it. That company is Studio Ghibli. Studio Ghibli is a Japanese animation company who specialise in feature length films. They have had a number of films out in Japan however not until ‘Spirited Away’ (2001) did they manage to hurl themselves into the Western market. Hayao Miyazaki has been compared as a Japanese Disney with his “lush, hand-drawn, 2-D animation, disregard for Hollywood narrative formulae and guiding philosophy—that animated films can be for grown-ups” (D.S.K, 2014)

‘Spirited Away’ (2001) was very successful all over the world and was the first Japanese animated film to win an Academy Award in 2003. This helped to bring Japanese anime into the homes of Western audiences and inspired a new generation to get into anime. Much like anime, Studio Ghibli has greatly influence Japanese game developers in how they tell stories through their games due the large amount that they are accustomed to within their society. Furthermore developers from the Western side of the industry are becoming more aware of anime coming from Japan and are actively exploring it for themselves

### 3.3.3. Cel-Shaded Games

Anime is a large influencer on the games industry which has been explored in this study. One area of video games that can be directly linked back to Anime in its stylised nature is the genre of Cel-shaded games. Cel-shaded games are games which have a distinct art style that
render out 3D objects to make them appear as 2D flat images. (Giant Bomb, Inc, 2016) This look gives off the feel of a Comic or Anime series with its bright colours and black edges.

There has been many games over the years which have used cel-shading. Most of these games have all been praised for their distinct look as it is easily noticeable against other games which have a realistic art style.

One of the first cel-shaded games to become infamous in the industry was Sega’s Jet-Set Radio (2000). The game was first developed for the Dreamcast and instantly becoming a hit with players of all countries. Jet Set Radio is highly regarded by many players for its art style even still being praised nowadays by both critics and players. “The most stunning game in the world, its solid colours and stark black lines rendering Tokyo as a vibrant cartoon playground in the midst of a totalitarian crackdown” (Byford, 2016).

Figure 5: Jet Set Radio, 2000 (Source: Ingenito, 2012)

Another good example of cel-shaded games is Okami developed by Clover Studio (2006) which has a distinctly anime feel. All of the assets in the game use this method which adds to the overall experience for the player. In addition with the mechanics of painting it makes the
player feel like they are personally drawing which also ties into influences from Manga and Comics.

Figure 6: (Okami, Future Gaming News, 2013)

Despite becoming critically acclaimed for its distinct art style and innovative gameplay, it failed to sell well and was deemed a ‘flop’ by many within the industry. Even though it didn’t sell as expected it has still been praised over the years for its influences for other games which have a similar art style such as Prince of Persia. (Totilo, 2009)

Cel-shading is one area within video games that shows obvious influences from both Anime and Mange from Eastern culture and Comics which is a staple of Western culture. Developers have been able to integrate cultural aspects and apply them into a video in order to create a very distinct art style.
3.4. **Mobile Culture**

One easily identifiable difference between the two markets is the popularity explosion in mobile gaming. This has boomed over the past couple of years following the advances in mobile hardware and accessibility to developers with the use of apps. Now the mobile gaming industry has overtaken both the console and PC industry in sales revenue over the last year which shows no sign of slowing down any time soon.

A large contributor to the rise in the mobile gaming market is the transition from arcade games onto the mobile platform. The popularity in the arcade market is still very high in places such as China and Japan due to the community aspect and the short term play sessions for players on the go. Therefore some games companies have expanded their reach in bringing their successful games over onto the mobile which has only aided the rise of popularity of mobile games.

China has exploded into the mobile industry in recent years with more and more people being able to afford smart phones meaning now there are more than three times the amount of mobile gamers in China than PC gamers which is the next highest type of gamer in China currently. (Sonnad, 2015) This is intertwined with the large amount of Chinese developers who are creating a variety of games for the mobile market especially in China and surrounding countries. China has now overtaken USA in global mobile game sales which is projected to rise further in the years to come which can be seen in Figure 7.
In addition to mobiles, tablets have also expanded into the games industry as they enable developers to utilise the larger screen space whilst also catering to the gaming 'on-the-go' market. Furthermore advances in technology are making the tablet near to the capabilities of seventh generation consoles which some developers are used to working with, in terms of poly counts, texture resolutions and other aspects which may affect a game's performance.

As mobile games are played on the go their lifespan isn't very long meaning a mobile game's performance is very important in its success as if the game lags or drops frame-rate while playing a player will just find another game to play. The best mobile games are some which are easy to get into and play, while also having a large incentive to bring the player back to the game rather than playing any others. One aspect of this which is apparent in a lot of mobile games is the lives/timed factors. This is where you have a certain number of lives which regenerate over a period of time. We now see a lot of different games using this technique due to the positive outcome in previous games.
The boom in the mobile market in recent years are now putting pressure on console developers to generate better quality games in both graphical and mechanic standpoints in order to rival the mobile powerhouse games such as Candy Crush and Bubble Witch Saga who now generate profits of over $2 Billion a year.

Nintendo have now chosen to try their hand in this lucrative industry by developing their new app 'Miitomo' which is a development of their 'Mii' format brought about on their Wii home console. ‘Miitomo’ isn't just a game but more a social networking app where games are included in other activities, including creating a character and then interacting with people in the world around you to earn points. This is their first dive into the mobile industry and judging from early statistics published by Nintendo on their twitter page we can see that the new app had over 1 million downloads in its first three days. (Source: Nintendo UK Twitter)

With the overwhelming success of Nintendo's efforts we can be sure that both Sony and Microsoft are being influenced to release their own content in the mobile industry in the foreseeable future.

3.4.1. Japan’s 'Keitai' Culture

Japan’s mobile culture has played a large part in the shift towards mobile gaming as a whole as it is universally recognised with being at the forefront of the mobile industry as a whole even breeding its own mobile subculture called “Keitai culture”.

‘Keitai’ culture breathes new life in showing how a technological advancement can have a profound effect on a historical culture, even something as small as a mobile phone which people in the developed world often take for granted. This new culture adds to what it means to be Japanese and may look strange to any onlooker however it effects many Japanese people in their daily life ranging from commuting signs and broadcasts to an overall standard of etiquette such as putting it on 'manner mode' when on the bus or train and generally note using them around the elderly due to health concerns.

One characteristic that makes this culture specific towards Japan is their relative lack of privacy between people in the more developed areas due to the density of urban areas, high
use of public transport and overall shortage of space in normal home life. It has forced people to use ways of communication which don't impose on others.

Big established companies are now following this mobile trend by concentrating on this area of the market. Nintendo have followed suit by concentrating on their 3D's hand-held console rather than their home console due to the overwhelming popularity in the key area of Japan since a third of its total Nintendo 3Ds is in Japan which is more than America and Europe.

“Japan’s quest for cultural uniqueness in contract to foreign nations, a national soul searching about what it means to be Japanese”. (Page 15, “Japanese Visual Culture”)
3.5. **Games Companies**

When creating games developers can start from any angle be that with the story, mechanics or world and then work everything around that one idea. The Western developers usually start from the core, that being the character. Once they have built the story of the character, who they are, what their back-story is, and where their purpose within the game is, the developers like to build outwards creating the world and feel of the game around that main character.

On the other hand the Western developers seem to create a different way, by making sure that the mechanics and the world are nailed down then heading inwards and creating the character. At larger companies there are usually a high number of employees working meaning that they can work on multiple things at once so this way of creating games is being turned on its head.

Unlike the western side of the gaming industry, the eastern side has slowed down in recent years in terms on innovative game development since Nintendo and its time with the Wii. On the whole the western industry has developed and shifted in terms of how games are produced and sold. This new shift is down to 'Indie Publishing'. Indie Publishing is where smaller development teams of people, even single developers in some cases create and sell a game one their own without big budget publishing companies funding the projects. They use platforms such as Steam, PlayStation and Xbox store. Here they can publish a product without having to pay for any fee's to get their game to the player base. It takes on the online format with digital downloads to keep costs down when producing their game which has benefited the PC games market tremendously.

3.5.1. **'Indie' Game Development**

Indie companies are now regarded as the innovators of the industry as they have to make sure that their product will stand out above the rest gameplay wise rather than graphically. Without the publishers pressuring the developers to make something that will make their money back, indie developers are free to create a game around their own ideas and what they find fun and most of all just because they want to make a game. This leads to massive innovations in all genres of games and fresh ideas coming out every week. Games like ‘Super Meat Boy’, ‘Terraria’ and the juggernaut ‘Minecraft’ have all come from indie developers. Minecraft was made by one man at the start of its life and now due to its success has been bought by one of
the largest companies in the world, Microsoft. This shows how influential and successful the indie scene is now becoming in the gaming industry.

The indie scene has started to flourish in the Western world, with a lot of developer starting up their own companies rather than having to fight for a job in the ever competitive job market. In addition it is very easy for developers to make their own games from home with the ever expansive range of easily accessible software and hardware needed. There is also a lot of opportunities to show off a game with a variety of conventions which include both indie teams and the big console companies who also support indie developers with their stores and marketplaces.

However it cannot be said for the Eastern market. The market is already designed to make games on a lower budget than the West meaning the development teams are smaller while also promising a full time job with guaranteed income for the developers. In addition to this game companies in Japan are actively looking for new developers to mould into personal company developers which they can use to create games that know in-house pipelines, technologies and techniques. It is also sometimes harder to get the software needed to create games to go on the major consoles and PC's. While the internet is a great help, some Japanese developers feel isolated from the West.

Even though Nintendo is a Japanese company many developers feel that they are a hard nut to crack. They don't give much information away about the development process that they use in house when working with their technology so other developers in Japan find it hard to work with them.

Some AAA companies in Japan like Nintendo, Capcom and Sega like to innovate themselves with their new games meaning the indie industry isn’t as developer as it is over in the western side of the market. Instead of developing their indie industry eastern companies have taken a shine in the rising mobile market which has taken the world by storm. Technological advancements in mobile devices have seen smartphones arise as the new phone of choice, this enables developers to utilise the new technology to produce a high number of mobile games at a low cost.
Nowadays larger game companies are creating games with bigger and bigger budgets sometimes even rivalling Film budgets, meaning publisher cannot risk making new and fresh content in their games as they won’t be sure that they will make a return on their investment. This fear of risk has left larger development companies stagnating with creating sequels and using old, proven mechanics and consumer satisfaction in order to make their money back.

3.5.2. Job Opportunities

Game development job markets play a large role in the types of games that are produced around the world. The backbone of the companies are the developers and artists which spend their working life designing and creating new IP for future generations.

Japanese companies like to employ newly finished graduates that flood the market every year in spring after they have finished their studies. These graduate developers are fresh in the industry which are keen to show off their skills and get a full time 'proper' job. This gets capitalised on by the companies as they can get graduates on a cheap wage which will then be moulded around the company philosophies and in the long term benefit the company more than an employee coming from another company.

Furthermore the Japanese are motivated to excel and succeed at the job meaning that they rarely change jobs throughout their career and would rather stay at one company and go through the ranks than go from one company to another.

However Western developers take a very different approach. Companies would rather have experience in a developer, being able to work under their own initiative throughout the working week which will be cheaper in time and money as the company doesn't have to spend their resources moulding and teaching the developer how to properly work within their company.

This puts a large amount of pressure on graduates to try and get experience while they are studying while also putting in the right amount of effort to get the best grades possible and also thinning out the job market making them look outside the field for other job opportunities.
As you can see at the early stage of the home console market there were a lot of companies designing products to try and create themselves a foothold in the video games industry. Judging from the figure were all very successful in their own right with companies sitting around the 1 – 3 million units respectively. However there was one company whose product was miles ahead of the rest. That was Atari and their 2600. The ATARI 2600 was a triumph of technology in the market with their enormous global sales which were well over 30 million units.
However the 2600 has a hasty fall from grace and Atari would never be able to replicate the popularity that they found themselves with this console. Why? Declining sales? Poor quality games? Or would it be the rising quality of competing consoles in the new generations. For most people it is all three put together which drove Atari's downfall and enabled other companies to take its place at the top of the games industry.

One of these companies to establish themselves in the market would be Nintendo with their release of the highly regarded Nintendo Entertainment System. This would be the first flicker of magic to come from the east in terms of the console market and a sure sign of what was to come. They exploded onto the market in 1983 and took the world by storm with their high quality exclusive game line-up. Since then they have shown that they can keep up with other major players in the industry.

Nintendo have sold consistently well since the release of its first console, the Nintendo Entertainment System, especially in its native Japan where the company originates, selling well over 19 million units alone which is a third of all units sold worldwide. (Source: Video Game Sales Wikia)

The NES brought Japanese games right into the homes of gamers around the world with titles such as ‘Super Mario’ and ‘The Legend of Zelda’. These games helped to cement Nintendo as one of the leading companies in the gaming industry being regarded as the best at that time. Nintendo like to debut their products in Japan before releasing anywhere else in the world. Japanese gamers first saw the console a full two years before it was sold anywhere else in the world. Being a Japanese company it has tried to stay true to its nearest and dearest by making sure they have the first experience with any of their new hardware and software.

Coupled with the high standard of craftsmanship which Japan has been defined with, due to the fact that at that point in history Japan were mass producing a wide array of products for a variety of companies and industries around the globe, the Nintendo Entertainment System had a large boost in sales due to the lack lustre state that the industry found itself in. The NES helped to establish Nintendo in the western markets and deliver a good first impression of the company in the western world.
From then on the whole world knew the name of Nintendo. They have continued to revolutionise the market over their time at the top, however in recent generation of consoles they have been overtaken by a more westernised theme of console such as Sony's PlayStation range and Microsoft's Xbox platforms due to their desire to pack as much power into their consoles as possible to ensure their games can be as realistic as possible.

One area where Nintendo cannot be touched is the handheld side of the console market. In 1989 Nintendo followed the success of their home console, the Nintendo Entertainment System, by releasing the Gameboy which again in classic Nintendo style revolutionised the market. They managed to encompass everything positive about their home console and games and bring it into a handheld device. Other companies followed suit by bringing out their own version however they couldn't match the success of Nintendo's Gameboy. No other company until Sony's PlayStation Portable (PSP), could draw steam from Nintendo's handheld dominance however still not even coming anywhere close to their popularity.

Nintendo's Gameboy can thank its popularity to a variety of reasons. One major reason is the top quality line-up of games that were released with the handheld console. Again Mario was adapted to play on the Gameboy which was a major hit with players and the later release of Pokémon Red and Blue which was a worldwide smash. Both games have now turned into multimillion pound franchises with a series of games on the various Nintendo consoles.

“The legendary Nintendo designer Gunpei Yokoi created the D-pad; he applied it to his Game & Watch series. His innovation removed the need for a protruding joystick that would have reduced the device's portability. The design first seen on Game & Watch has defined a signature style for Nintendo on both its consoles and portable technology ever since.” (Bossum and Dunning, 2015)

This sums up everything positive about the Japanese gaming industry, Nintendo in particular. As it shows that they are true innovators and throughout the short history of games have shown they can revolutionise the way we play. Even looking at the current generation of game consoles, you can see the remnants of the original gamepad created by Nintendo back in 1980.
Pokémon in particular has taken the whole world by storm since its release in Japan in 1996. Continued and revamped over the years while also staying true to what appealed to players in the first place which was its RPG aspect. As a player you can choose a Pokémon character to take with you across the world and level up while battling other Pokémon and their trainers, levelling up and catching wild Pokémon. This appealed to many players especially in Japan who love games with a lot of replay ability. In addition to the replay ability aspect of the game, the Japanese players also loved to fact it was on the Gameboy meaning they could play on the go or in their house without breaching other people's personal space or having control of their home TV to play on their other consoles which they shared with their family.

“The mobile market is effectively enhancing what Nintendo did with the Wii. The two main consoles were doing wonderfully with a hardware audience playing in-depth strategic games. The Wii came out and made games accessible to everyone, like grandparents playing tennis in front of their TV. Nintendo created family approach.” (Alex Williams, 2015)

Yet again Nintendo are seen innovating the market as seen from the point of an industry professional.

It is only in recent generations of consoles that other companies have been able to knock Nintendo off the top of the console podium. With the now declining sales of the newest Nintendo console, the Wii U, consumers are now looking to the company to again innovate and show what magic they can bring to the console market in order to stay afloat in the current market and compete with the likes of Sony's PS4 and Microsoft's Xbox One.

3.5.4. Shigeru Miyamoto

Shigeru Miyamoto is highly regarded as one of the fathers of the video game development with his work on a number of critically acclaimed games with Nintendo over the years such as Mario, Zelda and Pokémon. (Nintendo) He inspired most developers working in the industry today due to helping with the revival of the home console market in the 1980's. Most of today's developers will admit that they have played at least one of his games over their time within games.
What makes him stand out is his philosophical ideas that he takes into every project that he is a part of. He takes the stance of the player rather than a developer and tries to create a game that he will personally find fun and believes that other people will enjoy the game as well.

“When I’m making video games today, I want people to be entertained. I am always thinking, how are people going to enjoy playing the games we are making today? And as long as I can enjoy something other people can enjoy it, too.” (Shigeru Miyamoto, 2010)

At the root of all his philosophies is Miyamoto's idea of fun. He would rather the player enjoy their time in the game which they would like to play over and over rather than the game being too hard. “If a game is too difficult, people may not want to play it again. With the appropriate level of difficulty, people may feel like challenging it again and again.” (Shigeru Miyamoto, 2010). As one of the creative directors at Nintendo he likes to use this philosophy when helping with all the products that come from the company which helps to transfer onto other developers working at Nintendo.

In addition with the philosophy above Miyamoto doesn't like to use focus groups to test their games but rather have their in-house developers, his family and friends to test the games. “I always remind myself, when it comes to a game I’m developing, that I am the perfect, skillful player. I can manipulate all this controller stuff. So sometimes I ask the younger game creators to try playing the games they are making by switching their left and right hands. In that way, they can understand how inexperienced the first-timer is.” Miyamoto feels that it leads to better results in the testing process.

One any that Miyamoto doesn't like to pursue in his creation of games is the pursuit of high quality realism within his games. This is very common across Japan especially within Nintendo which is a stark contrast to other developers in the Western industry currently who strive to create more realistic games. “I recognize that there are certain types of games for which the photo-realistic graphics are suited, but what I don’t like is that any and all games are supposed to be photo-realistic.” (Shigeru Miyamoto, 2010).

Due to early technological drawbacks developers were bottlenecked into have low graphical quality games therefore forcing them to make sure that the game was first of all fun for the
player with interesting game-play. An example of this is Miyamoto's Mario, when first drawing up Mario he realised that the technology would not support animating hair on a character meaning that he had to draw Mario wearing a hat and having basic clothes to help him be more distinguished against the background while also being detailed enough to be relate-able with the player. Looking back at where Miyamoto started and now at the technological advancements he has admitted “Mario was born of rational design in the days of immature technology.”

Moving forward from the nostalgic games of the early Nintendo console to the new Nintendo Wii, Miyamoto has still been the driving force of the company’s innovative ideas which often change the industry for the better. “Miyamoto starts from the kinaesthetic of the controller. What is this thing going to feel like in my hands? Will I feel like I’m instinctively connected to this world? As opposed to, I’ve got sixteen buttons, and I’m trying to figure out which button does the super-thrust power-up.”(Paumgarten, 2010).

Yet again Miyamoto is thinking about game play and the perspective of the player first, rather than other aspects of the game such as graphics or power of the console itself. By using this philosophical ideal Miyamoto has again revolutionised the games industry furthermore cementing his legacy into history while also showing a difference in development styles to the West.

From studying Miyamoto he continuously shows himself to produce games in his own unique way, which some may deem the ‘Japanese’ way of development. However he always steps out the box and does his own thing when it comes toward making games. A great aspect of Miyamoto is that he realises that he is different than other developers especially towards the Western counterparts who sometimes prefer profits over creativity.

“I have explained—in regard to entertainment in general—that if development of products that thrive on creative uniqueness is dictated by those who prioritize sales and profits, the possibilities for the future of entertainment will be limited…So, what should we do in order to avoid it? I agree that as your question implies, the answer might be at odds with the nature of large business organizations. But at Nintendo we continue to endeavour to make such
innovation possible, and we are constantly working on new ideas. If we manage to deliver them, I hope everyone will complement our efforts.” (Miyamoto, TIME 2015)

3.5.5. **Tomonobu Itagaki**

Tomonobu Itagaki also has a similar philosophical outlook on video game creation by making sure that mechanics are at the heart of a game and personally working on the project throughout. However he also differs somewhat from Shigeru Miyamoto in the sense that he would rather create a game which can get the most out of the console that it is being played on in both graphical quality and player input. He relies on making 'TV Games' for the consumers who like to vivid realism style of the game rather than a stylized format with more emphasis on the game play.

*Figure 9: Global Ninja Gaiden Dragon Sword Sales, Source: VGChartz*
“I view our games as "TV games". That means it is a medium, which uses graphics and sound. And once you approach everything with that simple concept or philosophy, I guess it means we come up with the level of game that we do. You need to spend time not just on depth of the gameplay, it's about visual and sound because TV is the medium we have to use.”(Itagaki T, Kikizo, 2004)

In addition to this Itagaki has also mentioned that he likes to create his games to match his philosophy of realistic graphics by supporting the consoles which will show off his work to the highest quality and at the point in time are the more Westernised consoles from Sony and Microsoft but this cannot be said for his hand-held products. “In the world of console gaming, hardware power rules all, but that is not the case in the world of portable gaming. People look for how the game feels to the touch, and the physical properties of the device itself become extremely important.”(Itagaki, 1up.com, 2007). With a hand-held console as innovative as Nintendo's DS Itagaki could see the potential even before it was released on the market and then chose to support and make his games for that console as the new experience of the DS interested him greatly. Yet again here is another Japanese developer showing how versatile they can be within the industry by catering for a large global market while also sticking to their personal development philosophies. He has shown with 'Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword' that a game developed by a Japanese studio can do well outside its own domestic market especially a game that caters towards both the Western market for the realistic graphics and the Eastern for its story and mechanical aspects.
3.6. **Sales**

In order to generate any data that can be analysed this study will look into a variety of sales figures around the world to try and identify any correlation between countries and developers. One area in particular is what genre of games are the most popular at any given time in a certain location and if that has any effect on the games that are being developed and sold to their consumers and how that might differ from other markets around the world if any.

Gaming has taken over the world in recent years and can be seen with wealth of the booming gaming industry. Home consoles have pioneered the market since the move from the arcades into people’s homes with PC, handheld and mobile gaming becoming more and more popular by the day. In the western world home consoles are again at the top of the list with 51% of households owning at least one games console. (Source: *Industry facts - the entertainment software association*, 2015). To compare, the East prefer the handheld and mobile markets due to their ease of use and ever expanding population forcing people to find space to game while balancing their hectic lives and smaller living spaces.

The eastern side of the market is made up of a variety of countries however the biggest influencers in that marker are China, Japan and South Korea which make up three of the top four for overall game revenues for 2015 after a significant boom in the Chinese market over the last few years. A main reason for this boom is the recent change of laws in the Chinese government meaning that home consoles can now be sold in all areas of China. (Chen and Post, 2015) In 2001, China banned both the manufacturing and selling of home consoles across China as they feared repeated playing of home consoles in children under 10 would have a negative effect on their wellbeing. This ban forced gamers to use other mediums in order to play their games, the ban in turn helped the sales of both mobile and PC games in China. In 2015 the ban was lifted and home consoles flooded the market propelling China to the world leader in video game revenue.

Another factor affecting China’s video game market revenue is the overwhelming population size within China itself. China has just over a 1.3 Billion population which is nearly 1 Billion more than the next country on the list for revenue being the United States. With the higher population becoming more technological advanced inevitably more people will become more
interested in video games through any medium. This naturally gives China an advantage in the amount of revenue that they produce through the video games market if there are more people using the internet, technology and video games as a whole.

As of 2016 China are now the leaders in video game revenue across the world which can be seen in Fig 10 and shows no sign of slowing down.

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<th>IMAGE</th>
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**Figure 10: Top 10 Global Revenues via Countries in 2016 (Source Newzoo)**

For the west, the United States of America dominate the market with Western Europe trailing behind. The Middle Eastern countries also play a part in the overall market however most of their gaming revenue is built around the mobile industry while also being fairly new and underdeveloped I will not be deeply exploring that area.

The Western countries have always been near the top end of the list for video games revenue due to the fact that more of these countries are more technologically developed than others around the world meaning that they have access to a larger variety of consoles and games.
Video game genres play a large part in what distinguishes most of the countries from each other as onlookers can see what types of games are selling the best. Publishers can then use this data to formulate a better decision and reason behind whether to fund a project rather as they want to make sure they will make enough profit to break even and more importantly generate profit for the company.

In the current market Action shooters are one of the most popular genre of games among western consumers. This might be due to the higher quality of graphics being achieved on consoles in the current generation meaning that the games developed are more realistic. Another factor that might influence the sales of this genre is that the average player age is around 30 meaning they would rather play a game that has mature influences than a game that might have been developed for a younger audience such as the variety of games that are released on the Nintendo Wii.
Figure 11: Top 10 Games selling in USA over 2016 (Source VGChartz)

Figure 11 shows how popular the Action Shooter genre is within the USA, with having 9 out of 10 of the most sold throughout the year in that genre. The games in yellow are games which
have been released this year showing that again most of the games being released are in the Action Shooter genre.

Much like the USA, Europe also has an obsession with the Action / Shooter genre having 7 out of the top 10 games most sold in 2016 being in that genre. This stems from being culturally similar with one another. They are both typical Christian countries with the same way of thinking when it comes to society decisions, consumer behaviour and player feedback towards the games that are being released.
Over the years the Action / Shooter genre has become more and more successful in the Western Market. Figure 13 again shows the top 10 yearly video game sales however it
portrays a different picture than 2016 about what genre of games are popular. Here there is no one standout genre but only a mixture of different genres typically played on the Nintendo DS such as Simulation, Sports and Platform games. These genre of games were popular in 2006 due to the release of the Nintendo DS in 2004 which took the world by storm and drowned out the competition as it was the first console of its kind to utilise the 3D aspect.
## Europe Yearly Chart

The year’s top selling games at retail ranked by unit sales

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<td>Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day (DS)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>New Super Mario Bros. (DS)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,472,240</td>
<td>1,472,241</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Animal Crossing: Wild World (DS)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,169,228</td>
<td>1,169,220</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mario Kart DS (DS)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>963,501</td>
<td>1,742,658</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Gears of War (X360)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>750,001</td>
<td>750,002</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wii Sports (Wii)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>634,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories (PSP)</td>
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<td>562,851</td>
<td>1,446,139</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Sonic Rush (DS)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>483,449</td>
<td>622,080</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Big Brain Academy (DS)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>455,693</td>
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**Figure 13**: Top 10 selling games in EU in 2006
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Yearly</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dragon Quest Monsters Joker 3 (3DS)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>516,001</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Square Enix, Role-Playing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yakuza Sangokushi (3DS)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>358,882</td>
<td>358,882</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Level 5, Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dragon Quest Builders: Revive Alefgard (PSV)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>289,649</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Square Enix, Role-Playing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Software, Role-Playing</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dark Souls III (PS4)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>267,100</td>
<td>267,100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>From Software, Role-Playing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Square Enix, Role-Playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dragon Quest Builders: Revive Alefgard (PS4)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>212,072</td>
<td>212,072</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Square Enix, Role-Playing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From Software, Role-Playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monster Hunter X (3DS)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>191,343</td>
<td>2,733,327</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Capcom, Action</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Kan Colle! Kai (PSV)</td>
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<td>181,097</td>
<td>181,097</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kadokawa Games, Action</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Splatoon (WiiU)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>150,450</td>
<td>1,298,613</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nintendo, Shooter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yakuza: Kiwami (PS4)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>149,268</td>
<td>149,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sega, Adventure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Minecraft (PSV)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>143,124</td>
<td>721,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, Misc</td>
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</table>

*Figure 14: Top 10 Games sold in Japan over 2016 (Source VGChartz)*
Comparing the sales to Figure 14 which shows the top 10 best-selling games in Japan, helps to state that only two games from the top 10 are in the Action/Shooter genre, one of these games coming from Nintendo and not having any mechanics to shooting and kill other players but rather having to paint the map around them. Another feature which is different from both EU and USA sales data is that Role-playing games are more properly than any other game genre. This follows on from the research done earlier which highlights that Eastern players prefer that genre to any other, in addition to this it shows the amount of games that are released in the East that aren’t released in the Western side of the market.

All of the tables show information which is very important as it helps to clearly show that there is a difference in taste between the two sides of the changing industry. The sales figures in the tables solidifies the topic brought up in the literature review from a number of sources that the Western taste in games is more drawn towards the Shooter genre whereas the East like to play more Role-playing favoured games.

One popular game which traverses both sides of the market is Dark Souls 3. It’s number 4 in Japan for yearly sales even though it has only been released for three weeks showing that there are some aspects of the game that appeals to the Japanese market heavily. However it didn’t make it into the top 10 sold in USA or Europe due to it only being released for a week in those respective countries, it is projected to become one of the bestselling games of the year.

3.6.1. Dark Souls

Dark Souls 3 from the studio From Software has been released recently across the world and has already kept up with its high standard of previous games being critically acclaimed by critics for its hyper realistic graphics, RPG aspect and harder mechanics designed for a more ‘hard-core’ player base. These aspects of the ‘Souls’ series have been very well received by gamers from all different walks of life and cultural backgrounds.

Dark Souls is a great game to show how with inclusion of features that appeal to both cultures they enable to build an extremely popular series of games to sell all over the world. Starting with Demon Souls in 2009 the Japanese development company From Software has built up their reputation with a number of critically acclaimed games in the souls series which are now
regarded as some of the best games ever created. They combine mechanics which have proven to be a hit with gamers across many different genres such as character customisation, blood / gore, heightened difficulty, replay ability, multiplayer and a deep and rich story.

A main area where the soul’s series are popular is that the developers make the games with a higher difficulty than normal games. They do not have options to make the enemies harder or easier but start the player with a pre-set difficulty that cannot be changed. This aspect of their games caters to both the hard-core games on both sides of the market as it appeals to the replay ability that the eastern players like while also not being a walk in the park that again appeals to the western audience.

Another popular feature that merges the industry together in its love for the series is the dark, gritty and gory feel of the game as a whole. Looking from an outside perspective can see elements from a variety of sources that the developers know will appeal to a huge number of players.

For players on the eastern side of the market the 'Souls' series with its dark, gory feel will appeal to games who are interested in Anime which is a staple part of the culture in Japan. A large part of Anime culture has blood and gore as an integral part of the story when it comes
to combat. This helps to show the adult nature of the story and help to distinguish itself from normal more light-hearted anime series.

Figure 15: Dark Souls 2, 2014

Dark souls fits in well with its violent nature and adult themes that cater to a number of players in the western side of the gaming industry especially in the US. Many US gamers own a number of games which have combat elements as it is the genre that players find most interesting to them. The first person shooter genre of games have become a front runner in the US as people are looking to get away from their daily lives and jump into another reality. Below shows the top 10 games sold in the US over 2015. Evidently we can see the proof that at the current period in video games for the US, combat games are very popular. 7 out of 10 games in the top 10 are combat oriented and some with the direct emphasis of killing other people within the games using the most gruesome ways possible.

“Best-Selling Physical Games in US for All of 2015:

1. Call of Duty: Black Ops III (Xbox One, PS4, 360, PS3, PC)
2. Madden NFL 16 (PS4, Xbox One, 360, PS3)
3. Fallout 4 (PS4, Xbox One, PC)
4. Star Wars: Battlefront (Xbox One, PS4, PC)
Even though the Souls series of games aren't in the first person shooter genre it still has aspects that will appeal to players in the US market and has shown over the years that it are popular among players who love its gory aspects and heightened difficulty.

Yet again companies such as From Software and Paradox Interactive are starting to think outside the box and are now developing games which appeal to all the areas of the industry and combining things which players from different cultures and backgrounds can enjoy.

Figure 16: Top 10 Selling Game of 2015 in the US, Source: Makuch, 2016

Even though the Souls series of games aren't in the first person shooter genre it still has aspects that will appeal to players in the US market and has shown over the years that it are popular among players who love its gory aspects and heightened difficulty.

Yet again companies such as From Software and Paradox Interactive are starting to think outside the box and are now developing games which appeal to all the areas of the industry and combining things which players from different cultures and backgrounds can enjoy.

5. Grand Theft Auto V (PS4, Xbox One, 360, PS3, PC)
6. NBA 2K16 (PS4, Xbox One, 360, PS3)
7. Minecraft (360, Xbox One, PS3, PS4)
8. Mortal Kombat X (PS4, Xbox One)
9. FIFA 16 (PS4, Xbox One, 360, PS3)
10. Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare (Xbox One, PS4, 360, PS3, PC)
3.6.2. Game Budgets

Some games in the Western market now have Film style budgets going in the hundreds of millions however publishers cannot be sure that they will make their money back. To ensure they get the most return possible publishers try to cater to the mainstream audience meaning that they go for realism and usually a first person shooter which is very popular in the western market (see Fig 11) at the moment with the likes of Call of Duty and Battlefield.

A number of players complain about this as most companies go for graphical quality rather than story elements however the sales do speak for themselves and prove that these types of games are best-sellers. If players want to change the market they only need to make a stand and stop buying the games.

![Figure 17: Top 10 Highest Budget Games](image-url)
Figure 17 shows only 1/10 of the highest budget games produced in the world came from Eastern developers, this is because there are more AAA studios in the Western world which aims to produce more games for the masses so that they can make a much return as possible. Not even Nintendo who are a big developer in the market have a game within the top 10. Why?

- Eastern developers like to keep costs down as much as possible?
- They prefer to focus on gameplay rather than realistic aesthetics which cost less money to produce?
- Their development structure is different and people in higher positions get down and dirty with the other artists?

Moreover another possibility is that Nintendo's consoles are less powerful than Sony's PlayStation and Microsoft's Xbox meaning teams working on the games can afford to be smaller in numbers. In addition if a development team want to produce a game for the one of the other consoles then they might want to head towards the western worlds as their companies are largely based over there. On the other hand developers that want to produce something for the PC they are able to do so from anywhere in the world with the help of the internet.

When it comes to budgeting in games money can only take the game so far, there is no way in which more money can guarantee success. An article from Games Industry International in 2011 about video games in China portray this theme well. They explore development costs within a variety of company’s and compare them with the sales of their games that they sell which is displayed in Figure 18. The title that they use sticks out as it concisely explains what point they are conveying in their graph.

Figure 18 presents the information that even though a game might have a large budget it will not guarantee success. This information represents how there isn’t always money needed in order for a game to be a success rather just a good idea behind the game being developed. Indie games come into this equation which has been explored earlier in the study as it backs up the notion behind them and why they are becoming more and more popular in the industry.
all over the world.

*Console Games Are Hit-Driven, With Investment No Guarantee of Success*

- A: Red Steel
- B: Crackdown
- C: Lost Planet
- D: Assassin's Creed
- E: Stranglehold
- F: Halo 3
- G: Final Fantasy IX
- H: Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2
- I: Shenmue
- J: Grand Theft Auto IV

Figure 18: (Development Costs Vs Sales, Source Games Industry International, 2011)
4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

When this study was started a number of objectives were produced in order to achieve the aim. These objective were broken up in some areas so that different themes could be highlighted in order to support the result of the objectives.

Firstly, the studies objective was to produce an extensive literature review to highlight any previous work done by other people in similar areas of research such as cultural identities effecting the video game industry. This study has explored their work well and then expanded on certain aspects.

From then the study looked into a variety of themes which currently might have an effect on the video games industry. These themes include company directors, which have more of an influence in the Eastern side of the industry due to the fact that they have more of an overwhelming opinion when it comes to the creation of the game. Even though multiple people are working on a project they will still need to have everything Ok’d by the company director as they usually have large involvement in the creative process. There is a similarity in the Western industry with having a ‘lead artist / programmer’ however they aren’t usually the director of the company developing the game. Numerous company directors in the Eastern market apply this method when creating games such as Shigeru Miyamoto and Tomonobu Itagaki which have both been explored earlier in the study.

Another theme which has been identified in this section 3.6 is the newly developed Chinese force in the global market for video games. As of 2016 China has taken the top spot in global revenue for video games helped by both the increase of the mobile industry and the recent lifting of the console ban in the country. These themes have help China to tower above other countries in terms of sales which can only mean that developers will now be targeting China with their newest project. This in turn will heavily influence the market in the coming years.

Thirdly this study has explored the many creative influences around the world which help to inspire game developers in all aspects of their career. A variety of art mediums influence the
video games industry. These mediums stick to their place of origin for the larger influence such as Anime in Japan and Disney in America however they are starting to travel into different cultures with more people using technology to research other cultures.

A final theme that was investigated in this study is towards the sales trends between the two different sides of the market and how they affect each other and the games that are being developed. The results from looking at the sales figures are that the West like to spend a large amount of money when creating games in order to make their money back however this has a negative effect when it comes to innovation as the publishers cannot take a risk. This means that the innovators in the West are the ‘Independent Developers’. These are small teams making games on a very small budget however are usually very innovative. In comparison, the East develop games on a smaller budget than the West meaning that they can take some risks when it comes towards the game development process and what types of games are being produced.

Overall, this study has explored all the objectives set out in order to properly analyse both the Western and Eastern side of the gaming industry. It has shown that there are a large number of influences when it comes to the gaming industry as a whole. If a development team want to create a successful game breaching both sides of the market they need to make sure that first and foremost the game idea is unique and well thought.

4.1.1. Future Research

This study has identified a variety of influences from all walks of life that are affecting the video games industry today however there are still areas that could be investigated further which haven’t been explored within this study. These could involve the areas concerning:

- Religion within video games. How different religions effect how well a game appeals to different consumers of different faiths. As religion effects the whole world in a substantial way it will not doubt have an effect on the video games industry however that would in itself be able to be explored in another study.
- Where will China take the gaming industry? With the massive boost from games of all mediums in China it will continue to be at the forefront of the gaming industry. Will it
become a new hub of game development in the future in both creation and consumption of video games?

- Since the rise of mobile games in recent history, will the mobile industry start to drown out home consoles and make them redundant in the market?
- In addition to the rise in the mobile industry will the Virtual Reality have the same effect on the market or is it a niche section of the market and will go hand in hand with the other forms already in the market.
- How much does the internet influence the video games industry? Most of the topics talked about in this study all have the internet in common as it is starting to play a role in everyday life. Will society become even more connected to the internet and in turn will video games have to develop once again?

All future studies that tackle the video game industry and its influences need to be wary of taking too many different aspects into account. There are endless topics that influence the games industry however due to it being an ever evolving industry there is no set reason that drives the industry but a mixture of global scale.
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