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**Digital Mexican: Visual Representation in Video Games**

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty

of

Drexel University

by

Angel Martin Palomares

In partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree

Of

Masters of Science in Digital Media

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## Abstract

Digital Mexican: Visual Representation in Video Games

Angel Martin Palomares

People all over the world enjoy playing video games. Audiences worldwide have enthusiastically embraced video games. Although video games are popular, minorities may not be adequately represented in them. In games, their cultures are frequently reduced to stereotypical portrayals, which are all too familiar. Mexican culture and people are commonly stereotyped, underrepresented, misrepresented, and appropriated. The objective of this thesis was to gather and evaluate data from Mexican gamers using a grounded theory approach with an empirical lens. The aim was to gain insights into the qualitative analysis of their emotions and opinions towards their depiction in video games and the utilization of their cultural elements. To facilitate future game development, an interactive website was created to guide the appropriate use of Mexican culture. The findings from the gathered data revealed that Mexican gamers expressed dissatisfaction with how they are stereotyped in video games, expressed a desire for more representation, expressed discontent with the misrepresentation of Mexico, and expressed concerns about cultural appropriation.

**Keywords:** Cultural Appropriation, Racial Stereotypes, Underrepresentation, Misrepresentation, Video Games, Mexicans.



## 1. Introduction

The Entertainment Software Association (ESA) reports that the video game industry has been steadily growing, earning 43.4 billion dollars in 2019, 56.1 billion dollars in 2020, and 60.5 billion dollars in 2021 (urbanemujoe, 2022). The industry's growth can also be noted by the number of viewers watching live streams on platforms like Twitch and other live-streaming services. According to TwitchTracker (a service that provides information on how many streamers and viewers are currently active on Twitch), Twitch had around an average of 2.21 million concurrent viewers in 2020, 2.78 million concurrent viewers in 2021, and 2.58 million concurrent viewers in 2022 (*Twitch Statistics & Charts*, n.d.). Aside from doing well in the United States, the industry is also growing steadily in Mexico. Mexican video game revenue was 1.6 billion dollars in 2019, 1.49 billion dollars in 2020, and 1.73 billion dollars in 2021, according to Tiango Bianchi, an expert covering Internet and gaming in Latin America and Spain (*Video Gaming Revenue in Mexico 2021*, n.d.)

According to Clement, a research lead specializing in internet and gaming, the global number of gamers reached approximately 3.2 billion in 2021. Asia had the highest player count, with 1.4 billion, followed by Europe with 715.8 million, Latin America with 419.6 million, and North America with 284.9 million (Number of Gamers Worldwide by

Region 2021, n.d.). Gamers come from diverse backgrounds, encompassing various ethnicities, sexual orientations, and religious beliefs. However, it has been observed that game developers may not always adequately represent the diverse identities within their audience. Anna Anthropy, an acclaimed game developer and critic, expressed concerns about the lack of inclusion, as it not only isolates minority gamers but also restricts innovation by perpetuating repetitive content (Anthropy, 2012).

Mexican culture is among the numerous cultures stereotyped widely in the media. Because video games are interactive and offer a degree of agency, they enhance narrative consumption more than those forms of media such as movies or television. A noteworthy gaming aspect is the realistic graphics and gameplay mechanics that may keep players occupied for hours. Video games are a kind of entertainment that can alter players' perceptions of reality, identity, and how they see others (Jordan, 2014). Studies have been conducted on video games and representation, but they primarily focus on how race and gender are depicted in video games (Mou, n.d.; Deskins, n.d.). In general, minority and female images are stereotypical and do not reflect reality, according to the research.

To make consumers feel like they are part of an audience, developers must recognize that their content might affect their target audiences' gameplay experiences, particularly those with representations that differ from the norm. Mexican representation in popular culture has generally been very stereotypical, and video games are no

exception. Ediberto Roman, who specializes in immigration issues, asserts that it is unlikely that a Latino or Latina will be depicted as a working-class member or a law-abiding citizen. The media will often use clichés, such as a hot-blooded sexy character, a seductive curvaceous vixen, a gang member, a cartel boss, a comedic relief character, or, at most, the antagonist (Roman, 2000).

African Americans, Latinos, and Arabs are just a few minorities who have been studied for their representation in the media (Sisler, 2008)(Passmore et al., 2017)(Rivadeneyra, 2006). However, literature about Mexican representation in video games is scarce and usually associated with all groups in Latin America. It is crucial to examine how various ethnic groups are portrayed in the media since it may influence how people see things and foster understanding, fear, or distrust (Saleem et al. Lemieux, 2017). Negative stereotypes of Mexicans are frequently used in video game narratives. This encourages the harmful influence of not critically understanding Mexican culture and dissuades non-Mexican gamers from seeing Mexican individuals as complex since they are portrayed differently in video games.

To effectively address the representation of Mexican identities in video games, it is important to understand how they are depicted in the medium. Identifying gaps in perception can result in progressive improvements to the present representational flaws. Hence, this thesis looks at various video games and analyzes how they visually depict Mexican culture and how Mexicans perceive their culture to be represented. An

interactive design website was created with design samples and case studies to assist designers in incorporating Mexican cultural themes in digital media applications, focusing on but not limited to video games. This website's goal is to provide a resource to developers about the usage of Mexican culture in their upcoming projects rather than to condemn them for their past work. According to survey participants, Mexicans like playing video games, but they also want their culture and natural instincts to be reflected in the games they play.

### **1.1 Research Question**

What do Mexican gamers feel about the portrayal of Mexican culture in video games?

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Stereotypes of Latinos and Latinas

Video games, television, and cinema have been widely acknowledged to engage in stereotyping and directly impact how culture is portrayed and represented. Courtney and Whipple (1983) have described stereotyping as mentally short-handling an idea or an image to communicate it quickly and effectively. We see a diverse cast of characters whose identities do not conform to collective norms and whose representation is reduced to simplified caricatures of what would otherwise be a complex concept. Latino or Latina characters in movies and television are often portrayed in stereotypical roles, such as living in the desert or crime-ridden areas, as gangsters, providing comedic relief, as maids (for Latinas), or being sexy and sassy (for Latina women). Additionally, Latinos are often depicted as being highly romantic (Mastro et al., 2007)(Blakemore, 2017).

Video games similarly portray Latinos to how they have been depicted in mainstream media, which means that they are usually based on what was popular at the time the video game was produced. This is evident in the *Grand Theft Auto* series, which has long depended on racial and gender stereotypes. Women are presented as just sexual objects for the male protagonist, while Blacks and Latinos are portrayed as antagonists and criminals. Despite its ethically dubious characters, the franchise can be seen as a parody of modern American lives. In fighting games like *Tekken* and *Street Fighter*, fighters from Mexico are often portrayed as luchadors. Characters from these series lean

on longstanding stereotypes as shorthand for representing gender and culture. Stereotypes in video games offer a much more dynamic element than in television or movies since they allow people to act as someone else. Using stereotypes in video games makes the story move along much quicker, allowing the characters to develop faster. It has been demonstrated that stereotypes play a crucial role in facilitating communication between players and video games, as they assist players in identifying the race that the game is attempting to represent.

In an article that Rob Cover wrote, Cover notes that stereotypes play an important form of communication when presented inside video games. Cover explains that "In digital gaming, the stereotype becomes an even more important form of communication, due to the requirement to represent recognizable identities, bodies, avatars, scenes and characteristics with speed and without lengthy or detailed framing that would otherwise permit complex interpretation (as in, e.g., a novel.) (Cover, 2016)". Cover argues that certain users may not have encountered radical discourses that influence their perceptions of themselves and others, which may contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes. However, Cover contends that digital gaming has the potential to be a platform for promoting more progressive and ethical representations through subversion.

A study by Rocio Rivadeneyra (2006), who specializes in media and its influence on adolescents and emerging adults with an emphasis on Latinos, examined Latino perceptions of stereotypes among high school students. A questionnaire about Latino stereotypes on television was given to a focus group of thirty-seven high school Latino students. In Rivadeneyra's study on Latino perceptions, her primary research question was, "Are Latino adolescents aware of the stereotypical portrayals of Latino characters on television?" After conducting their research, they discovered that the thirty-seven high school Latino students in the study were aware that most English-language television programs depict Latinos negatively and stereotypically, as opposed to Spanish-language television, which presented Latinos in a more natural light. This aimed to determine whether minorities knew how television depicted them. In previous studies, it was only assumed that the participants were aware of their depictions (Rivadeneyra, 2006).

Michelle Ortiz and Elizabeth Behm Morawitz surveyed 209 Latino Americans to examine the impact of English and Spanish-language television exposure in the United States on how Latinos perceive intergroup relations. Before conducting their survey, they hypothesized that "English and Spanish-language television consumption will interact in predicting perceptions of treatment toward Latinos." Using a social identity-based cultivation approach to examine the influence of television on Latinos and regression analysis to analyze the results, they were able to determine that their hypothesis was partially supported since "increased English-language television consumption was

associated with increased perceptions of prejudice and discrimination against Latinos (Ortiz & Behm-Morawitz, 2015)."

Both studies' participants recognized that Spanish-language television shows typically depict Latinos favorably, while English television shows tend to portray them negatively. In video games, minorities are commonly stereotyped as a way to quickly convey their representation to players without delving into specific details. Stereotyping is a complex issue that can have adverse effects on individuals and society as a whole. When individuals from certain groups are constantly portrayed in a negative or simplified manner, it can lead to negative perceptions and discrimination towards that group. According to research conducted by Dill and Burgess (2011), racial stereotypes in video games can impact how they perceive someone. The study found that individuals who played video games containing stereotypical depictions of Black men as criminals or dangerous were less likely to view a Black political candidate positively than a White political candidate. This suggests that exposure to negative stereotypes can influence people's perceptions and attitudes toward individuals from different racial backgrounds.

Game developers must be mindful of their representations' impact and strive for more accurate and diverse portrayals. Obtaining feedback on how Mexican gamers perceive their representation in video games is essential as it can guide game developers in avoiding detrimental stereotypes. Through the examination of survey results obtained

via a qualitative approach, a comprehensive understanding of how Mexican gamers perceive their representation in video games can be obtained, which will be presented later in this paper.

## **2.2 Latino Underrepresentation in Video Games**

Compared to other ethnic groups, Latino characters are underrepresented in video games. When Latino characters appear in video games, they are often given minor roles in the plot or portrayed as adversaries. Children Now, a community-based group in Oakland, California, assessed the incidence of stereotyped themes in video games. Regarding representation, their study looked at the top ten best-selling video games from each system for the period of January to May 2001, and they discovered that of the 874 player-controlled characters, 635 (73%) were males. In contrast, 107 (12%) were females. Characters based on their ethnicity consisted of fifty-two percent White characters, thirty-seven percent Black characters, five percent Latino characters, and three percent Asian characters. When Black or Latino characters did appear in video games, according to the research, they were frequently the supporting character and performed stereotypical roles (i.e., athletes, urban outlaws, violent offenders, etc.) (Glaubke et al., 2001).

In a separate study, Dmitri Williams et al. examined the representation of characters in video games and sampled one hundred and fifty games across nine platforms from March 2005 to February 2006. According to the results, White characters

represented 84.95% of all primary characters, Black primary characters represented 9.67%, and Native Americans or Hispanics did not appear as primary characters in any of the analyzed games; they only appeared as secondary characters (Williams et al., 2009).

Another study by Ross Orland found that sixty-seven percent of the main protagonists in the top fifty games of 2014 were White. Black and Asian protagonists account for three percent of this group, and Latino protagonists comprise one percent (Shoemaker & College, 2014.).

Most of the studies that were discussed up to now focused on just AAA gaming, which refers to video games developed and marketed by major publishers. But Carle Passmore et al. conducted a systematic content analysis of eighty games from Steam's top-seller list to determine the racial diversity within independent games. They used a specific set of criteria to identify indie games for their research. They defined indie games as those that were developed by small teams or individuals, without the backing of a major publisher or financial support from a large company. They also excluded games produced by well-known indie studios, such as Double Fine or Klei Entertainment, to focus on lesser-known developers. They then searched for and selected 80 indie games that met these criteria for their analysis. Their analysis had two parts: the racial representation of main characters in indie games and the racial representation of non-playable characters (NPCs). The results were that when it came to main playable

characters, they found out that out of sixty-three games that had humans as main characters, seventy percent of the main characters were White, eight percent were Asian, six percent were Black, two percent were Native American, fourteen percent were biracial or ambiguous, and zero percent were Hispanic. According to the analysis of the representation of NPCs, fifty-five percent of the NPCs were White, thirteen percent were Asians, ten percent were Black, four percent were Hispanics, and three percent were Native Americans (Passmore et al., 2017).

Considering all the studies discussed in this section, it was observed that both Indie and AAA games exhibited a diminished portrayal of Latino characters, whether in primary roles or as non-playable characters. Statista reports that Latin America ranked third in the world regarding the number of gamers in 2021, with Asia ranking first, Europe ranking second, and North America ranking fourth, based on the number of gamers worldwide. Demonstrating that the demographic of gamers hailing from Latin America is significantly larger than that of North America (*Number of Gamers Worldwide by Region 2021*, n.d.).

International Game Developers Association (IGDA) is a nonprofit organization representing game developers worldwide. Developer satisfaction surveys are conducted biannually by their organization to assess the current population composition, quality of life, and overall satisfaction within the game industry. A survey conducted by the IGDA

in 2021 included 803 respondents, which revealed: "The developer satisfaction survey 2021 has a Western bias regarding ethnicity, language, and country of work." A total of seventy-eight percent of respondents identified as White, people who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x were at ten percent, while thirteen percent identified with more than one ethnicity (*Developer Satisfaction Survey (DSS) – IGDA, n.d.*). The underrepresentation of Latinos and other racial groups in video games, along with their often-stereotypical portrayals, could result from the gaming industry's Western-centric nature.

To promote diversity, understanding, and engagement within the gaming community, creators need to acknowledge the significance of producing inclusive and diverse content that reflects the experiences and identities of all players. By tackling the underrepresentation and stereotyping of Latinos and other races, the industry can address these problems and encourage greater inclusivity.

### **2.3 Misrepresentation of Latin America in Video Games**

Mexico is often portrayed in video games as a desert teeming with drug dealers, drug lords, and dangerous scenarios. Games like *Call of Juarez: The Cartel* and *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advance Warfighter 2* (GRAW 2) contribute to misrepresenting Mexico as a perilous region. GRAW 2, developed by Ubisoft Paris and Red Storm Entertainment and published by Ubisoft, especially reinforces this inaccurate depiction. This game centers

on a group of skilled soldiers from the future tasked with suppressing a civil war in Mexico to prevent its spread into the United States. The game is situated in Juarez, where the majority of the city is portrayed as being under rebel control, with burnt structures, destroyed automobiles, and destroyed roadways visible in the game. The controversy surrounding *GRAW 2* centered on its portrayal of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, as a lawless area needing military intervention. Upon the game's release in 2007, the mayor of Juarez and the governor of Chihuahua criticized it for propagating xenophobic concepts regarding Mexicans residing in the border state and discouraging individuals from traveling to the border city ("Mexican Mayor Slams *GRAW2*," n.d.) ("Mexican Governor Orders Seizure of *GRAW2*," n.d.).

In *Call of Juarez: The Cartel*, Techland developed the game, and Ubisoft Entertainment published this first-person shooter game that features three protagonists on a mission to dismantle the Mendoza cartel, a fictional Mexican cartel operating in both Mexico and the United States. The protagonists pursue Mendoza to Juarez, where the player witnesses poverty-stricken buildings and traditional marketplaces taken over by the cartel. Legislators from Chihuahua attempted to prohibit *Call of Juarez: The Cartel* due to its portrayal of drug cartel violence, similar to the ban of *GRAW2* in Mexico. As drug wars are sensitive subjects and Mexico has experienced challenges in its fight against drugs, the legislators did not want children exposed to such content (Mexico moves to ban *Call of Juarez: The Cartel*, published, 2011). Games centered around the United States-Mexico

border can perpetuate racist stereotypes through their interactive mechanics, regardless of whether they explicitly mention particular locations.

Regarding other Latin American countries' representation in video games, the Venezuelan government expressed concern about *Mercenaries 2: World in Flames*, a game developed by *Pandemic Studios* and published by *Electronic Arts*. The Venezuelan government considered the game to present Venezuela as a country in turmoil and disorder and to portray Hugo Chavez in a negative light, which they feared could damage his reputation ("Venezuelan Government Takes Issue with Mercenaries 2," n.d.). Bolivian officials took issue with *Ubisoft Entertainment* and *Ubisoft Paris'* depiction of their country as a center of drug production and trafficking in *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Wildlands*. Their displeasure was expressed, and they even threatened to sue (*Bolivia Threaten Legal Action over Ghost Recon Wildlands' Depiction of the Country*, 2017).

The examples provided of Latin America's depiction in these video games resulted in government officials expressing dissatisfaction, fearing that players may mistakenly believe the video game representation to reflect the actual locations accurately. Using Disneyland as an example, Baudrillard illustrates how an imaginary world creates an experience that leads observers to believe these hyperreal locations are real (Baudrillard, 1994). The digital realm can create a heightened sense of reality, particularly when the player has not physically experienced the real-life location.

Claudio Rossi's article suggests that the portrayal of Latin-American cities in video games can impact players' perceptions of these real-world locations. The author argues that video games often rely on stereotypical depictions of Latin-American cities, which can reinforce cultural assumptions and biases. These depictions may also create a distorted image of these places, which can influence players' expectations and experiences when they visit them in real life. However, Rossi also notes that video games have the potential to challenge these stereotypes and offer more nuanced representations of Latin-American cities. By doing so, they can help players develop a more accurate and empathetic understanding of these places (Rossi, 2020).

Game designers must carefully consider the portrayal of the game environment, including the selection of objects, their usage, and their visual representation. Due to these decisions, there is often concern over the portrayal of certain cultures in games. The article by Majed S. Balela and Darren Mundy on how video games portray heritage artifacts returns to the issue of how media representations of culture influence our understanding of the world. To understand whether ideas of authenticity play a role in depicting cultural artifacts in game worlds, the authors interview game developers worldwide. Based on their interviews and analysis, game designers frequently do not consider accurate depictions of cultural items to be a significant priority when designing video games (Balela & Mundy, 2016).

However, when a game requires cultural accuracy, the situation changes, as Balela and Mundy state, “When developing games, which include cultural items, design teams make use of a range of different resources, ranging from personal knowledge, secondary sources, to direct experience (Balela & Mundy, 2016).” Game designers use a variety of information sources to ensure that the culture depicted in their games is accurate as possible. As mentioned by Balela and Mundy, “During the interviews, the majority of game designers were noted and categorized as using mainly secondary sources” An interactive website focused on Mexican culture could be beneficial for game designers, who frequently depend on secondary sources to gather cultural information. This resource could aid them in accurately incorporating Mexican culture into their future projects.

#### **2.4 Mexican Culture Appropriation**

The definition of cultural appropriation, as provided by the Cambridge dictionary, is “The act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture (*Cultural Appropriation*, n.d.)” In an article that Jason Jackson wrote, Jackson characterizes cultural appropriation as:

“a kind of cultural change or movement that is recognizable because it is accompanied by a metacultural discourse in which source communities—as represented by those who take up the role of spokespeople—do not approve of,

and are aggrieved by, an unwanted taking of an important cultural practice, cultural form, or body of cultural knowledge (Jackson, 2021)."

Game developers "draw from a rich field of [cultural] topoi and representations that is well established." Consequently, game design often involves the integration of pre-existing cultural representations, leading to the creation of "a complex cultural meta sign" that adapts "familiar motifs from popular literature, art, cinema, or even political discourse" (Reichmuth, & Werning, 2011).

Sometimes, even after conducting research or receiving education about a culture, individuals may still unintentionally appropriate or misrepresent aspects of it. Sisler's study explored the depiction of Arab and Muslim characters in video games and revealed that cultural stereotypes are often used in their portrayal. Using a visual analysis-based approach, Sisler analyzed games from both Western and Middle Eastern regions to investigate how Arab culture and people are represented in video games. The study uncovered several instances of misrepresentation in games developed by teams from both regions, which Sisler extensively discusses in his work (Sisler, 2008).

Game developers may receive negative feedback and face criticism regarding their depiction of culture in their games. In a now-deleted article, Dia Lacina, a Native American game critic, voiced her criticism of *Horizon Zero Dawn*'s developers for their portrayal of various tribes in the game and their usage of terms such as "savages," "braves," "tribal," and "primitive" to describe these tribes. (*What We Talk About, When We*

*Don't Talk About Natives*, 2017). By stating that "The uncritical use of words such as primitive and savage to describe appropriated cultural signifiers on large media platforms serves to reinforce racist and colonialist ideas about indigenous people (*What We Talk About, When We Don't Talk About Natives*, 2017)", they elaborate on why these words can be harmful. It should be noted that this is not universally true, as there are instances where certain gamers may actually praise the use of cultural elements in video games. For example, in *Super Mario Odyssey*, Mario has the ability to don a sombrero or a sarape as part of his attire. However, in an article published by The Daily Caller, Rebecca C-Palacios criticized *Nintendo* for cultural appropriation of Mexican culture in the game. Interestingly, some Mexican players rejected her criticism and instead praised *Nintendo* for acknowledging their culture (*Nintendo Cuts Sombrero From Super Mario Following 'Cultural Appropriation' Outrage*, n.d.). Due to the personal and subjective nature of culture, traditions, and heritage, cultural appropriation is a matter of perspective. Some individuals may find appropriation offensive, while others may appreciate it and perceive it as beneficial. When an act of appropriation is not acceptable within a particular minority culture but is acceptable outside of it, the opinions and viewpoints of the minority culture that is being appropriated hold greater significance. Cultural appropriation is not a clear-cut issue (Svensson, 2017).

Acquiring additional viewpoints from the relevant cultural group would be beneficial to discern whether video games are appropriately utilizing their culture or not.

Different game developers incorporate cultural elements in their games, but the manner in which they do so largely depends on the specific context in which these elements are presented. When cultural elements used in a game are respectful and well-intentioned, it can be considered appropriate. If these elements are used in an unfavorable way, it can result in negative perceptions (Burgess et al., 2011).

As previously discussed in this literature review, games including *Call of Juarez: The Cartel*, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2*, *Mercenaries 2: World in Flames*, and *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Wildlands* have been criticized for appropriating Latin America and its culture.

However, there have been some efforts to portray Mexican culture, characters, as well as Latin culture more accurately and respectfully in video games. The game *Guacamelee!* developed and published by *DrinkBox Studios*, features a Mexican protagonist, Juan Aguacate, who is on a mission to save El Presidente's Daughter from an evil skeleton named Carlos Calaca. Juan must travel between the land of the living and the land of the dead during the course of the game. The game incorporates Mexican culture and folklore, including the Day of the Dead and lucha libre wrestling, in a way that celebrates and respects Mexican traditions.

*Papo & Yo*, developed and published by *Minority Media Inc.*, explores the relationship between a young boy and a monster, drawing on the developer's personal experience growing up and dealing with an alcoholic and abusive father. The game deals

with heavy themes such as addiction and domestic violence while incorporating Brazilian culture and folklore elements (*Q&A*, 2011).

*Overwatch 2*, developed and published by *Blizzard Entertainment*, includes Sombra, a character intended to represent people from Mexico, as well as a map that aims to depict Mexico. Jeff Kaplan, the former vice president of Blizzard Entertainment and former game director, expressed his intention to prioritize inclusivity and acceptance in the game's hero design. He aimed to ensure that a wide range of players could feel included and embraced. This encompassed various aspects, such as the heroes' personal narratives and their countries of origin. The diverse representation within the game emerged naturally from the development team's commitment to inclusiveness and their receptive mindset (Kaplan 2017). Kaplan has expressed that the game's development team was careful and thoughtful when it came to diversity and representation in the game. They aimed to avoid creating characters that relied on stereotypical portrayals and were sensitive to ensuring that no one felt uneasy or excluded. Kaplan emphasized that they now see cultural sensitivity not as a mere obligation but as a chance to embrace new perspectives and foster a more inclusive gaming environment (Campbell, 2017).

Lastly, *Borders* is a video game that simulates the experience of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border as an undocumented immigrant. The game was designed to educate players about the dangers and hardships that immigrants face when crossing the border. In the game, the player takes on the role of an undocumented immigrant who is trying to

make it across the border without being caught by the border patrol. The game depicts the dangers of crossing the border, such as dehydration, exhaustion, and the risk of being caught by border patrol agents. The game also highlights why people may cross the border, such as to pursue a better life and opportunities for their families. However, the game also shows the risks involved, as crossing the border can also result in death or separation from loved ones. Overall, the game aims to provide players with a better understanding of the realities faced by undocumented immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. By playing the game, players can gain empathy for the struggles faced by immigrants and become more informed about the political and social issues surrounding immigration (*Borders* by Gonzzink, Jonathan DiGiacomo, Reckoner, n.d.). These games demonstrate that an accurate and respectful representation of Latin American culture and characters is possible in video games.

Our daily lives are being enriched by virtual experiences, which play an increasingly important role in how we live and experience them. Video games have been said to “commodify our cyborg desires, our will to merge with and become technology” (Wolf & Perron, 2003), thus, a melding of cultures should not be interpreted as a reduction of past expressions of culture but as an expansion of future possibilities. Cover and Rossi have discussed that video games possess the potential to create powerful and better experiences, and the virtual world has become a space where such experiences can be realized (Cover, 2016.)(Rossi, 2020).

By analyzing the results gathered from the respondents in this study, we aim to acquire a more profound understanding of the opinions of Mexican gamers regarding the depiction of stereotypes within video games, the types of stereotypes they encounter, their feelings about being underrepresented in video games, their perceptions of how Mexico is portrayed, and their sentiments about cultural appropriation. Before discussing the results, it is important to conduct a content analysis examining how Mexican culture is portrayed in video games, focusing on characters and the depiction of Mexico.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data Collection

In order to comprehend the data collected for this thesis, a content analysis was performed to examine the cultural components used by video games. A list of games provided by playthatgame was primarily used for this thesis. This particular list was chosen because it collected around 3000 "best of games" lists to create a comprehensive meta-list of the greatest video games ever made (Play That Game, n.d.). Since this list contained games from the 1980s through the 2020s, it was intentionally chosen. After that, it was narrowed down to stating that the character was Mexican, the location was based in Mexico, or that the game had a strong Mexican influence. As a result of narrowing down the list to these components *Overwatch 2*, *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers*, *Tekken*, *Street Fighter 4*, *Grand Theft Auto 5*, *Grand Theft Auto 3*, *Grand Theft Auto San Andreas*, *Grand Theft Auto Vice City*, *Fallout New Vegas*, *Tekken 3*, *Grim Fandango Remastered*, *Bioshock*, *Super Mario Odyssey*, *Red Dead Redemption*, *Fortnite*, *Little Big Planet*, and *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2* emerged.

There were three parts to the content analysis. A brief overview of the game's narrative and what the game developer meant by its overall image. Secondly, analyze the press reviews to see what they thought of the game. Lastly, the Mexican representation of the game and the participant results from the survey that was conducted.

A survey was created after examining the Mexican cultural elements present in the list of games. The survey consisted of three primary sections. In the first section, participants were asked to rate the integration of the character with Mexican culture using a Likert scale ranging from one to five. A score of one represented very poor integration, while a score of five indicated excellent integration. Additionally, participants were requested to indicate which character they believed best represented them in media and which character least represented them. Similar to the first section, the second section of the survey utilized a Likert scale. However, this section centered on evaluating locations that showcased Mexican culture. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each location incorporated Mexican culture on a scale of one to five, with one being very bad and five being very good. Additionally, they were required to identify the location they believed best represented Mexico and the one that represented it the least. Lastly, the third part of the survey examined issues such as the misrepresentation of Mexicans and Mexico in video games, the underrepresentation of Mexicans, and the appropriation of Mexican culture.

For this portion, a grounded theory approach with an empirical lens was used to analyze the data gathered from the survey to explore how Mexican gamers perceive the portrayal of their culture in video games, which was then divided into three themes Common Mexican Stereotypes, The use of Mexican Culture, and Mexican Representation and Cultural Appropriation. The insights obtained from this survey will be valuable for

those interested in incorporating Mexican culture into future projects. The opinions shared by the participants in the survey are of great significance, as they shed light on the perceptions of Mexican culture in video games. Those who identified themselves as Mexicans or were Mexicans were eligible to participate in the survey, which was distributed on Facebook and Reddit (at r/Mexico, r/TrueGaming, and r/Samplesize subreddits). The survey remained open for one month, during which 44 responses were collected.

### **3.2 Results and Analysis**

Word clouds were utilized to visually represent the survey results, with larger words indicating greater significance. While all the data collected from the qualitative survey is relevant, the word clouds emphasize specific findings that are particularly noteworthy. Our research on how Mexican gamers perceive Mexican culture in video games identified a recurring theme linked to stereotypes. Additionally, we obtained valuable insights into their views on the underrepresentation of Latinos and Latinas in video games and their opinions on the misrepresentation of Latin America, specifically Mexico. Furthermore, we explored their attitudes toward cultural appropriation.

### **3.3 Mexican Cultural Analysis**

#### **Overwatch 2**

*Blizzard Entertainment* developed and created *Overwatch 2*, a multiplayer shooter game. In the game, players are divided into two teams of five members each, each of

whom chooses a character from a range of heroes, each with unique abilities, these heroes come from a variety of national/ethnic backgrounds and occasionally speak in their native languages during matches. The objective is to collaborate and achieve assigned objectives. Real-life locations inspire *Overwatch*'s maps but have been adjusted to fit the fictional world.

GamesHub appreciated how *Overwatch 2* retained the original game's charm, particularly in portraying its heroes. In an article published by GamesHub, they stated that the characters' design and dialogue had been updated, which made it more credible. (Spindler, 2022). A review by GamingBolt praised *Overwatch 2* for its exceptional interactions between heroes, particularly the engaging performances delivered by the voice actors. ("Overwatch 2 Review – Hero's Comeback," n.d.).



Figure 1 Sombra *Overwatch 2*

A great deal of emphasis is placed on the gameplay mechanics and the abilities of each character in *Overwatch 2*. The game also stands out for its representation of multiple nationalities and its boundary-pushing approach to representing these groups within video games. Known as one of the most notorious hackers in the world, Sombra represents Mexicans in *Overwatch 2*. Her knowledge is always used to gain an advantage, making her highly intelligent and duplicitous. She is calculated and willing to manipulate others to get what she wants when necessary. When in combat, Sombra displays confidence and bravery, occasionally displaying arrogance and a bit of sarcasm.

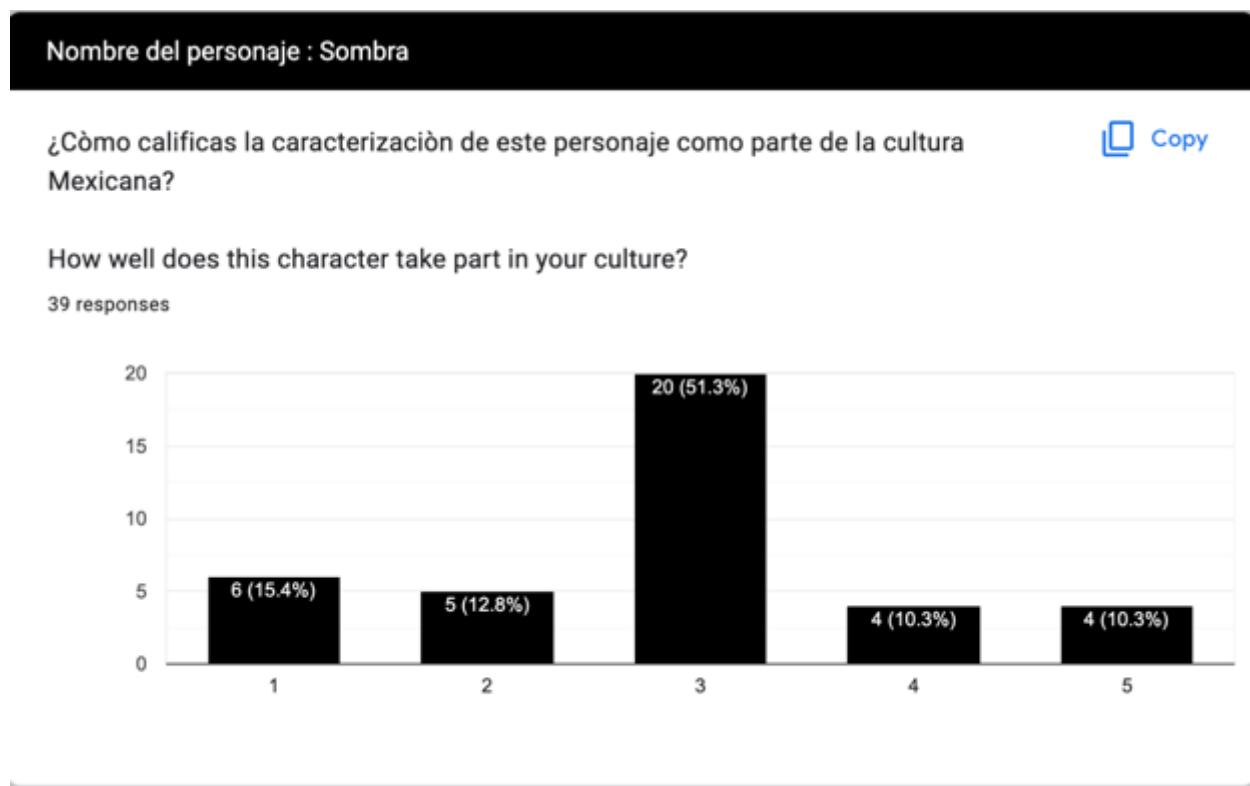


Figure 2 Bar graph on how well Sombra takes part in their culture

In the study, the majority of participants assessed Sombra as fitting moderately well into Mexican culture based on their responses to a question about cultural participation. Furthermore, when asked to identify which character made them feel represented or not, participants who selected Sombra provided their feedback. One participant conveyed that Sombra's cultural representation was not too overt but rather subtle and natural. They perceived Sombra primarily as a fighter and a hacker, and her membership in their culture was of secondary importance. However, another participant remarked that Sombra did not seem to be of Mexican descent. This discrepancy may be attributed to Sombra's strong and assertive character. Lastly, one participant admitted to being unaware that Sombra was Mexican.



Figure 3 Dorado *Overwatch 2*

The game *Overwatch 2* features a fictional representation of Mexico called Dorado, set above the coastline. Instead of depicting Mexico as a town stuck in the past, the game designers chose to bring Mexico into the future while preserving its cultural elements. During the process of developing *Overwatch*, the team faced challenges in finding appropriate references to accurately depict the Mexican town of Dorado. Eventually, they resorted to searching for "colorful Mexican towns" on Google Images, where they came across a photograph that helped solidify Dorado's aesthetic. However, it was later revealed that their visual reference was actually a town in Italy called Manarola. (Twitch, n.d.).

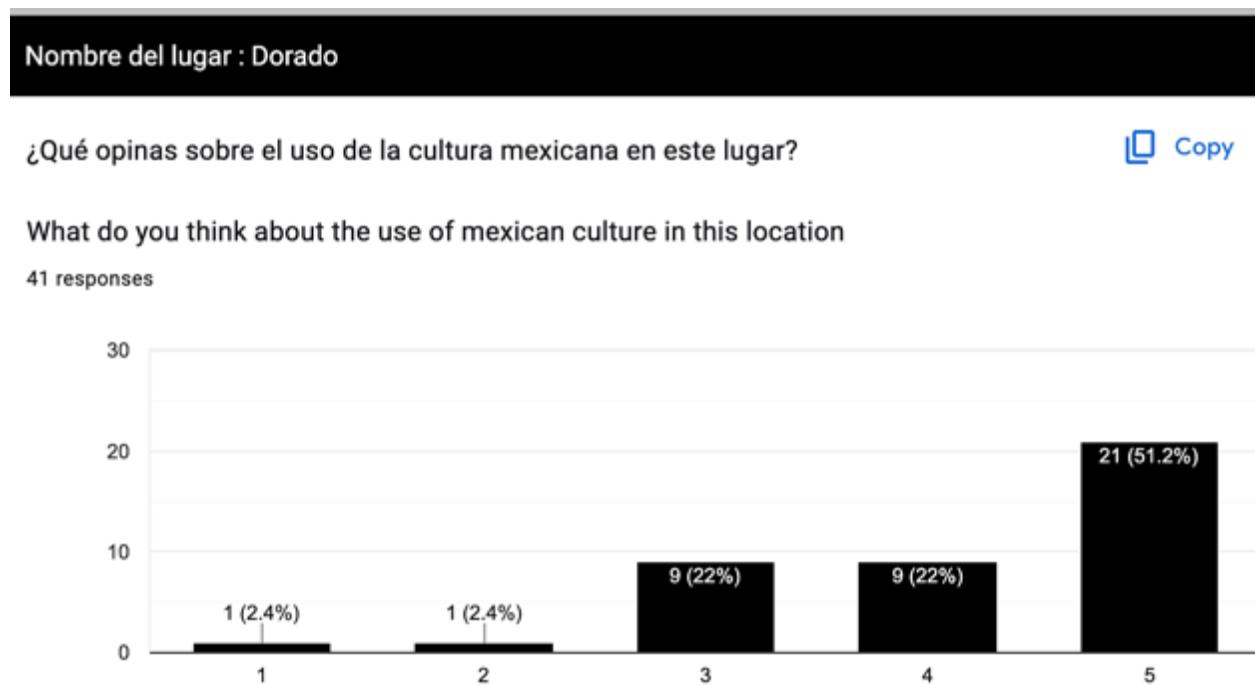


Figure 4 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Dorado

According to the survey results, the majority of Mexican gamers liked the incorporation of Mexican culture into this location. Participants provided the following responses to the question about which location made them feel like they were in Mexico. It looked like a touristy town, said one participant. Another participant, however, admired the town's mixture of modern and traditional Mexican architecture, saying it was "charming and colorful." Several participants agreed that it reminded them of a tourist town or a typical Mexican town with a small population. One participant complimented the representation of the place, while another commented that it reminded them of a Mexican town. Other participants found the architecture reminiscent of magical towns, and some suggested it may qualify as one.

Participants provided the following responses when asked which location felt least like Mexico. Rather than Mexico, it looked more like Spain, according to a respondent.

### *Super Mario Odyssey*

*Super Mario Odyssey* is a 3D platforming video game developed and published by Nintendo. Mario embarks on a global adventure to rescue Princess Peach from Bowser who plans on marrying the princess by force. In order to save the princess, Mario teams up with a sentient hat named Cappy, who grants Mario new abilities by giving Mario the ability to possess objects and enemies. The game features diverse kingdoms with unique themes and challenges, with the main objective being to collect Power Moons. (*Super Mario Odyssey™ for Nintendo Switch - Nintendo Official Site*, n.d.).

EasyAllies says *Super Mario Odyssey*'s levels are exceptional as they introduce new locations to the Mario franchise. The article also highlights how the sand kingdom transforms the desert stereotype with a unique twist, reinventing typically themed worlds (*Easy Allies*, n.d.). Gaming Age wrote in their article that each world in the game was unique and charming, praising the world's use of worlds. (Yeung, 2017).



Figure 5 Tostarenan *Super Mario Odyssey*

Sand Kingdom in *Super Mario Odyssey* features the Tostarenans, who wear traditional Mexican clothing, such as sombreros, ponchos, and maracas, and resemble sugar skulls. Their city is vandalized with ice by the antagonist, which initially distresses them. The citizens are seen enjoying themselves and rejoicing after the city is restored to its former state. As far as design goes, they are based on sugar skulls, which are commonly used on the Day of the Dead.

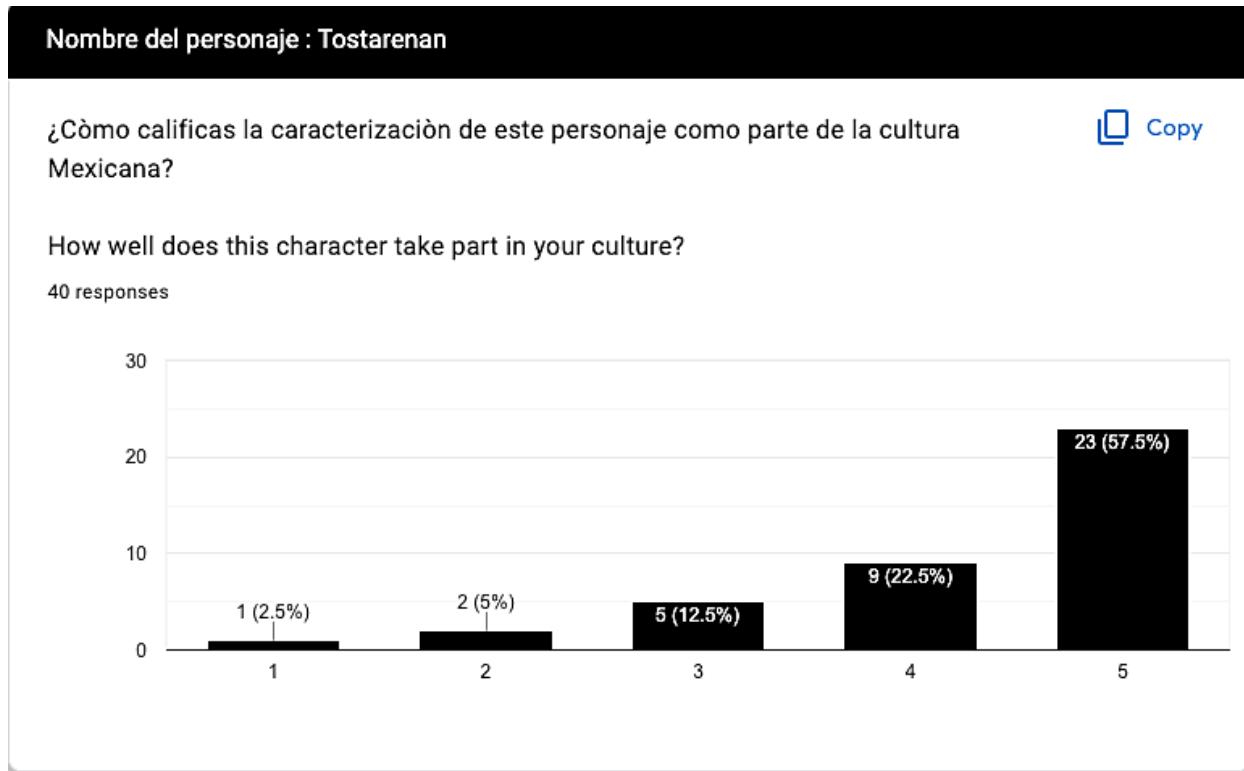


Figure 6 Bar graph on how well Tostarenan takes part in their culture

When participants were asked about the character's cultural participation in Mexican culture, 57.5 percent of respondents answered that Tostarenans fit very well within their culture. For those who selected Tostarenans when asked which character made them feel represented or not, one participant opined that the game did not attempt to be anything more than a cartoon set in a cartoon world. However, they also acknowledged that the game developers exhibited some knowledge of Mexican culture by incorporating details inside the town. Another participant described the Day of the Dead skull used in the game as cute. Moreover, a third participant praised the use of the skull as a representation of gender, considering it both adorable and sensible. One

participant appreciated that the game represented one of Mexico's most crucial traditions, the Day of the Dead, and found the image and colors to be particularly striking. Lastly, a participant admired the game's friendly and inviting depiction of Mexican culture in its visuals.



Figure 7 Sand Kingdom *Super Mario Odyssey*

The game *Super Mario Odyssey* features a fictional location that is inspired by Mexican culture called the Sand Kingdom. The Sand Kingdom in *Super Mario Odyssey* is the third location players can explore. It is portrayed as a desert-themed area with a quaint town at the beginning of the level. When you initially arrive, the kingdom is frozen, and to restore it to its original state, you must defeat the boss. Mexico inspires the town, as the game's director was greatly impressed by the country and wanted to incorporate its influence into the game (Brian, 2017). Upon initially entering the town,

players will notice that the local inhabitants are distressed due to their frozen town. However, once you restore the area to its normal state, you will witness the locals celebrating joyous festivities. Inside the city, you can hear the cheerful tunes of Mariachi music playing in the background, setting a lively ambiance. The buildings in the city are designed to resemble the vibrant architecture of Mexican houses, with bright and colorful exteriors. Adorning these buildings are nopales, cactus plants commonly found in Mexico, as well as serapes, colorful shawls, or wraps, hanging from them, adding to the cultural aesthetic of the town.

Nombre del lugar : Sand Kingdom

¿Qué opinas sobre el uso de la cultura mexicana en este lugar?

 Copy

What do you think about the use of mexican culture in this location

43 responses

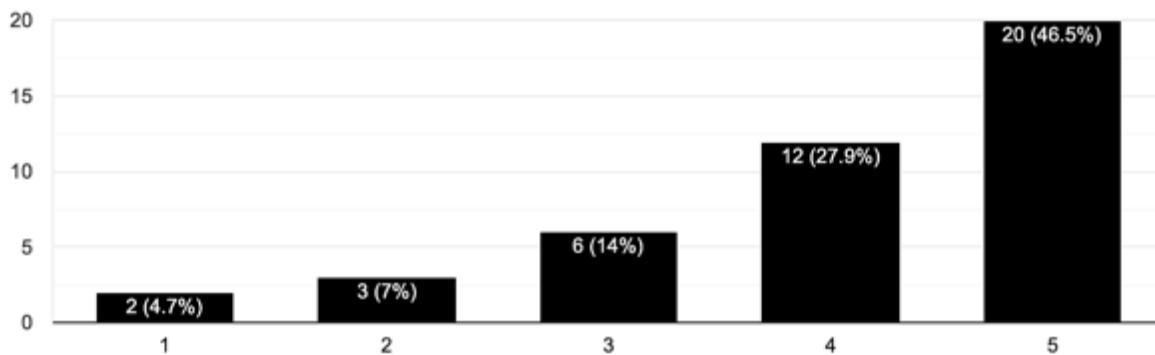


Figure 8 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside the Sand Kingdom

Based on the information presented in the bar graph, it is evident that Mexican gamers enjoyed the use of Mexican culture in the level. We asked participants which location in the game made them feel the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. Those who identified the Sand Kingdom as the most authentic location cited various reasons, such as the infrastructure, the correct cartoonized depiction of Mexican-style architecture, and the similarity to a Mexican neighborhood with its fountain and houses. One participant mentioned that while the setting in *Super Mario Odyssey* might seem a bit stereotypical, it resembles Guanajuato, and the vibrant colors are fitting with traditional festive colors in Mexico. Another participant pointed out that the use of vibrant colors in the game was a great way to showcase the bold and vibrant colors of many Mexican houses. The music, locations such as the ruins and rideable jaguar statue, and the town characters also helped to create an immersive environment. Finally, one participant stated that the Sand Kingdom's color made it feel like they were in Mexico.

Participants who did not feel like the location resembled Mexico expressed their thoughts by saying that, "It doesn't look like Mexico," and another participant stated, "I don't see any resemblance."

### **Fortnite**

*Fortnite* is an online multiplayer video game developed by *Epic Games*. It is a battle royale, where players compete against each other until only one player or team is left standing. The game takes place on a virtual island where up to 100 players drop in from

a flying bus and must scavenge for weapons, resources, and equipment to eliminate opponents and survive. (*Fortnite for Nintendo Switch - Nintendo Official Site*, n.d.).

As of this writing, *Fortnite* is currently in Chapter 4, season 2. It has come a long way ever since its release in 2017. Because *Fortnite* is an always-online game, it can be constantly updated and modified based on feedback from its community. In the event of any controversies, the game's developers are able to make swift changes to address them. (Lake, 2020). Epic Games, the creators of *Fortnite*, has had to occasionally remove certain skins from *Fortnite* for various reasons, ranging from concerns over providing a competitive advantage to compliance with international laws and addressing real-life controversies (*Fortnite*, 2022).



Figure 9 Masked Fury *Fortnite*



Figure 10 Dynamo *Fortnite*



Figure 11 Rosa *Fortnite*

When it comes to using culture, they usually choose the ones that are popular in that culture. *Fortnite* has skins inspired by Day of the Dead, Luchadores, Journey to the West, etc. There are two skins for the Luchadores: Masked Fury (figure 9) and Dynamo (figure 10). The Masked Fury design skin is heavily influenced by Lucha Libre, with a green star mask that is predominantly red, black, and white. The wrestling boots, as well as the rest of the outfit, follow this color scheme. Featuring a mask with a green star and predominantly colored in red, black, and white, Dynamo's character skin draws influence from Lucha Libre. In addition to the wrestling boots, this color scheme is carried throughout the rest of the outfit. Rosa (figure 11) takes over that role for the Day of the Dead. Rosa's character skin is heavily inspired by La Catrina, with a skeletal face paint and a dress made from purple, baby blue, black, and pink colors.

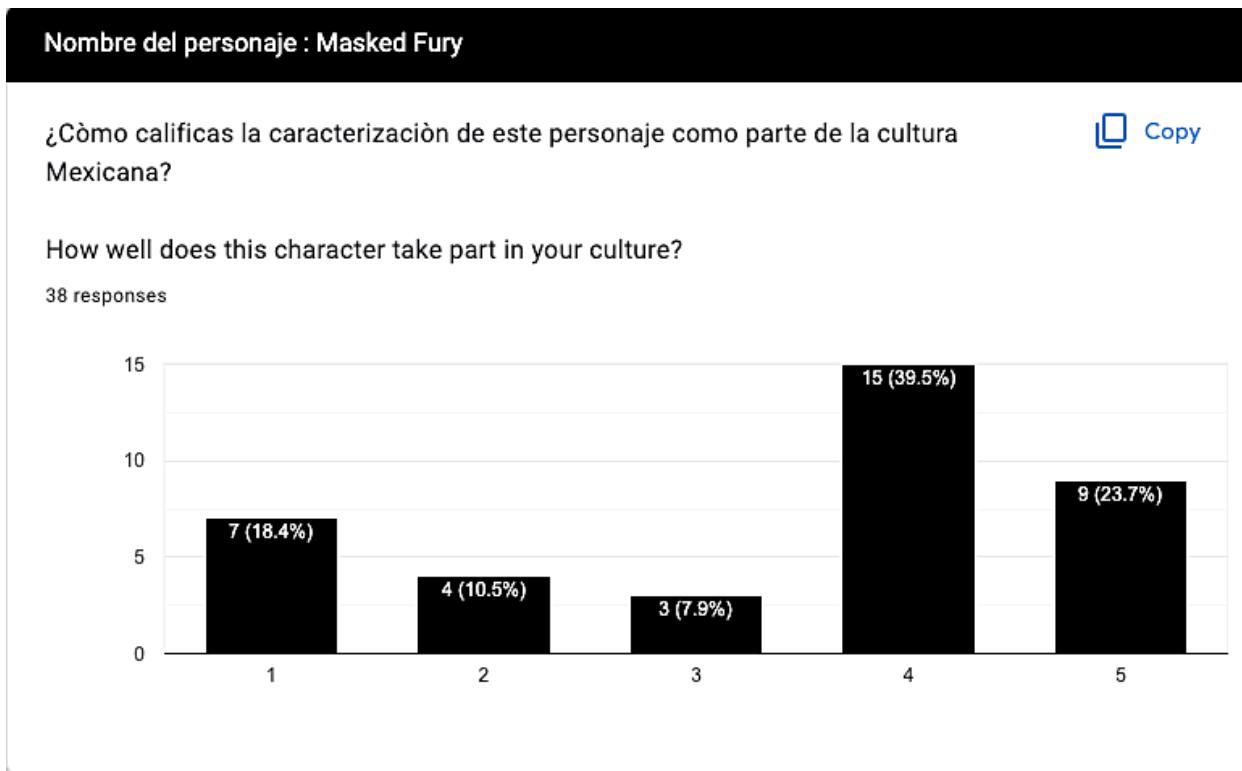


Figure 12 Bar graph on how well Masked Fury takes part in their culture

According to the participant's responses to the question about the character's cultural participation in Mexican culture, most respondents felt Masked Fury fit their culture well, as indicated by the bar graph above. The character is described as a fighter for life by one participant.

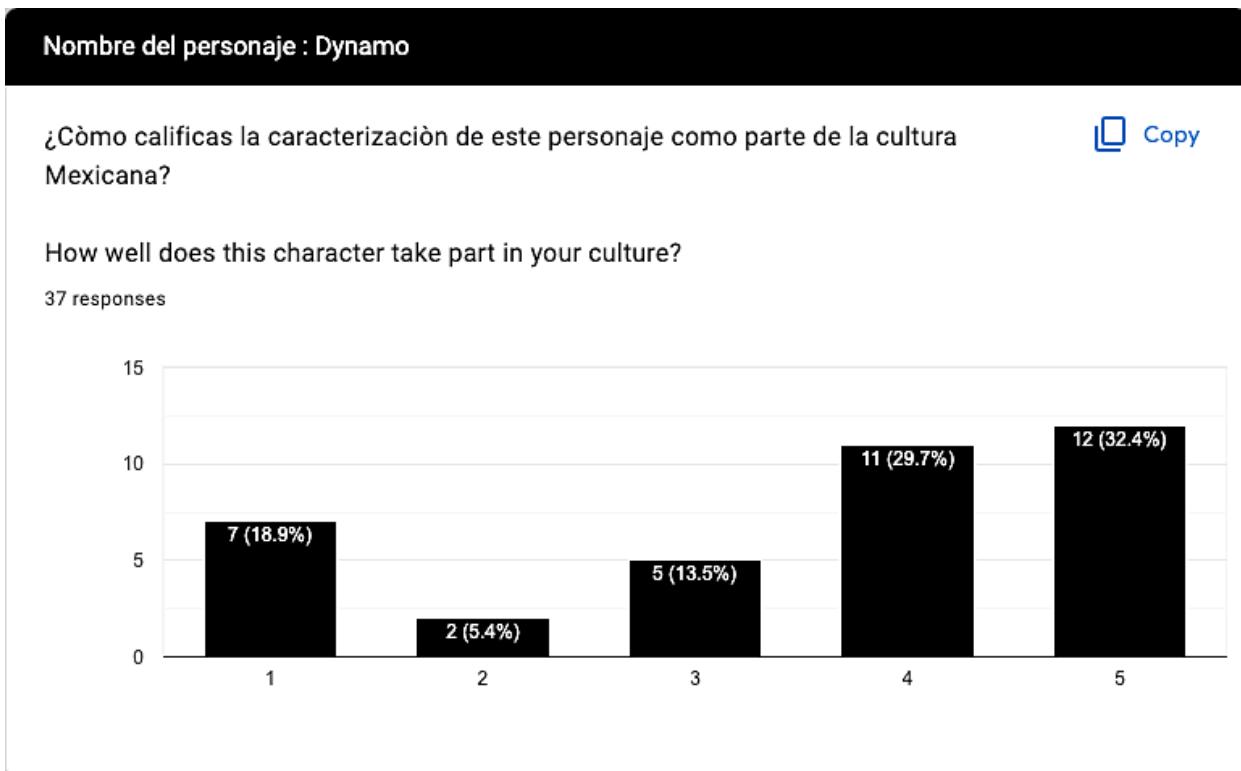


Figure 13 Bar graph on how well Dynamo takes part in their culture

According to the participant's responses to the question about the character's cultural participation in Mexican culture, the majority of the participants expressed that Dynamo was a good fit for their culture, as indicated by the bar graph above.

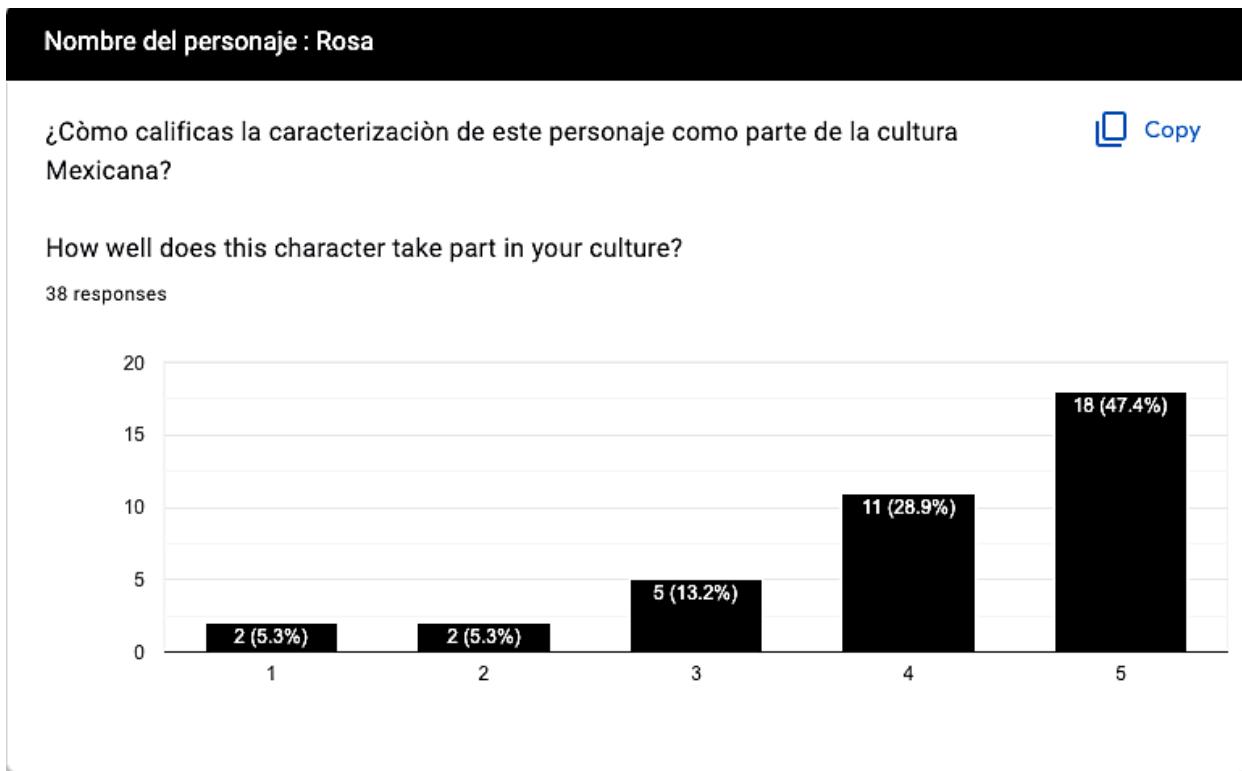


Figure 14 Bar graph on how well Rosa takes part in their culture

Based on the bar graph above, the majority of respondents perceived Rosa to be a suitable representation of their culture in Mexico, according to their responses to the question regarding the character's cultural involvement. Participants who chose Rosa as a character that represented them in the media gave the following reasons: One respondent stated that Rosa's clothing incorporates elements commonly worn in their country. Another participant compared Rosa to a traditional Catrina. For a third participant, Rosa represented their culture, which they could relate to. Lastly, one participant recognized that featuring Día de los Muertos, a significant Mexican holiday, in a popular game like Fortnite could help promote Mexican culture.

### Tekken

The final round of a worldwide martial arts tournament is approaching, with a large prize purse for the fighter who defeats "Heihachi Mishima" in the finals. The sponsor of the contest is the Mishima Zaibatsu Group, a large financial group. Having won death matches around the world, only eight fighters remain. The winner of the tournament will be titled "The King of the Iron Fists." Whoever defeats Mishima will win the prize money and fame. (Namco, n.d.).

Many critics praised the game during its release. A UK magazine called Computer and Games gave *Tekken* an overall score of 97. The article described it as the best fighter game on any platform, fully rounded and perfect, with the characters being its defining strength, with each character characterized by a unique set of advantages and disadvantages (Computer and Video Games, 1995). *Tekken*'s graphics were IGN's only criticism when reviewing it. Nevertheless, they lauded the gameplay as smooth and commended the character designs. IGN praised each character's unique fighting style (Staff, 1996).



Figure 15 King *Tekken*

*Tekken* features characters hailing from different parts of the globe, but for Mexican representation, they opted to introduce a wrestler named King. King is a masked wrestler with a mystique about him. He is a compassionate person who often takes in orphaned children. When he dons his mask, he becomes a mighty wrestler who is nearly unbeatable. In an effort to raise funds for an orphanage, he participates in competitions. King himself was once an orphan who was fortunately adopted by a caring family. (Namco, n.d.). King is a luchador that wears a Jaguar mask. He is designed in a luchador attire with his pants being made of spandex, with black pro wrestling boots, black shin

guards, gloves representing jaguar hand, gray arm guards, and a tail to fit his jaguar look. King seems to be inspired by Fray Tormentas, Mexico's wrestling catholic priest. Tormenta decided to become a wrestler because he did it to raise money to support an orphanage. He is simply an average priest when he is not in the ring or caring for the children (Fox,1998).

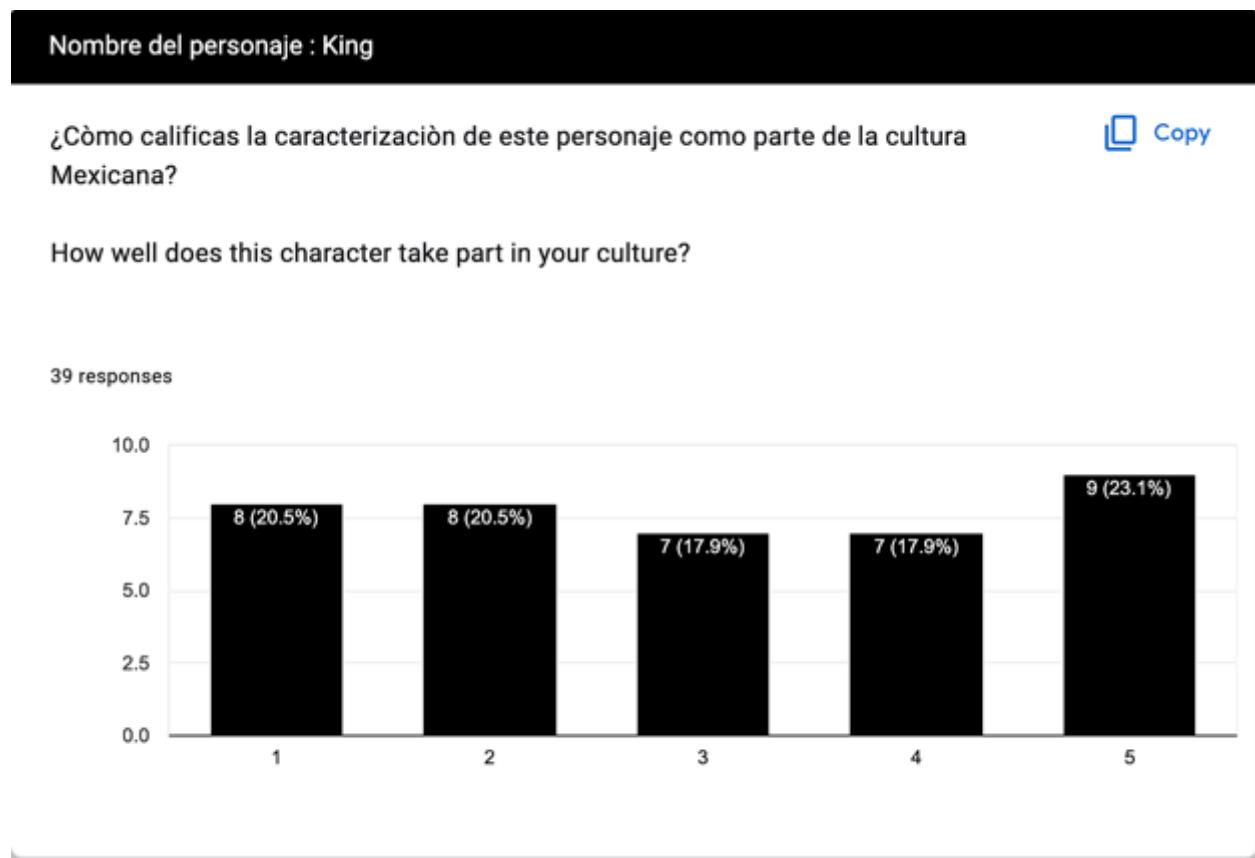


Figure 16 Bar graph on how well King takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well King represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated King as a medium representation. People who chose King as a character that made them feel represented in the media gave specific reasons for doing so. One person said they were represented by King's willingness to

compete in a tournament for the prize money to save the orphanage. As another participant noted, King is depicted as a fierce and strong character, with a face that suggests he would defend his mother if she were insulted.

Participants who did not feel represented by King in the media provided their reasons. One participant cited dissatisfaction with the character's design, while another expressed surprise that King was associated with Mexico. A third participant commented that King, being an animal, did not reflect their cultural background.

### Tekken 3

An ancient evil force has reawakened and is feeding on the souls of mighty warriors in secret. The greatest fighting contest the world has ever seen will be required to lure it out of hiding. *Tekken 3*. The motives of some fighters are revenge, while those of others are honor. Everyone is fighting for their lives and the fate of humanity as a whole (*Tekken 3 [English]*, n.d.).

*Tekken 3* was lauded as the definitive fighting game of its era by critics of Absolute PlayStation, who commended its seamless gameplay and elaborate character designs. (*TEKKEN 3 - Review - ABSOLUTE PLAYSTATION*, n.d.). According to IGN, *Tekken 3* set a new standard for the fighting game genre with its impressive animation speed and finely crafted character textures. The game was also considered a "game changer" for the original PlayStation, and IGN anticipates even more advancements from the series in the future. (Staff, 1998).



Figure 17 King the Second *Tekken 3*

In much the same way as Tekken had characters from different regions, *Tekken 3* continued that tradition. King the Second is the Mexican representation of this game. King the Second spent his youth in the original King's orphanage. After the original King was killed by Ogre, King's dying wish was for King the Second to take over the orphanage. Armor King took on the responsibility of training a new King after the demise of the original. Upon learning about a new tournament, Armored King registered him to gauge the effectiveness of his training against the most formidable opponents. In lucha libre, masks have significant importance as they create an atmosphere of mystery and function as a symbol that can be inherited across generations. It is typical for the son of a wrestler to wear a similar mask, or even the same one, to continue the family's legacy.

King the Second is a luchador that wears a Jaguar mask that the original King wore. He is designed in luchador attire, with his pants made of spandex, black and yellow wrestling boots, yellow shin guards, blue arm guards, and a tail to fit his jaguar look.

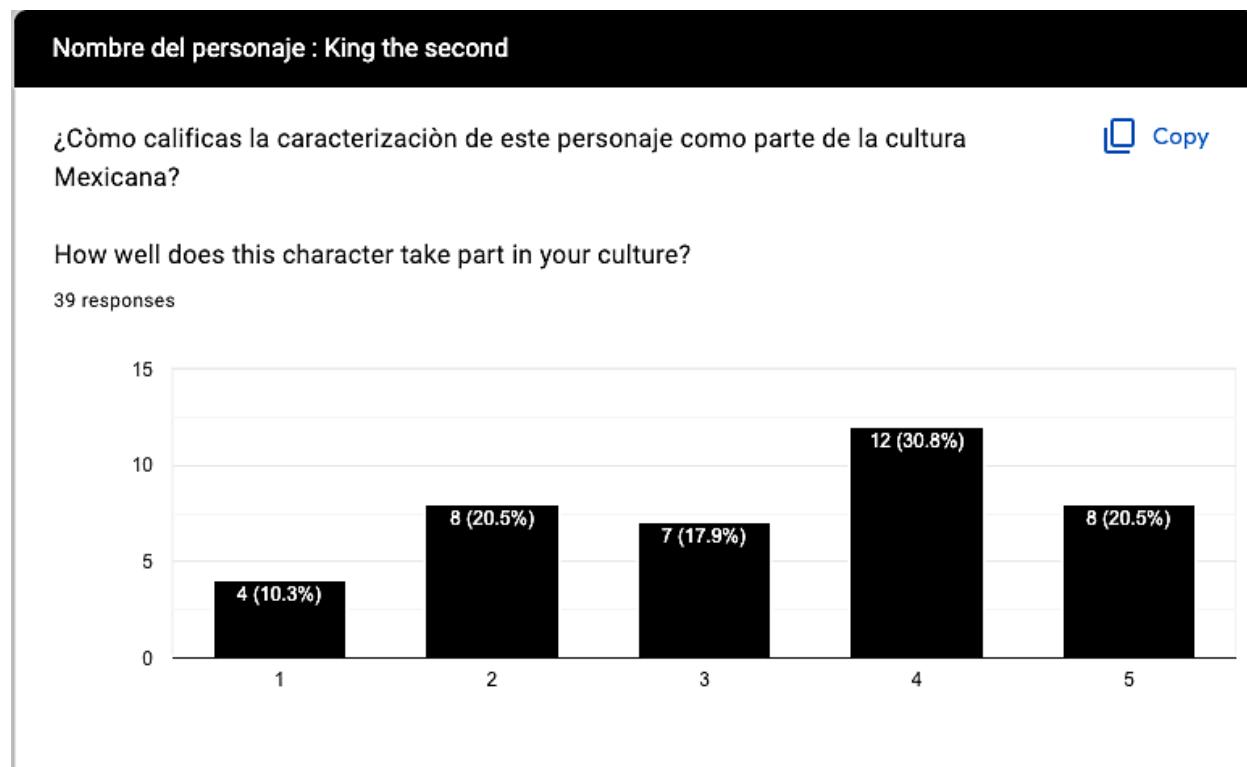


Figure 18 Bar graph on how well King the Second takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well King the Second represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated King the Second as a positive representation based on the results. Participants who picked King the Second as a character that represented them in the media provided detailed justifications for their choice. One respondent mentioned that King II was based on a Mexican wrestler who was also a priest, which served as inspiration for the movie Nacho Libre. This participant felt that King II's backstory and identity as a luchador were a good fit for Mexico's

wrestling and religious culture. The participant also found King II's mask relatable and believed it helped others identify with him, particularly since Tekken is a well-known fighting game.

One participant who did not feel represented by King II in the media explained their reason. They stated that warriors with animal heads often appeared in the media to reflect pre-Hispanic cultures rather than Mexican culture.



Figure 19 Ogre *Tekken 3*

Along with King the Second, another character based on Mexican background was included. The newly introduced character, Ogre, can be portrayed as an Aztec in the game. Ogre can be depicted as a muscular man with dark green skin. He wears various pieces of ancient Aztec jewelry and a large golden helmet with orange hair. On his left

arm, he wears a shield that resembles the Aztec calendar. As stated in the game, ancient human civilizations worshipped him as the "God of Fighting." (Prima, n.d.).

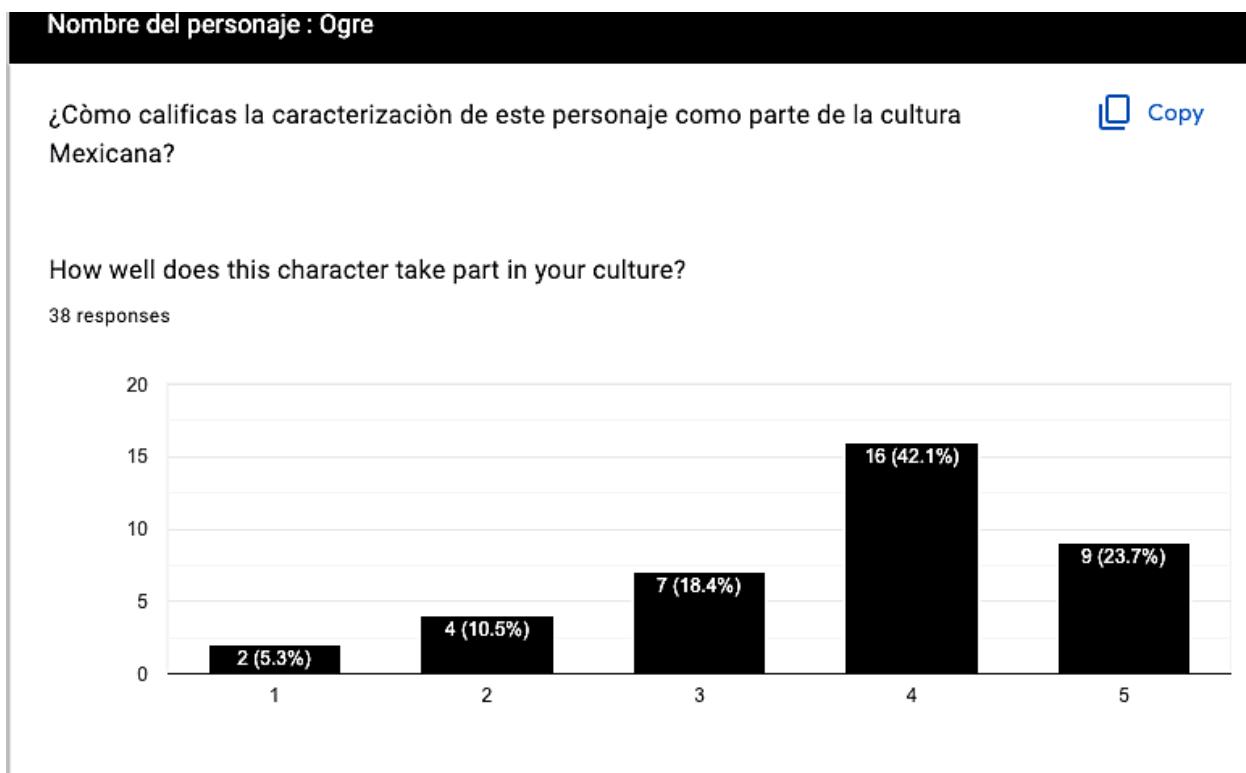


Figure 20 Bar graph on how well King the Second takes part in their culture

According to the participant's response to the question about the character's cultural participation in Mexican culture, most respondents felt Ogre fit their culture well, as indicated by the bar graph above.



Figure 21 Mexican Temple *Tekken 3*

The game *Tekken 3* features a fictional representation of Mexico called Mexican Temple. The Mexican Temple stage in *Tekken 3* depicts a Mexican-themed environment in the form of a pyramid or temple structure. Upon entering the level, players are greeted with intricately carved and painted walls in the background.

**Nombre del lugar : Mexican Temple**

¿Qué opinas sobre el uso de la cultura mexicana en este lugar?

 Copy

What do you think about the use of mexican culture in this location

42 responses

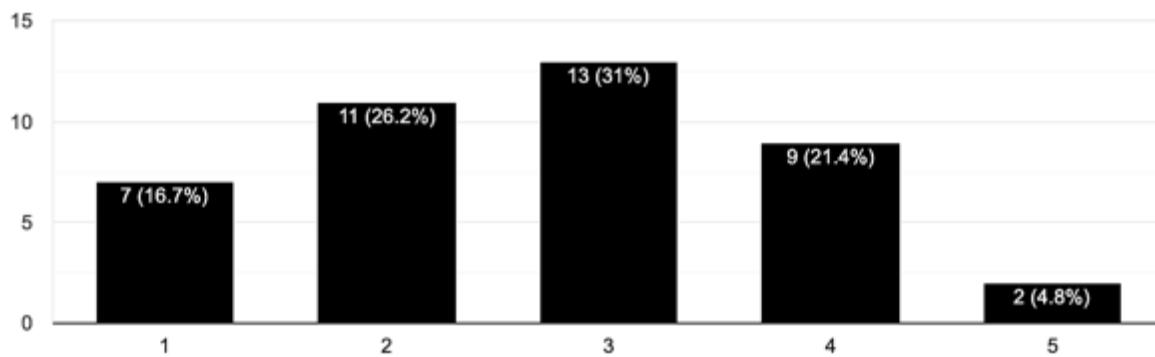


Figure 22 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Mexican Temple

According to the given bar graph, it is clear that Mexican gamers generally have mixed feelings about the use of Mexican culture in this level. We then asked which locations evoked the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. Most participants stated that this level did not evoke a Mexican atmosphere for them. One participant conveyed that although the Mayan/Aztec temple is an integral component of Mexican culture, it appears too antiquated to represent them. Another participant commented that the level lacked any cultural elements and was simply a dimly lit room. Similarly, another participant remarked that the room was dark with minimal details. Another participant expressed that the level appeared strange and did not embody

Mexican culture adequately. Lastly, one participant perceived the level as more reminiscent of a South American or European temple rather than a Mexican one.

### *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers*

The World Warrior tournament has witnessed the clash of the most talented fighters from around the globe for a duration of two years, during which they have maintained their supremacy. However, the time has come for these fighters to relinquish their dominance as a new set of challengers, Cammy, Dee Jay, T. Hawk, and Fei Long, have proven their worth and secured their spot in the tournament. These challengers possess deadly martial arts techniques, which they believe can defeat M. Bison. Nonetheless, their success depends on their ability to survive against the original Street Fighters and their newly acquired skills. The ultimate test of true Street Fighting prowess lies ahead, and only those who are worthy will emerge victorious (*Super Street Fighter 2 - Posters / Box Artwork - Page 2 | TFG Art Gallery*, n.d.).

As per a GameFan article, *Capcom* has yet again made a strong impression with its latest release. Aside from the top-of-the-line animation and artistry, *Super Street Fighter 2*'s music is exceptional as well. *Capcom* went all out when creating this version, with incredible graphics, controls, and overall enjoyment (*Gamefan Volume 2 Issue 08 July 1994*, 1994). In their article, Electronic Gaming Monthly stated that all four of their reviewers agreed that while it was the best version of *Street Fighter 2* so far, the additions were limited considering the numerous versions that had already been released. At this point,

they expressed a desire for a new installment in the series instead of just four additional characters (*Electronic Gaming Monthly* 61, n.d.).



Figure 23 T-Hawk *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers*

The *Street Fighter* series has fighters from all over the world participating in the world warrior tournament, and the first Mexican representation inside of the Street Fighter series was T-Hawk. The storyline of T-Hawk in *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers* revolves around seeking retribution against M. Bison for forcibly seizing his homeland. Expelled from his reservation in America, T-Hawk found refuge in a Mexican community, where he established a new life. Through his participation in the World Warrior tournament and his ultimate triumph over Bison, he successfully reclaimed his

nation and restored justice. T-Hawk is an American Native, and his fighting style reflects this. Mexican Typhoon, Tomahawk Buster, Condor Diver, and Condor Spire are among his moves. Design-wise T-Hawk wears a denim vest and pants, iron bracers covering both forearms and steel armbands around his biceps, a cowboy-style brown leather belt with a buckle and metal decorative tokens, moccasin boots, and a blue and white triangular patterned headband with a pair of white eagle feathers with the end tip being red.

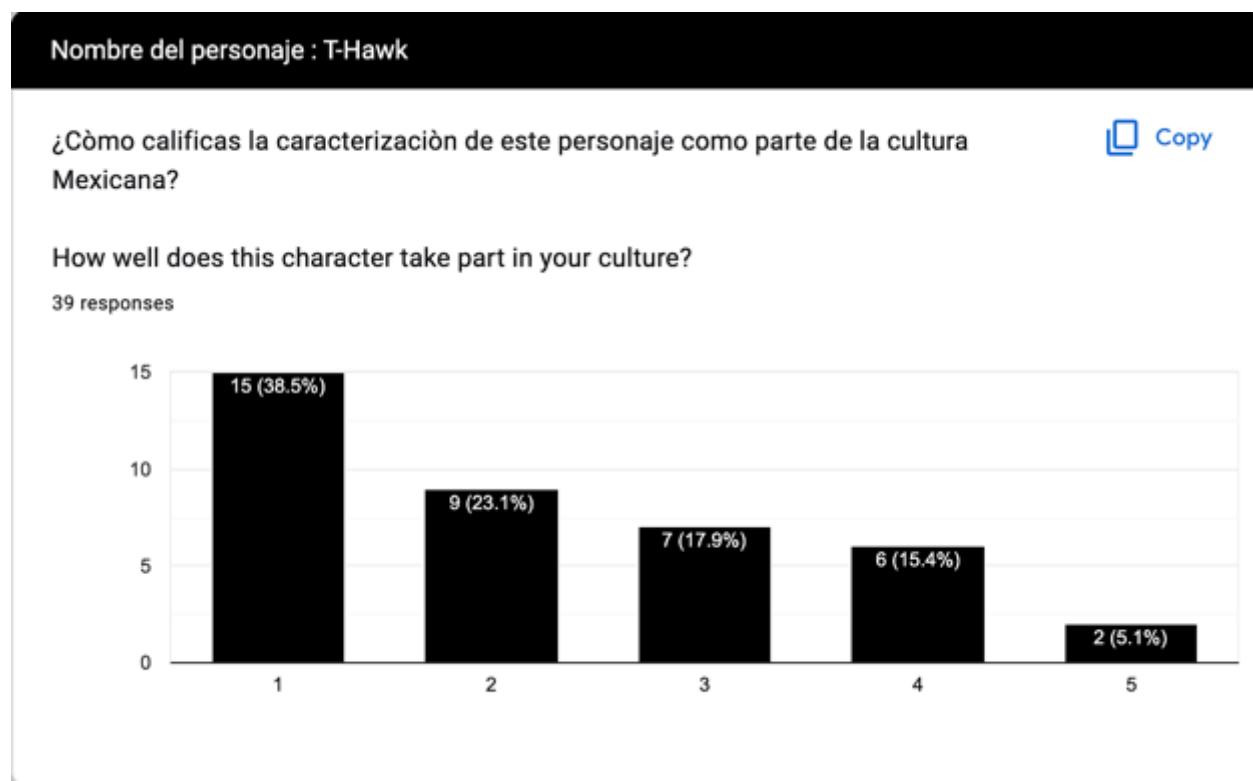


Figure 24 Bar graph on how well T-Hawk takes part in their culture

According to the bar graph above, the majority of respondents evaluated T-Hawk as a negative representation in terms of how well it reflects their culture. Individuals who selected T-Hawk as a character that made them feel underrepresented in the media provided specific justifications for their choice. Several participants commented on the appearance and cultural representation of T-Hawk. According to one participant, T-Hawk represents Native American culture more than Mexican culture. T-Hawk seemed more like a Native American, specifically a Cherokee, than a Native Mexican, according to another participant. T-Hawk's outfit and wrestling style was also noted by some participants as resembling those of Native Americans from the United States and Canada. T-Hawk's costume surprised one participant, who said they had never seen a Mexican dressed like that. According to another participant, T-Hawk's outfit was not in tune with indigenous Mexicans, and characters like El Fuerte and Necalli were more appropriate. Lastly, some participants felt that T-Hawk's appearance was more representative of Native American culture than Mexican culture. Out of all the respondents, only one felt that T-Hawk was a representation of themselves in the media. This individual mentioned that they shared the same height and build as T-Hawk, and also noted that T-Hawk was the first Mexican character they played in any video game.



Figure 25 Hospicios Cabañas *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers*

T-Hawk's stage in *Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers* is set in Guadalajara, Mexico, and features the real-life location of Hospicios Cabañas as its backdrop.

Nombre del lugar : Hospicio Cabañas

¿Qué opinas sobre el uso de la cultura mexicana en este lugar?

 Copy

What do you think about the use of mexican culture in this location

42 responses

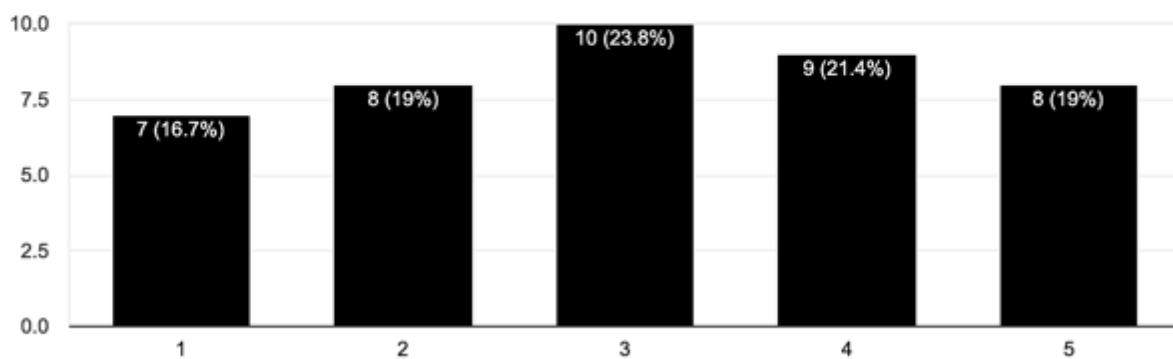


Figure 26 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Hospicio Cabañas

Based on the provided bar graph, Mexican gamers expressed varied sentiments regarding the incorporation of Mexican culture in this level. Subsequently, we investigated which of the locations evoked the most and least pronounced feelings of being in Mexico. Several participants provided reasons for why this location reminded them of Mexico. The location reminded several participants of Mexico for a variety of reasons. One participant suggested it may be because the location is similar to Hospicios Cabañas in Jalisco, commenting, "I assume it is based on..." Another said that the location is emblematic of Guadalajara. According to a third participant, the cultural representation was respectful, while a fourth participant stated, "That place is in my city,

Guadalajara." Participants who did not associate this location with Mexico provided different reasons for their opinion. One individual suggested that the people depicted in the location gave an impression of a primitive civilization, stating, "Unless this is supposed to take place 400 years ago...no one dress like that in their day-to-day life." Another participant pointed out that not everyone in Mexico wears headdresses. A third participant attributed their perception to the colors and architecture, while a fourth participant humorously commented, "No mames, those are Greek columns, jaja."

#### **Street Fighter 4**

By blending the cherished fighting moves and techniques from the original *Street Fighter II* with the latest technological advancements from *Capcom*, *Street Fighter IV* revitalizes the iconic fighting series and returns it to its roots. This extraordinary experience reintroduces the world to the revered art of virtual martial arts. *Street Fighter IV* revives the elements that made *Street Fighter II* a hit worldwide, featuring classic and new characters, stylized 3D graphics, and a mix of 2D and 3D gameplay (*Street Fighter® IV on Steam*, n.d.).

According to Kikizo's article on *Street Fighter 4*, *Capcom* has established itself as the leading Japanese developer by delivering precisely what fans want. Rather than just a more visually appealing version of SFII, they consider Street Fighter 4 to be the ultimate fighting game. Additionally, they praised the game's stunning character design and pioneering visual presentation, which they described as vibrant and captivating (Kikizo |

*Review: Street Fighter IV (Page 3)*, n.d.). ZTGD's article praises the stunning visuals of *Street Fighter IV*, highlighting its gorgeous appearance and incredibly smooth animation. The 3D character models are described as phenomenal and their facial expressions, ranging from cocky to pained, add to the game's character. The article notes that the backgrounds are also detailed and diverse. Ultimately, the writer believes that, in terms of art, SFIV is the most visually appealing fighting game they have ever played ("Street Fighter IV," 2011).



Figure 27 El Fuerte *Street Fighter 4*

*Street Fighter 4* brings in a new Mexican representative into the game. El Fuerte spends his time honing his lucha libre talents and improving his culinary skills. He

traverses the world in search of the best dishes on Earth. He is a hyperactive, highly excited combatant who continuously muses out loud about new recipes, even during combat. He regularly draws inspiration from other fighters he encounters because of their diverse origins from across the world, much to the chagrin of some but greatly to the delight of others. His cooking yields conflicting outcomes (Street Fighter IV Prima Official Game Guide, n.d.). Tepache Bomb, Chili Mexicano, Tostada Press, Fajita Buster, Quesadilla Bomb, and Guacamole Leg Throw are just some of the moves El Fuerte uses while fighting, inspired by Mexican dishes. El Fuerte is dressed in traditional luchador attire, with black elbow pads on his arms and a gold belt around his waist. He's dressed in white button-up pants that resemble a chef's uniform and white-laced wrestling boots with golden soles. His mask is white, much like the rest of his outfit.

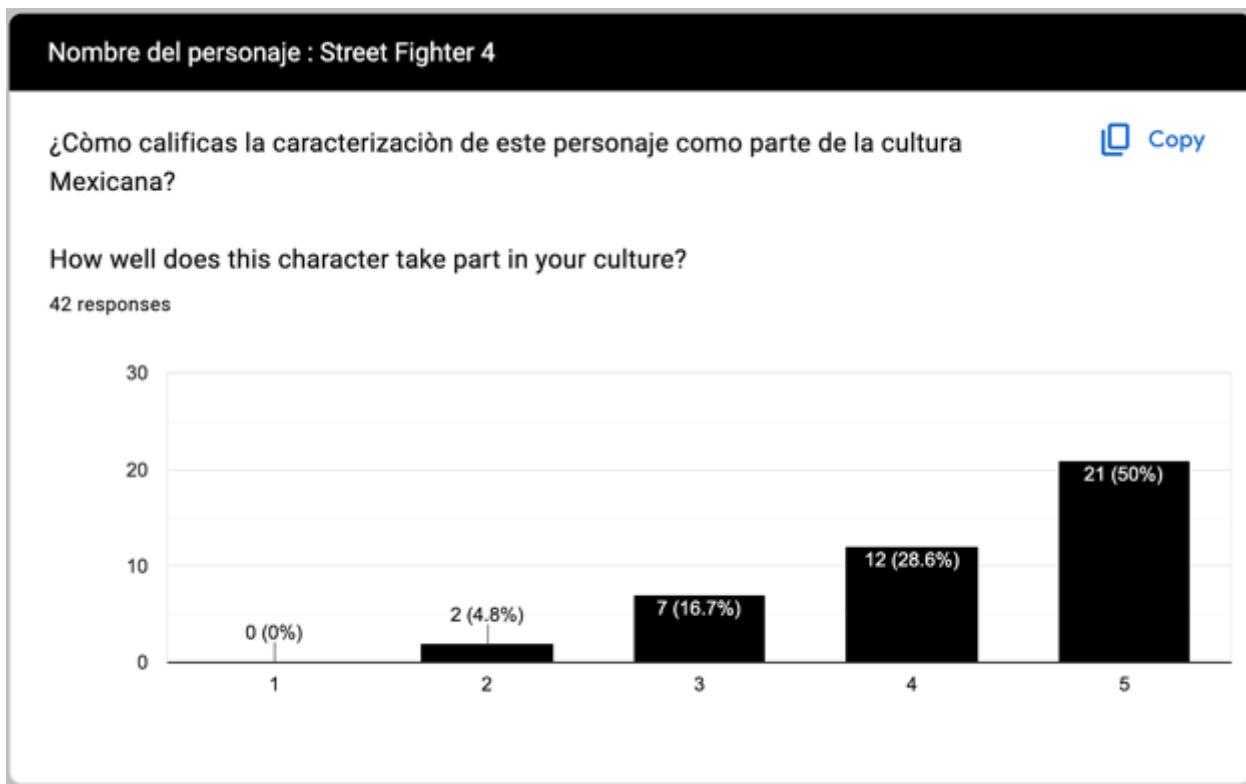


Figure 28 Bar graph on how well El Fuerte takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well El Fuerte represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated El Fuerte as a positive representation. Participants who selected El Fuerte as a character that they felt represented them in the media provided particular justifications for their choice. One individual mentioned that they identified with El Fuerte because wrestling is a well-known symbol in Mexico. Another participant expressed that they related to El Fuerte because he resembled a typical Mexican wrestler, albeit with some exaggeration. A third participant explained that they felt a connection to El Fuerte because of his Mexican appearance. Finally,

another participant believed that El Fuerte was a suitable representation of lucha libre wrestling.

### **Red Dead Redemption**

In the early 1900s, the cowboy era in America was drawing to a close. John Marston, a former outlaw, is compelled to assist in establishing law and order across the American frontier after federal agents threaten his family. This journey is full of high-stakes gunfights, adrenaline-pumping train robberies, and thrilling duels, all occurring during a tumultuous period of violent transformation. *Red Dead Redemption* follows the story of John Marston as he fights for survival in a stunning open world, determined to leave his violent past behind him by confronting and defeating his enemies one by one. This is an epic tale of struggle and redemption as Marston seeks to bury his past and forge a new future for himself (*Information / RDR*, n.d.).

According to an article published by 3DJuegos, *Red Dead Redemption* is a game that truly gives justice to the Western genre. The game features diverse missions, expertly crafted characters, an exceptional storyline, and an overall sandbox experience that is considered the best. Therefore, Rockstar's latest offering is highly recommended and a game that one must have (de 3DJuegos, 2010). In an article published by Eurogamer Italy, it was asserted that *Red Dead Redemption* is an exemplary masterpiece. The game showcases how developers should work towards creating the perfect atmosphere and

depicting a beautiful historical setting. The graphics, gameplay elements, and every other aspect of the game are of the highest caliber (Filippo, 2010).



Figure 29 Vicente De Santa *Red Dead Redemption*

In the initial first half, the game is set inside of the Americas, but as you progress, you make the people the player was trying to capture flee to Mexico. It is up to the player to go to Mexico to capture them and bring them to justice. *Red Dead Redemption* features Vicente De Santa as a significant secondary villain who holds a commanding position in the Mexican army and displays unwavering dedication towards their mission, willing to eliminate anything in their way. Upon entering Mexico, the player meets Vicente and strikes a deal to hand over the desired individuals in exchange for assistance, but later

suffers betrayal by him. Throughout the game, Vicente is depicted as a malevolent figure who relishes inflicting pain and anguish on others.

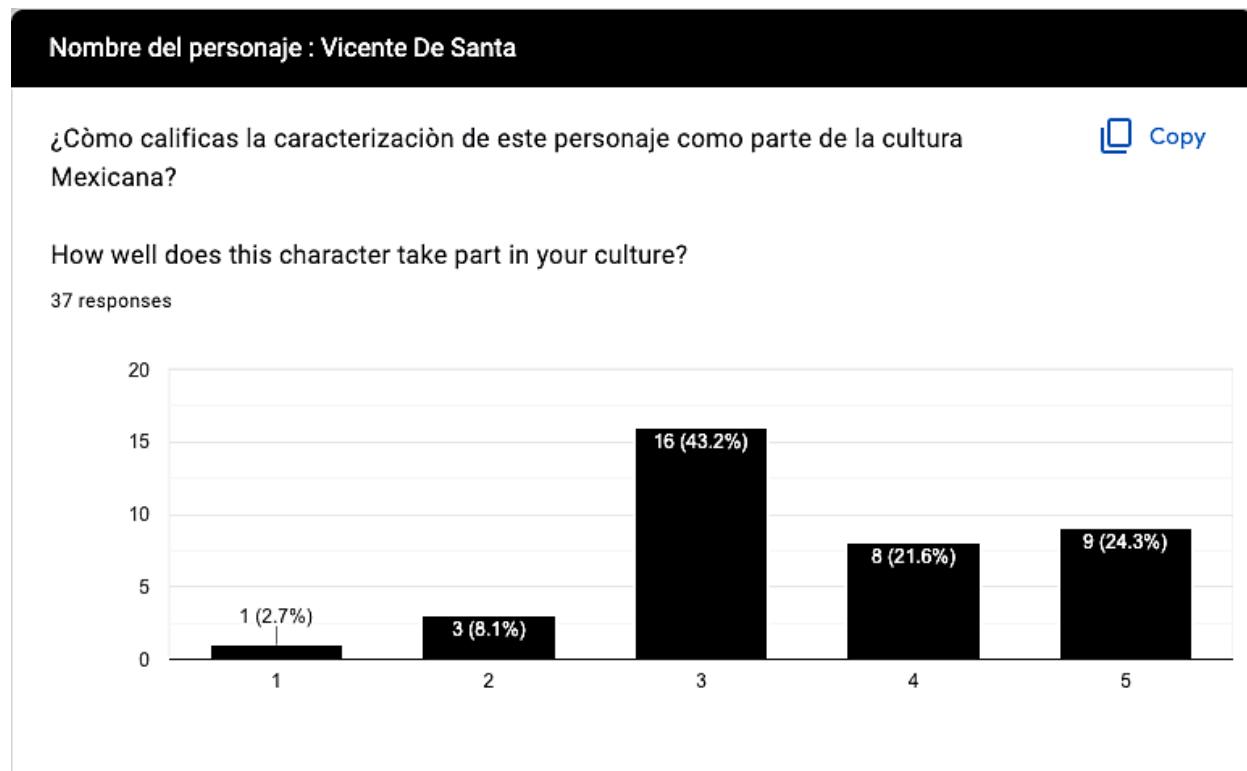


Figure 30 Bar graph on how well Vicente De Santa takes part in their culture

Based on the results shown in the bar graph above, the majority of respondents gave Vicente De Santa a rating of mixed representation in terms of how well he represents their culture.



Figure 31 Abraham Reyes *Red Dead Redemption*

Abraham Reyes is a prominent character in the game *Red Dead Redemption*, playing a crucial role. He was born into a wealthy family but eventually became the leader of the Mexican Revolutionists, leading a violent uprising against the Mexican Army to fight for social reform. Reyes' magnetic personality has helped him effectively gather members for his group of guerillas. The player initially meets Reyes when rescuing him from captivity, and later, he saves the player after the Mexican army betrays them. Reyes is a passionate advocate for his people's liberty and is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve it. Reyes' attire includes a leather jacket paired with black gloves, a green sarape, leather boots, and a pistol holstered at his side.

Nombre del personaje : Abraham Reyes

¿Cómo calificas la caracterización de este personaje como parte de la cultura Mexicana?

 Copy

How well does this character take part in your culture?

37 responses

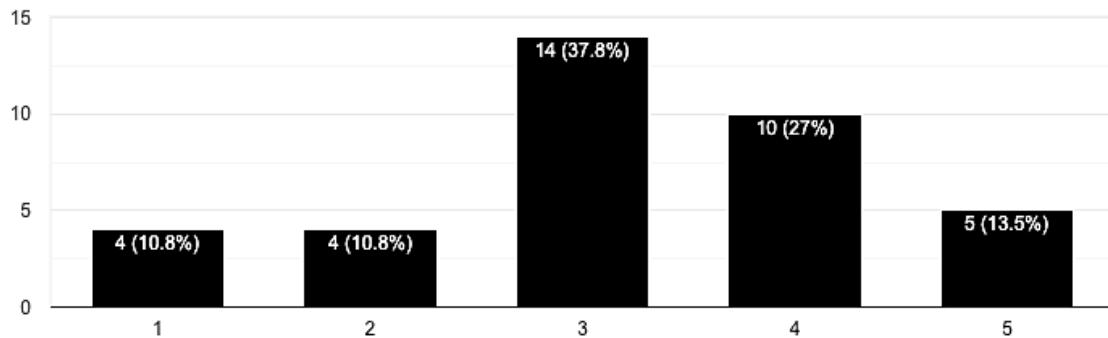


Figure 32 Bar graph on how well Abraham Reyes takes part in their culture

Based on the results shown in the bar graph above, the majority of respondents gave Abraham Reyes a rating of mixed representation in terms of how well he represents their culture.



Figure 33 Luisa Fortuna *Red Dead Redemption*

In *Red Dead Redemption*, Luisa Fortuna is a 19-year-old schoolteacher and Mexican Revolutionist who plays a significant role. Her resolute commitment to the revolution and fiery spirit are notable. She is determined to free Mexico from its oppressors. The game portrays Luisa wearing attire that is in line with the game's setting and time period, which is set in the American Old West. She is depicted wearing a white and baby blue blouse with a long blue skirt.

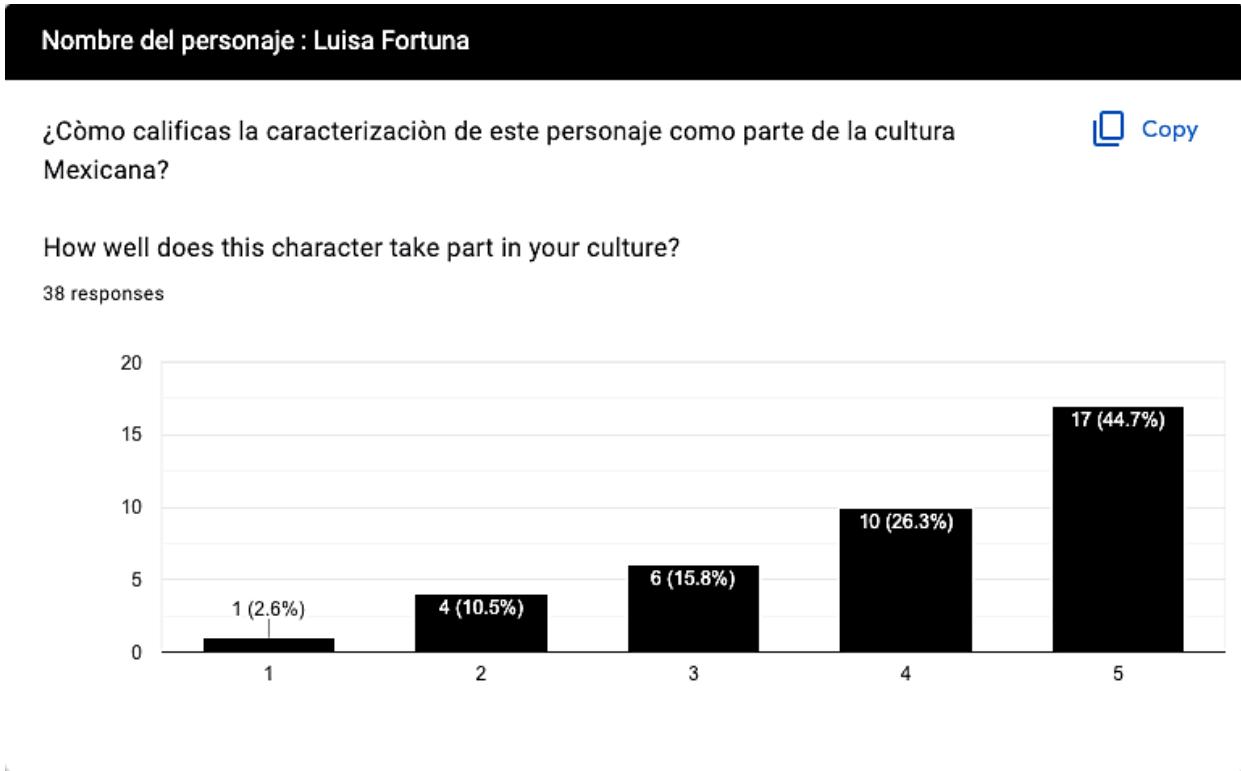


Figure 34 Bar graph on how well Luisa Fortuna takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Luisa Fortuna represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Luisa Fortuna as a positive representation based on the results. Those who chose Luisa Fortuna as a character embodying their representation in the media offered specific justifications for their selection. A participant expressed that while an individual similar to Luisa Fortuna may have existed in the past, the character still comes across as a caricature. Another participant mentioned that Luisa's skin color and facial features are common in Mexico, and her attire closely resembles the typical dresses of the region.



Figure 35 Nuevo Paraiso *Red Dead Redemption*

As players progress through the main storyline of *Red Dead Redemption*, the main character embarks on a journey to Nuevo Paraiso, the second region they can explore, in pursuit of two key antagonists. As you journey to Mexico via boat, you are met with gunfire from Mexicans who are trying to kill the person helping you cross. This initial encounter paints a negative picture of Mexico, giving the impression that hostile individuals populate it. As the player delves deeper into Mexico in *Red Dead Redemption*, they begin to realize that the country is in the final stages of the Mexican Revolution. Unlike in other games, the Mexican non-playable characters (NPCs) are not one-dimensional expendable characters. They are intricately crafted with cultural programming that makes them less naturally hostile. When interacting with these NPCs,

they do not provoke the protagonist unless provoked first, and they will fiercely defend their comrades if necessary.

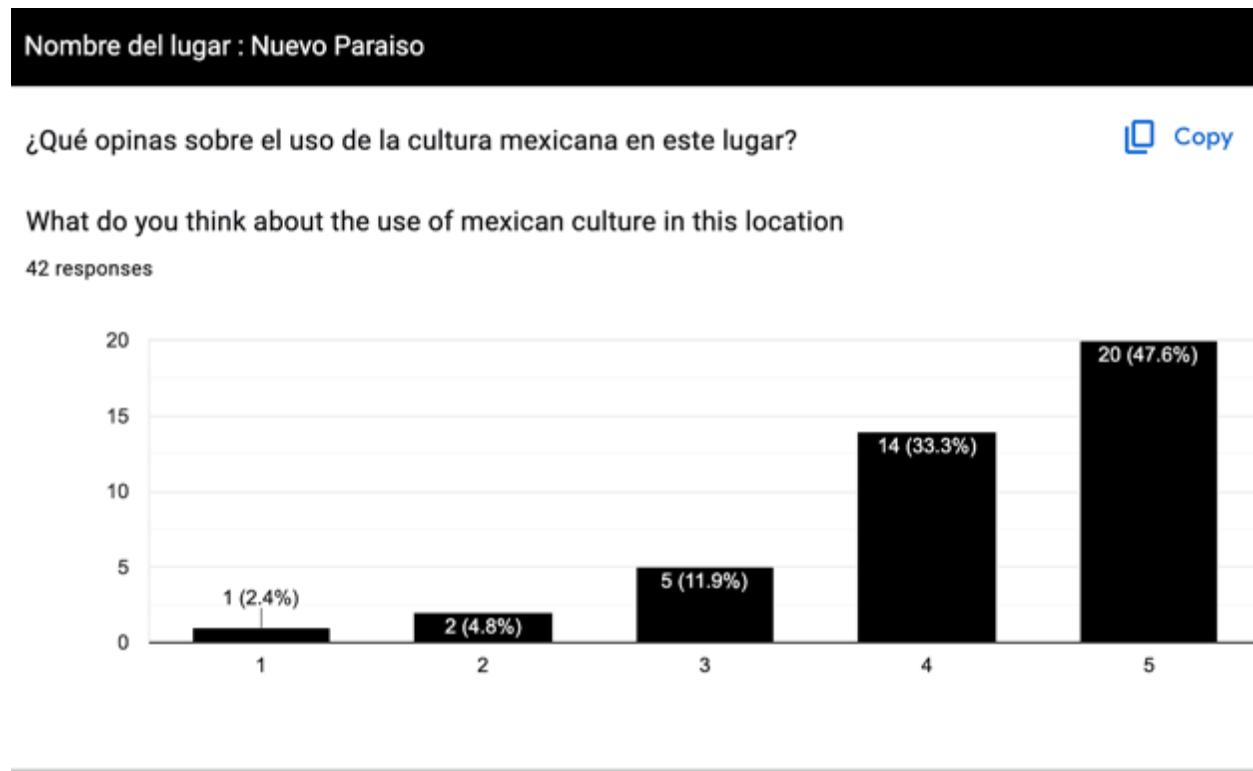


Figure 36 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Nuevo Paraiso

According to the given bar graph, it is clear that Mexican gamers generally have positive feelings about the use of Mexican culture in this level. We then inquired which of the locations provided the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. Most respondents expressed that this particular level made them feel like it was Mexico. Various participants expressed their thoughts on the representation of Mexico in *Red Dead Redemption*. One person noted that although the game is set in the North, it still brings to mind Mexico. Another participant found the portrayal of Mexico in the game to be unique

and realistic, unlike previous games. Others made comments about the similarity to small towns in Mexico, the game's reflection of the country's Hispanic heritage, and the accuracy of the graphics. Overall, the participants felt that the game captured the essence of Mexico and its history. One expressed a negative opinion by saying that it feels like a small town.

### *Grand Theft Auto 5*

In a merciless metropolis where trust is scarce, a retired bank robber, a young street hustler, and a frightening psychopath become involved with the criminal underworld's most dangerous and deranged factions, the U.S. government and the entertainment industry. To stay alive, they must successfully execute a sequence of perilous heists, but their own lack of trust in one another could be their undoing (*Grand Theft Auto V*, n.d.).

When it came to what critics thought about the game, PlayStation Universe published an article praising *Grand Theft Auto V* as a remarkable accomplishment that excels in nearly every aspect it sets out to achieve. The game seamlessly blends exceptional gameplay, captivating characters, and an expansive open world brimming with endless activities, making it a fitting finale for this console generation. With an assurance of hundreds of hours of immersive enjoyment, thought-provoking social commentary, and masterful storytelling, *Grand Theft Auto V* truly stands out as a masterpiece. In an article that TheSixthAxis wrote, *Grand Theft Auto V* is a self-aware and

self-referential masterpiece of satire, with allusions to modern culture and public perception of the series. The writing is intelligent, funny, and filled with references to popular media, showcasing excellent scripting and voice acting. It's a genius reflection of the world it comes into, like the best of satires. Later stated in their article that while *Grand Theft Auto V* is not groundbreaking or set out to change the world, it offers engaging and clever content that delivers what fans want. The game is packed with compelling personal stories and a magnificent world full of thousands of characters living their own tales, making it a must-play landmark in videogame history ("Grand Theft Auto V Review," 2013).



Figure 37 Martin Madrazo *Grand Theft Auto 5*

When it comes to characters that the player interacts with as part of the story is a character named Martin Madrazo. Martin Madrazo is a character in *Grand Theft Auto 5* who holds the position of a cartel leader. His quick temper and merciless approach to dealing with those who offend him indicate his psychopathic tendencies. Madrazo takes pleasure in publicly reminding those around him of his psychopathic tendencies and instilling fear in others. His conduct towards his wife and other women suggests a misogynistic inclination. The player stumbles upon Madrazo after unintentionally damaging his residence while engaged in an extramarital affair. Madrazo demands compensation for the damages, and after payment, he assigns the player the task of assassinating his cousin, who is a potential witness against Madrazo in court. Martin Madrazo wears expensive and stylish clothing, including a blue suit and white shirt. He also wears brown shoes.

**Nombre del personaje : Martin Madrazo**

¿Còmo calificas la caracterizaciòn de este personaje como parte de la cultura Mexicana?

 Copy

How well does this character take part in your culture?

39 responses

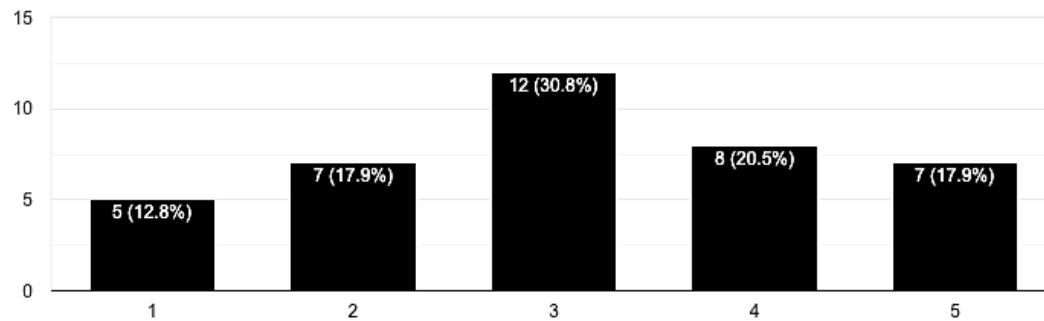


Figure 38 Bar graph on how well Martin Madrazo takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Martin Madrazo represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Martin Madrazo as a Mixed representation. One participant who felt represented by Martin Madrazo said, "He dresses and looks like an average middle-class person." On the other hand, those who did not feel represented by the character mentioned, "He looks and dresses like the common people I see." Additionally, a participant pointed out that "Not all Mexicans in the US are cartel leaders."



Figure 39 Mani *Grand Theft Auto 5*

Mani is another Mexican character from *Grand Theft Auto 5*. When approached, he speaks exclusively in Spanish to the player and onlookers. Mani discusses his unhappiness with being ignored by everyone around him, and Mani receives threats in the game due to him being Mexican. Inside the game, he is desperate to seek work as an actor. Mani is dressed in traditional Mariachi attire. Mani is dressed traditionally as a mariachi, wearing a sombrero with an embroidered bolero jacket.

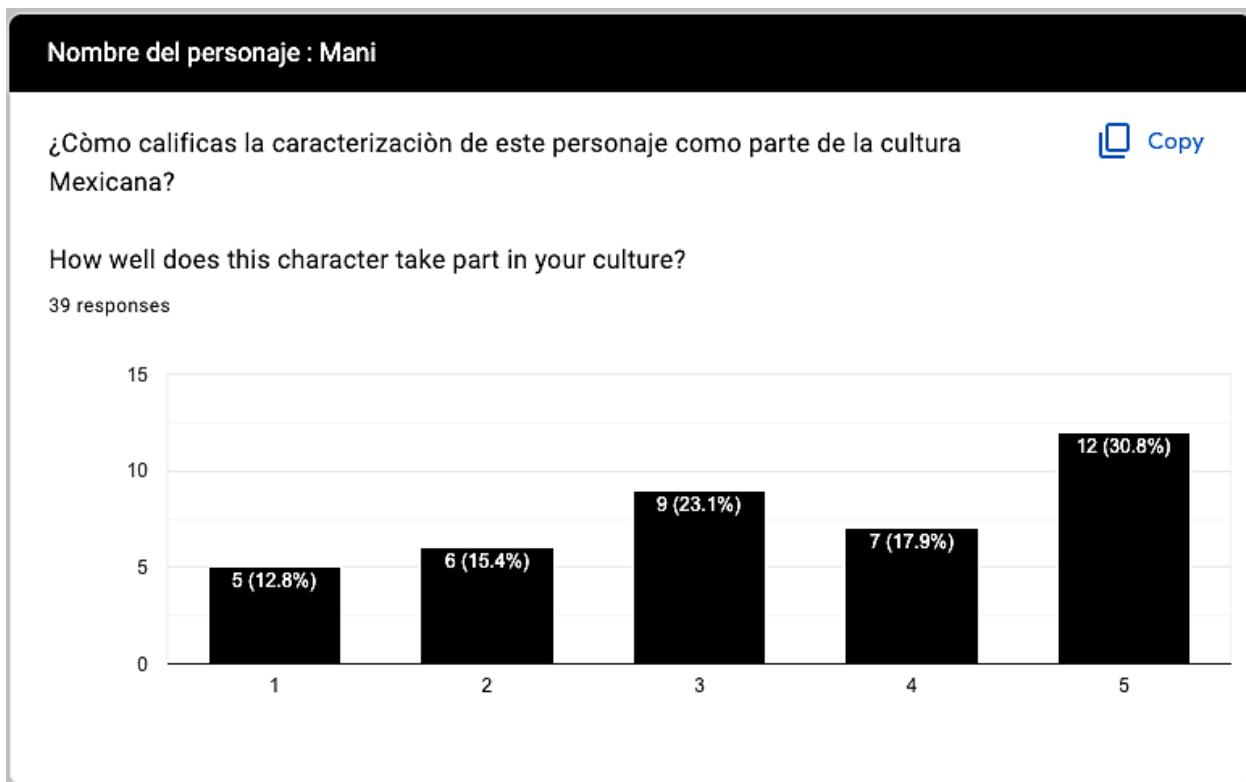


Figure 40 Bar graph on how well Mani takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Mani represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Mani as a positive representation based on the results. One participant who felt represented by Mani said, "Mani depicts everything that Mexicans know about their culture, and that's why I feel represented. Although it may seem stereotypical to some, how some people in the country dress and present themselves is quite literally like that." Another participant, however, criticized the game for perpetuating stereotypes, saying, "It places stereotypes onto one person, and the use of violence in the game only adds to the stereotype." On the other hand, those who did

not feel represented by Mani expressed their view, saying, "We don't wear sombreros like idiots, which is why we don't feel represented.".

### *Grim Fandango Remastered*

Something is amiss in the land of the dead, and you're being deceived. Enter Manny Calavera, a travel agent at the Department of Death, who offers luxury packages to souls during their four-year journey to eternal rest. However, trouble arises in this paradise. You must assist Manny in unraveling a conspiracy that risks his salvation. *Grim Fandango's* remarkable tale chronicles Manny's four-year adventure as a travel agent to the dead (*Grim Fandango Remastered for Nintendo Switch - Nintendo Official Site*, n.d.).

In their article, Adventure Gamers praised *Grim Fandango's* character development, highlighting each character's distinct personality (*Grim Fandango Remastered Review*, 2015). In an article that Attack of the Fans wrote, they as well praised the characters in *Grim Fandango*. The article that was written said *Grim Fandango Remastered's* well-crafted story relies heavily on its unique and memorable cast of characters, including the reluctant hero Manny, his dimwitted but lovable sidekick Glottis, and both a love interest and a villain. Each one's distinct contribution elevates the character interactions. The voice acting adds to the game's authenticity, with the decision to cast Latino actors contributing to its Spanish-style setting. The Land of the Dead is vividly depicted through various nuances, creating an immersive experience (<https://www.facebook.com/DJamesSC>, 2015).



Figure 41 Manuel Calavera *Grim Fandango Remastered*

Manuel Calavera is the main protagonist of the video game *Grim Fandango*. He is a travel agent trapped in the Land of the Dead due to his past mistakes and cannot move on until he has redeemed himself. Throughout the game, Manny is depicted as a sarcastic and quick-witted character who uses his wit and resourcefulness to solve puzzles and navigate the game's world. Manuel Calavera is seen wearing a white suit and black pants. *Grim Fandango* draws significant inspiration from the Mexican holiday Dia De Los Muertos and film noir movies. Tim Schafer, the creator of *Grim Fandango*, has conducted thorough research on the Mexican holiday, as evident in a video where he discusses the inspirations that influenced the creation of *Grim Fandango* (DoubleFineProd, 2018).

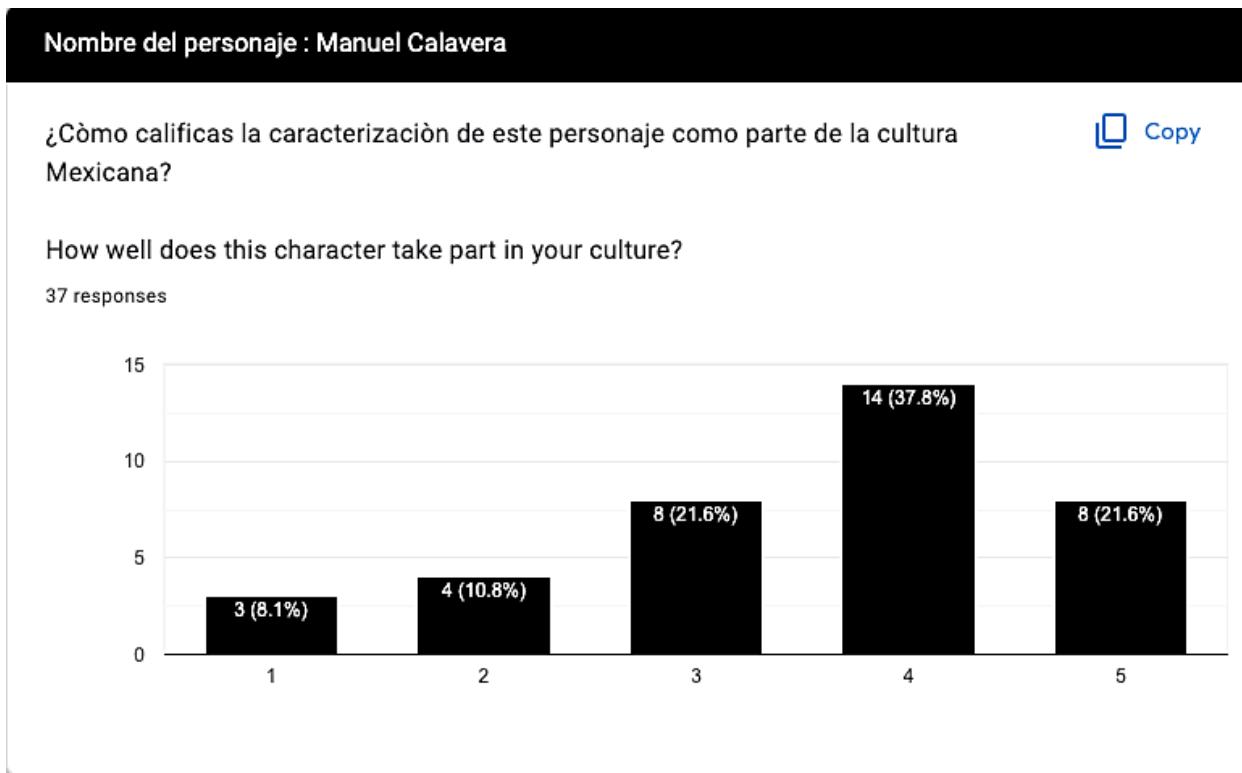


Figure 42 Bar graph on how well Manuel Calavera takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Manuel Calavera represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Manuel Calavera as a positive representation based on the results. Certain individuals who identified with Manuel Calavera's character in media found relatable qualities in him, expressing "Manny is a skeleton, and I have one too." Others found him "cool and smart."

### Bioshock

Embark on a journey to Rapture, an undersea city that was once a paradise for the brightest minds but has now descended into a dystopian chaos caused by one man's arrogance. In this decaying metropolis, you will encounter Splicers - insane predators

who hunt Little Sisters, young girls whom their massive Big Daddy guardians protect. Survival in Rapture will require your wits, scavenged weapons, and extraordinary abilities granted by Plasmids that alter your DNA. You must adopt their powers to vanquish the city's twisted creatures (*BioShock Remastered for Nintendo Switch - Nintendo Official Site*, n.d.).

In an article that Cheat Code Central wrote, the author praises the game's visuals, particularly the underwater effects and lifelike character animations, and notes that the game's varied locales contribute to its immersive atmosphere. The author also comments on the game's high-quality audio, including the sound effects and voice acting, which help to flesh out the game's world and characters. The author notes some occasional issues with transparency in the game's visuals but praises the game's attention to detail and ability to create a dynamic and alive world (*BioShock Review for PC*, n.d.).

Extreme Gamer, in their article, praises Bioshock for its impressive graphics and audio, which are powered by the Unreal gaming engine. It suggests that *Bioshock* is among the best-looking games on Xbox 360 and could even be considered the best-looking game of the next generation. The attention to detail in the world of Rapture, and the atmospheric effects that create suspense and realism, are highlighted as particularly impressive. The article also argues that the sound in *Bioshock* is equally important and impressive, perfectly capturing the 1940s time period and featuring eerie and captivating sound recordings. The voice actors are praised for their work, which is said to be strong

enough to make Bioshock a strong contender for sound of the year (*Bioshock Xbox 360 Review - Extreme Gamer*, n.d.).



Figure 43 El Ammo Bandito *BioShock*

Set in 1960, *BioShock* follows the story of Jack, the lone survivor of a plane crash in the Atlantic Ocean. After stumbling upon the entrance to the secluded underwater city of Rapture, which has been ravaged by civil war, Jack finds himself stranded in a perilous and unfamiliar dystopia. With the aid of a mysterious figure named Atlas, he must confront the mutated inhabitants of Rapture, utilizing various weapons and genetic

enhancements to survive and uncover a means of escaping back to the surface. El Ammo Bandito is a vending machine that sells ammunition to the player. When the player interacts with the machine, it talks to the player in very broken English, with the machine talking in both English and Spanish. The Mexican bandit inspires El ammo bandito's design since the logo consists of a man wearing a sombrero and a red scarf with two revolvers. The bottom part has a cactus design on the machine.

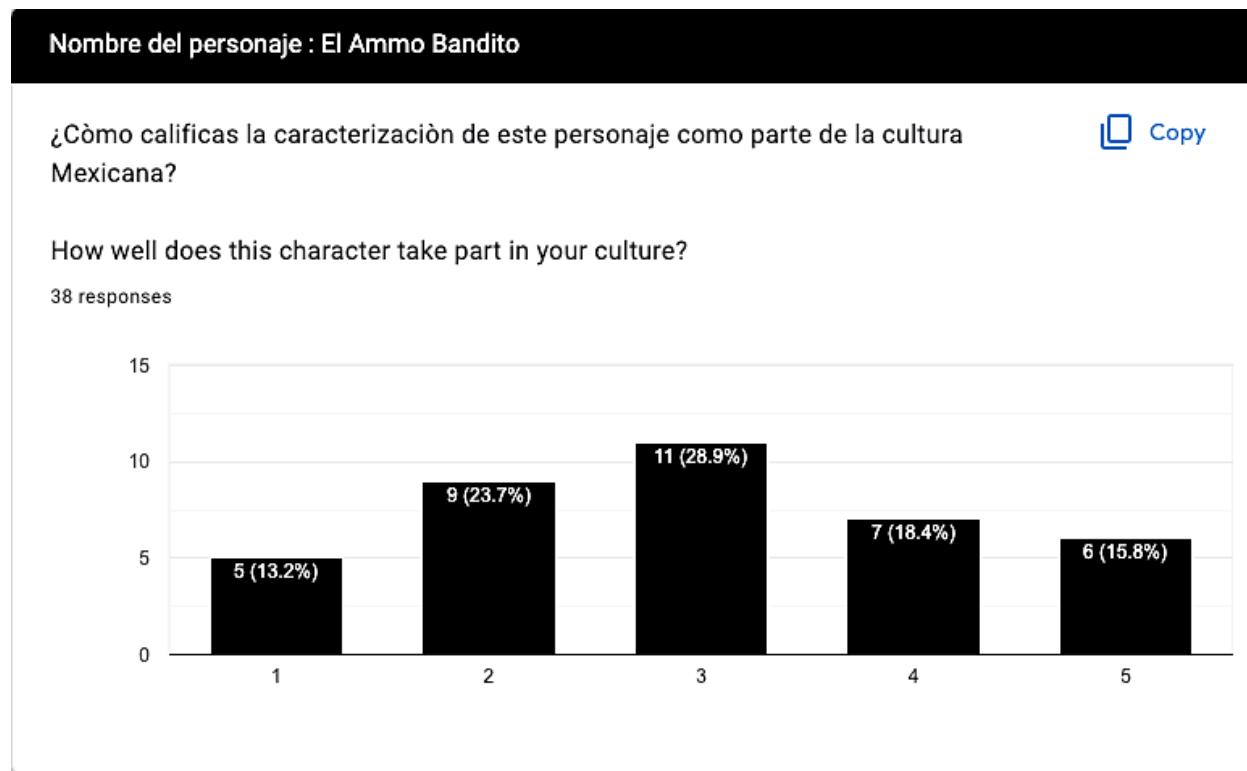


Figure 44 Bar graph on how well El Ammo Bandito takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well El Ammo Bandito represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated El Ammo Bandito as a mixed representation. Participants who chose El Ammo Bandito as the character that least

represented them in the media gave specific reasons for their selection. One participant expressed, "Although I appreciate the design, I don't think it accurately portrays Mexican culture. It seems too generic." Another participant stated, "It's essentially just an ammunition vending machine, and the term 'bandito' isn't even Spanish; it's an English word."

### **LittleBigPlanet**

*LittleBigPlanet* is a video game that provides players with an imaginative and creative world to explore and build upon. The game allows players to construct new levels and environments, collect various tools and objects, and engage with unique characters and challenges. Players can customize their gameplay experience by collecting items, clothes, and creative tools, which are hidden or rewarded for skilled gameplay. The game takes players through different locations on the PlayStation 3, each with unique levels and challenges (*What Is LittleBigPlanet?*, 2010).

GameSpy's article praised *LittleBigPlanet*'s diverse and fun stages, which are themed around specific geographic areas and have excellent platforming gameplay. The game features various themes, such as English gardens and Indian-themed stages, which are dazzling to see and play. However, the article noted that some stages might feature odd but harmless stereotypes (*GameSpy: LittleBigPlanet - Page 3*, n.d.). In an article by The Sixth Axis, the game's visual aesthetics, music, and multiplayer functionality are

highlighted, with particular emphasis on the exceptional quality of the pre-made levels and the refreshing appearance of the visuals (“Review,” 2008).



Figure 45 Wedding Reception *LittleBigPlanet*

In *LittleBigPlanet*, players embark on a puzzle platforming adventure that takes them on across the globe. The player's mission is to stop the main antagonist, who is kidnapping creators. The game features levels inspired by real-life locations but presented in a whimsical caricature style. The player will explore various countries, including England, Mexico, the United States, Japan, India, and Russia, as they progress through the game. Throughout the game, players have the opportunity to gather stickers, decorations, objects, materials, costumes, audio, and backgrounds that are all uniquely tied to the culture represented in each level. The Wedding Reception, which is based on

the Mexican holiday El Día de los Muertos, this level has you traversing the graveyard of the church, and it is filled with different depictions of Calaveras, Altars and Ofrendas, marigold flowers, candles, and Flor de Nube.

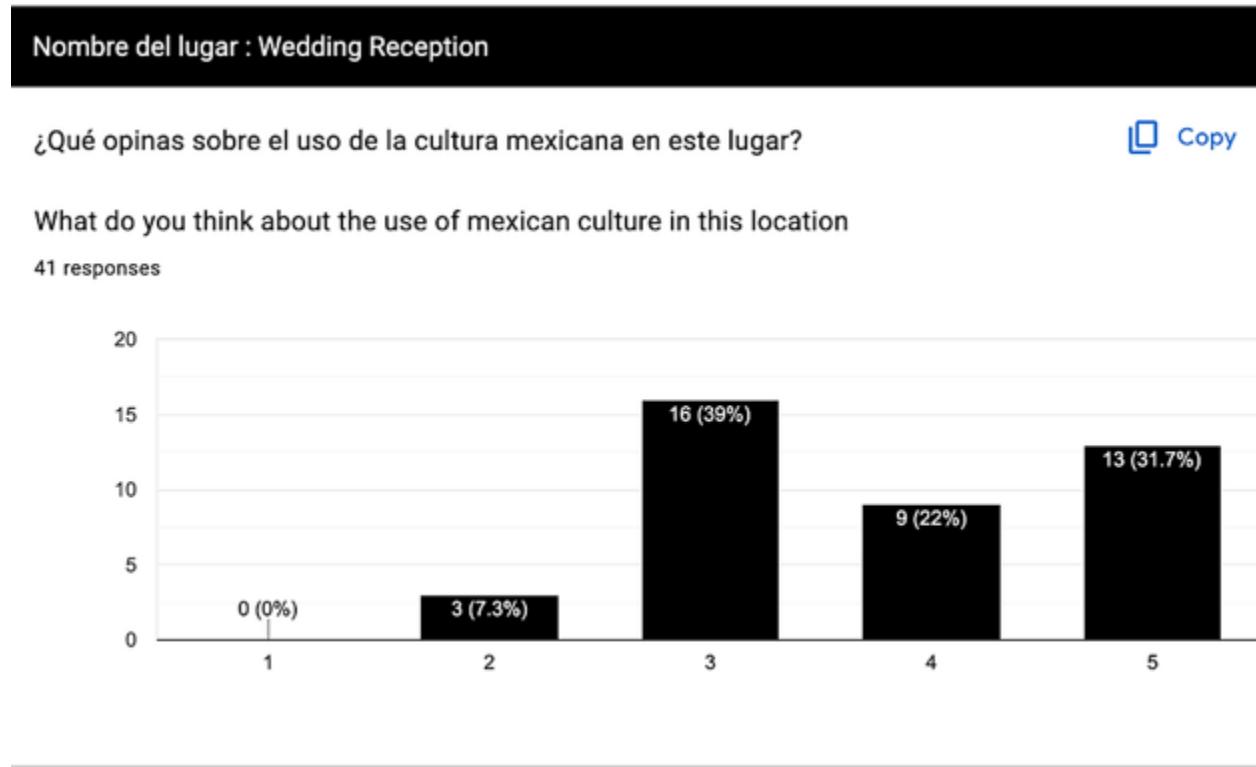


Figure 46 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Wedding Reception

The bar graph indicates that Mexican gamers had varied positive responses toward the depiction of Mexican culture in the game. Additionally, we asked which of the locations in the game evoked the strongest and weakest sense of being in Mexico. Among those who chose this level due to its resemblance to Mexico, one participant highlighted the presence of "distinct Mexican iconography," while another emphasized the "vibrant decorations and imagery of the sugar skull" as powerful reminders of their

culture. However, one respondent expressed a dissenting opinion, stating that the level did not accurately depict Mexico and described it as a "poor representation."



Figure 47 Boom Town *LittleBigPlanet*

In *LittleBigPlanet*, the level "Boom Town" presents a caricatured depiction of Mexico, resembling the portrayal often seen in Hollywood. The level features a desert town where inhabitants are depicted wearing sarapes, sombreros, and sporting exaggerated mustaches, conforming to the conventional media portrayal of Mexico. The goal for this level is to rescue Uncle Jalapeño, who is locked up inside a jail.

Nombre del lugar : Boom Town

¿Qué opinas sobre el uso de la cultura mexicana en este lugar?

 Copy

What do you think about the use of mexican culture in this location

42 responses

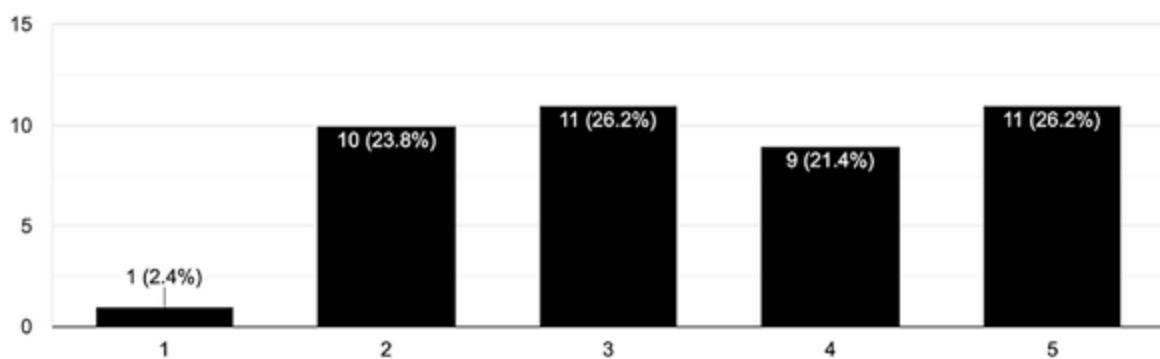


Figure 48 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Boom Town

According to the given bar graph, it is clear that Mexican gamers generally have positive feelings as well as mixed feelings about the use of Mexican culture at this level. We then inquired which of the locations provided the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. We proceeded to ask the participants which locations gave them the most and least convincing impressions of being in Mexico. Some of the participants shared their feedback on the location that they felt gave the strongest sensation of being in Mexico, while others felt that it did not accurately convey Mexico. For instance, one participant pointed out that "The majority of cacti in Mexico are nopalos. That type of cactus is more common in the USA," while another participant felt that the location

presented an underestimated image of Mexico. Additionally, one participant mentioned that some places in the location had colors typically associated with Mexico in movies, whereas another participant felt that “because of the colors” the location reminded them of Mexico.



Figure 49 Serpent Shrine LittleBigPlanet

In *LittleBigPlanet*, the level "Serpent Shrine" the game has the player going through an Aztec temple that is inspired by the temple of Quetzalcoatl.

Nombre del lugar : Serpent Shrine

¿Qué opinas sobre el uso de la cultura mexicana en este lugar?

 Copy

What do you think about the use of mexican culture in this location

41 responses

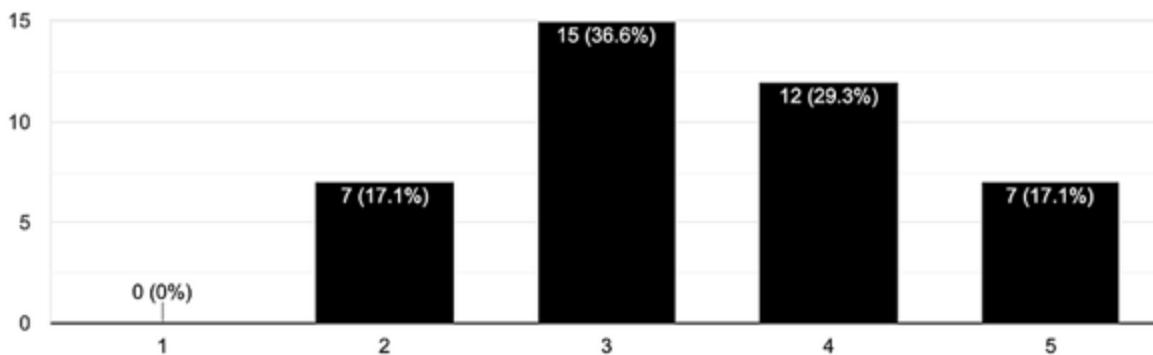


Figure 50 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Serpent Shrine

According to the given bar graph, it is clear that Mexican gamers generally have mixed feelings about the use of Mexican culture in this level. We then inquired which of the locations provided the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. Some respondents felt that the level resembled Mexico, and among those who strongly felt this way, they believed that the level showcased their ancestors. However, one respondent disagreed, stating that the level did not resemble Mexico at all.



Figure 51 Frida the Bride LittleBigPlanet

Frida the bride, is a character in *LittleBigPlanet*. She is in charge of a level called the wedding reception. She tasks the player to help find her missing fiancé. Frida the Bride is portrayed as a caricature of Frida Kahlo, a renowned painter famous for her nature-inspired works and captivating portraits, including self-portraits. In this representation, Frida dons a wedding gown with a bouquet of marigold flowers and a floral headpiece, adding to her overall charm.

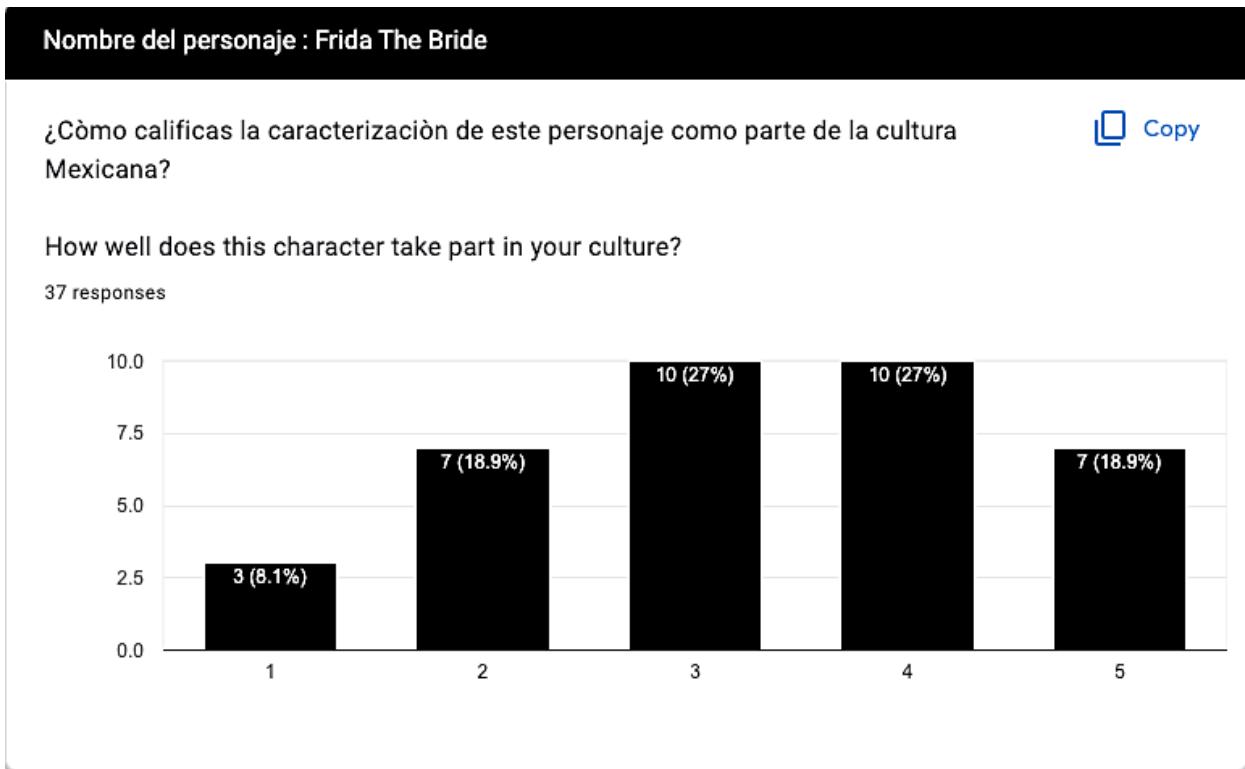


Figure 52 Bar graph on how well Frida The Bride takes part in their culture

Based on the results depicted in the above bar graph, respondents were generally divided between perceiving Frida the Bride as a mixed representation and a positive representation of their culture when evaluating how well she embodies it.

### Grand Theft Auto III

*Grand Theft Auto III* is a critically acclaimed game that portrays the dark and seedy underworld of Liberty City, where everything began. It offers a massive and diverse open world, a varied cast of characters from all walks of life, and the freedom to explore at will, giving you access to the intriguing, ruthless world of crime. With exceptional voice acting, a darkly comic storyline, an impressive soundtrack, and groundbreaking open-

world gameplay, *Grand Theft Auto III* is the game that set the standard for the open-world genre for an entire generation (Games, 2020).

According to Game Chronicles' article, the game is categorized as violent, mature, and filled with criminal activities thus, it may not be appropriate for children. However, the article also highlights the game's immersive and expansive open world, providing hundreds of hours of entertainment. The article further emphasizes that the game is highly addictive and unique as it seemingly has no end, allowing players to continue playing even after completing the main storyline and still have fun (*Game Chronicles - Review*, n.d.). Game Over Online reviewed *Grand Theft Auto III* and found it highly successful and memorable. Although the graphics are initially weak, the more the game is played, the more the player can appreciate the trade-offs that were made. The gameplay is exceptional, allowing players to complete missions for crime bosses or create chaos throughout the city. While the story is not very deep, it flows smoothly and has several nice twists and turns. Overall, the author believes that the gameplay in *Grand Theft Auto III* is outstanding and will hold much more replay value compared to other games in their collection (*Game Over Online ~ Grand Theft Auto III*, n.d.).



Figure 53 Catalina *Grand Theft Auto 3*

Catalina is represented in *Grand Theft Auto III* as a mentally unstable woman with psychopathic tendencies, self-centeredness, a tendency to be destructive, reckless, and hotheaded. Her temper is exceptionally short, and she can quickly become angry in a matter of seconds. She frequently resorts to insulting and verbally abusing those who are close to her, showing no regard for almost anyone other than herself. Regarding its design, Catalina is depicted in an overly sexualized manner, thereby perpetuating a stereotype associated with Latinas. She is depicted wearing a black jacket, tank top, pants, and shoes. Her hair is styled in a ponytail.

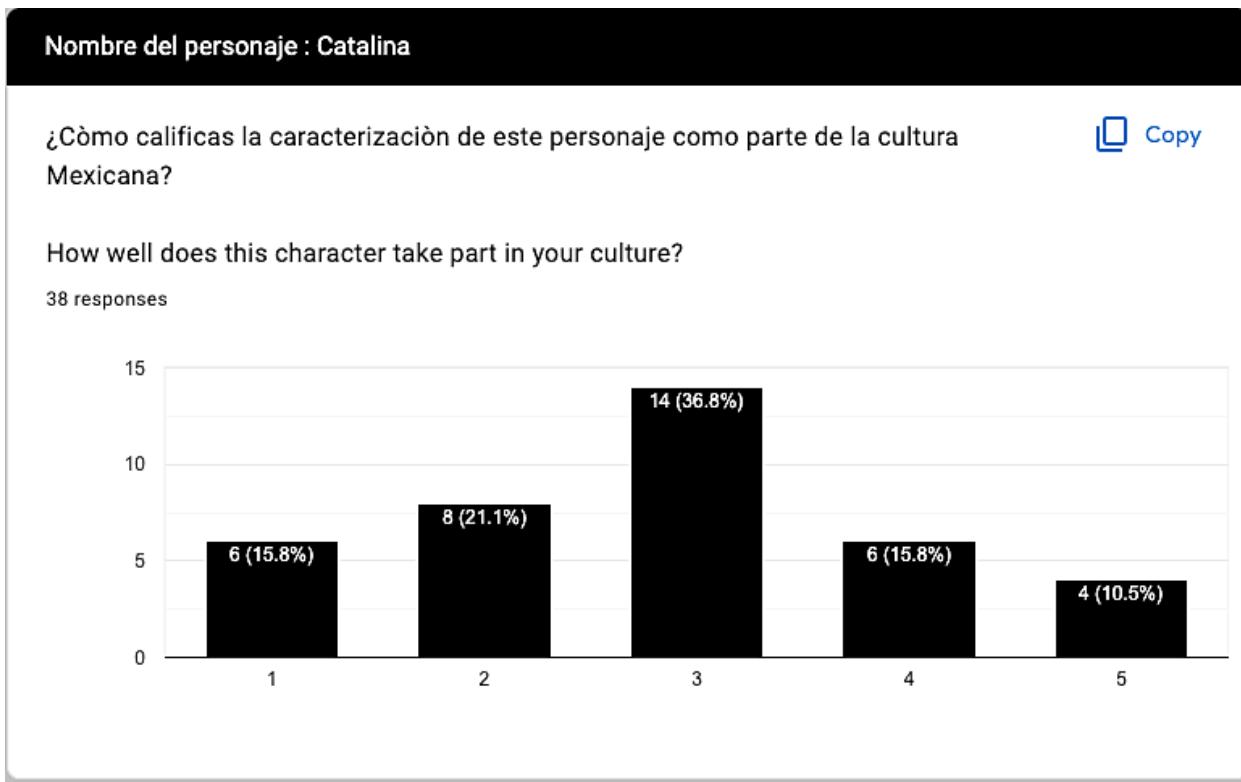


Figure 54 Bar graph on how well Catalina takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Catalina represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Catalina as a mixed representation based on the results. Those who selected Catalina as the character that did not represent them in the media provided reasons for their choice. One participant expressed that Catalina did not have a Mexican appearance and seemed like a generic non-playable character. Another participant opined that Catalina seemed like a Chola, which is a cultural stereotype associated with the United States.

### *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*

Step into the 1980s, a decade characterized by big hair, excess, and pastel suits, and experience the return of *Grand Theft Auto* in a gripping tale of a man's ascension to the top of the criminal underworld. Vice City is a sprawling metropolis that stretches from the shores to the wetlands and from the glamorous to the destitute. This digital city is the most diverse, comprehensive, and lively creation to date. With a combination of open-ended gameplay and a story that focuses on the protagonist's personality, you'll arrive in a wondrous and seedy city and be given the chance to seize control in any way you desire (Games, 2021).

According to an article by IGN, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is considered one of the most remarkable games of 2002. The article highlights the game's impressive graphics, including its use of classic 80s color schemes and clothing, as well as its vast scope, which is filled with numerous intricate details. However, the characters in the game have a caricatured appearance, with unrealistic textures and designs. The game is generally praised for its large scale and extensive content rather than its attention to fine details (Oct 20 et al., 2002). Game Over Online published an article praising the game's impressive graphics and meticulous attention to detail. They highlight how the game depicts a realistic and immersive city modeled after Miami, where each building has its own unique history and character. The article also discusses the highly-detailed character models that convey emotional context through facial expressions. However, the citizen

animations in the game were sometimes criticized as appearing robotic and unrealistic. The article emphasizes the game's immersive atmosphere and attention to detail (*Game Over Online ~ Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, n.d.).



Figure 55 Pedro Garcia *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*

Pedro Garcia operates as a gun runner within Vice City, while the Vice City Bureau of Investigation monitors his activities. On the other hand, Garcia purchases weapons from outside the state and distributes them on the streets of Vice City.

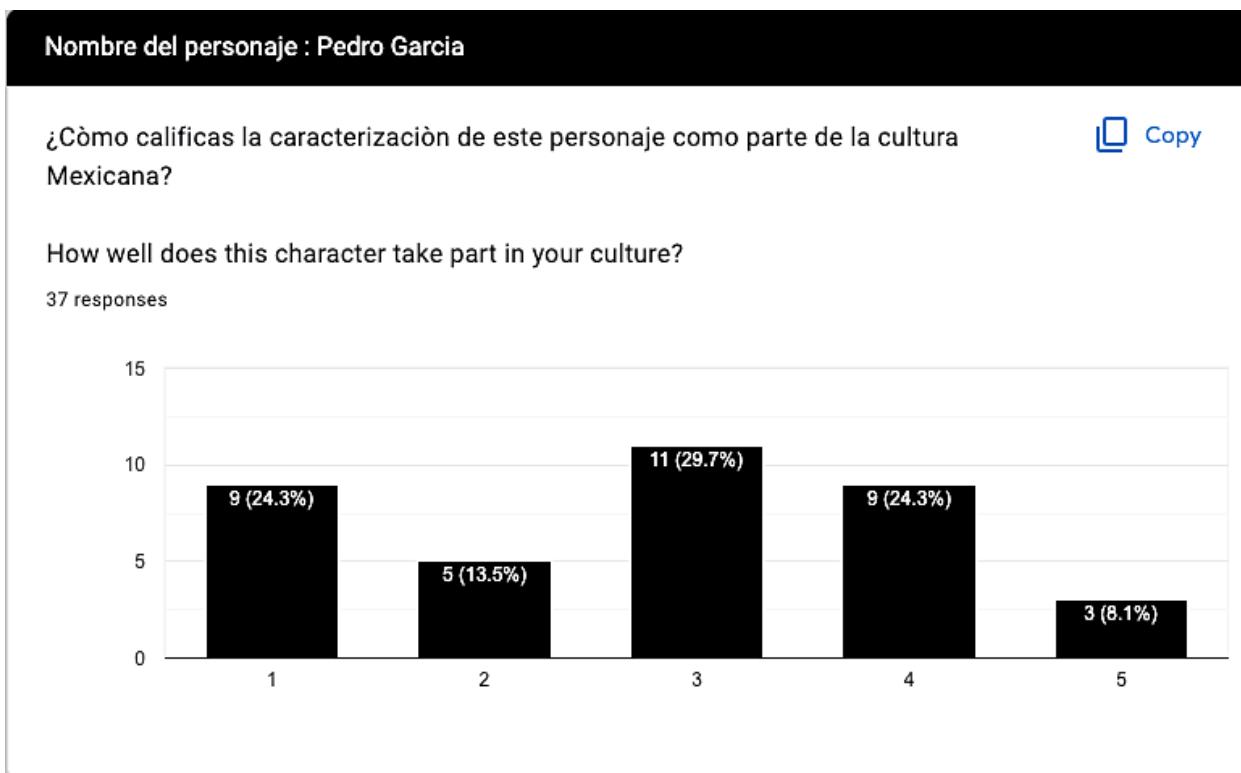


Figure 56 Bar graph on how well Pedro Garcia takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Pedro Garcia represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Pedro Garcia as a mixed representation. Respondents who selected Pedro Garcia as a character that represented them cited his relatable appearance as a reason for their choice. One participant noted that Pedro looked like an "average man," while another mentioned that he seemed "very ordinary" and did not perpetuate cultural stereotypes.

### Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

Five years prior, Carl Johnson fled from the chaos of Los Santos, San Andreas - a city besieged by gang warfare, drug abuse, and corruption - where even the rich and

famous sought to avoid the criminal underworld. Fast forward to the early 1990s, and Carl must return home after his mother's murder, his family's disintegration, and the downfall of his childhood companions. However, upon his arrival, he is wrongly accused of murder by a couple of corrupt police officers. In order to clear his name, CJ embarks on a journey across the entire state of San Andreas to both save his family and seize control of the streets (Games, 2021).

Gamers Temple's article about *Grand Theft Auto San Andreas* praises the game's skillful combination of storytelling, thrilling action, and open-world gameplay. In addition, the article delves into the impressive graphical design, commenting on each city's distinct look and atmosphere, the high-quality character models, and the excellent sound quality (Date: 7/20/2005, n.d.). In their article on *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, the reviewer at Gamer Chronicles commends the diverse physical models and body language of the characters in the game. Nonetheless, the reviewer observes that the characters' facial expressions, particularly in cutscenes, could have been improved. Despite this, San Andreas's graphics are generally superb (*Game Chronicles - Review*, n.d.).



Figure 57 Cesar Vialpando *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*

Cesar Vialpando, who happens to be Catalina's cousin, possesses an attitude that contrasts with hers. In *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, he is portrayed as a kind, loyal, caring, and selfless individual. However, his patience is limited, and he may become short-tempered if things don't go as planned. Cesar is the leader of the Varrios Los Aztecas, a fiercely proud Latino street gang.

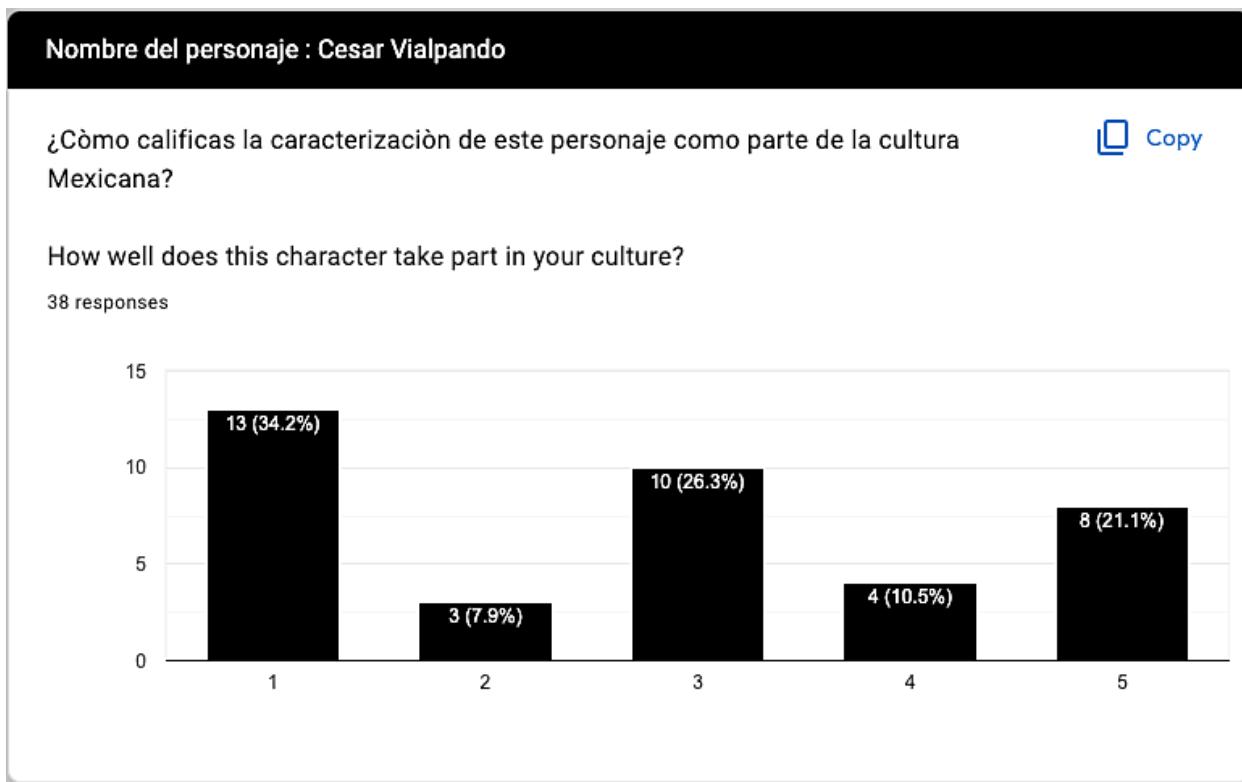


Figure 58 Bar graph on how well Caesar Vialpando takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Cesar Vialpando represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Cesar Vialpando as a negative representation. Those who selected Cesar Vialpando as the character that least made them feel represented in the media shared their thoughts. One individual commented that while they liked the character, they did not consider him truly Mexican, as he seemed more like a Mexican American or a "pochito cholo," a term used to describe someone who has adopted gang culture. They appreciated it when games featured both distinctions, allowing players to see the differences. Another participant suggested that Cesar was more representative of the cholo culture in the United States. Some participants shared

that they did not believe Cesar embodied Mexican culture, as he was depicted as a thug and had a thuggish appearance.

### *Fallout: New Vegas*

Welcome to New Vegas, where digging your own grave before being shot in the head and left for dead is just the beginning. This city is a battleground for warring factions fighting for control of the desert oasis, with dreamers and desperados caught in the crossfire. With the right weaponry and attitude, anyone can make a name for themselves in this lawless land, but beware of making enemies along the way. You'll encounter diverse characters, mutated creatures, and powerful factions as you explore the blistering Mojave Wasteland, the grand Hoover Dam, and the glitzy Vegas Strip. Pick a side in the looming conflict or seize the opportunity to become the ultimate ruler of New Vegas (*Fallout*, n.d.).

Regarding the opinions of critics about *Fallout: New Vegas*, Destructoid's article applauds the game for its immersive elements, such as improved background noise, an impressive soundtrack, creative side quests, and fantastic companion characters ("Review," n.d.). Xbox Addict praised the impressive graphics of *Fallout: New Vegas* in their article, particularly the detailed presentation of famous landmarks like the Hoover Dam and the New Vegas Strip. They highlighted how the game's environment was carefully crafted to fully immerse players in a unique world (*Fallout*, n.d.).



Figure 59 Raul Tejada *Fallout New Vegas*

Raul Alfonso Tejada, a Mexican mechanic and gunslinger, builds a modest home and settles in Nevada to leave his tumultuous past behind. He takes pleasure in listening to the radio until his preferred station unexpectedly ceases broadcasting. He is seized and detained when he sets out to investigate the reason and finds out why the broadcast has stopped.

Nombre del personaje : Raul Tejada

¿Cómo calificas la caracterización de este personaje como parte de la cultura Mexicana?

 Copy

How well does this character take part in your culture?

38 responses

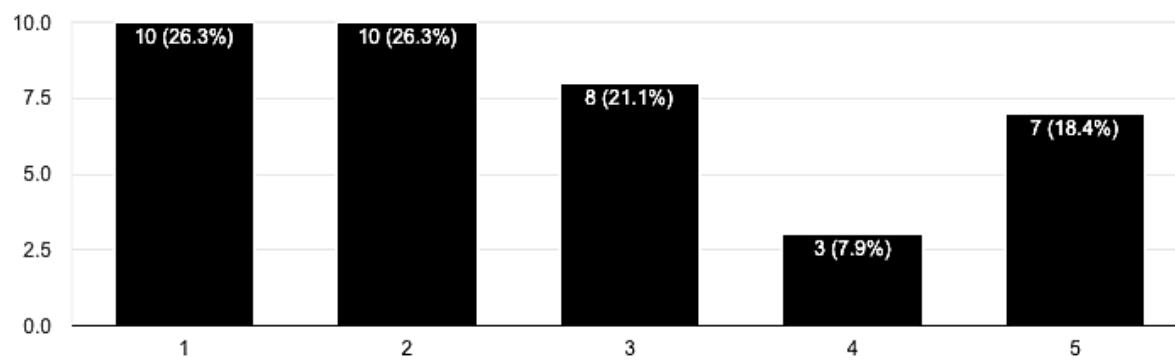


Figure 60 Bar graph on how well Raul Tejada takes part in their culture

When it comes to how well Raul Tejada represents the respondents' culture, as shown in the bar graph above, most respondents rated Raul Tejada as a negative representation. Individuals who identified with Raul Tejada as a character that represented them in the media shared their perspectives. One participant expressed that Raul's Mexican heritage made him stand out in a game that lacked representation from that region, but ultimately saw himself as a person first and Mexican second. Another participant saw Raul as an accurate depiction of an average Mexican citizen before the bombs fell in the Fallout universe. However, some participants did not feel represented

by Raul. One individual felt that Raul lacked any physical indicators of his Mexican heritage, while another did not like the character.

### **Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2**

Experience the nostalgia of the most iconic skateboarding games ever created with *Tony Hawk's™ Pro Skater™ & Tony Hawk's™ Pro Skater™ 2*, now available in one epic collection. This fully-remastered game has been rebuilt from the ground up in incredible HD, bringing back all the pro skaters, levels, and tricks that fans loved, and more (*Tony Hawk's™ Pro Skater™ & Tony Hawk's™ Pro Skater™ 2*, n.d.).

PlayStation Universe, in their article on the game, asserts that the updated graphics have significantly enhanced the game's visuals, as the graphics, models, and textures have been modernized to make it look stunning and contemporary (Hawden, 2020). Gaming Nexus, in an article, notes that the game has expanded on the levels from the original PS1 titles by adding modernizing touches while still retaining the essence of what made them great. The game is highly addictive and will keep players engaged for extended periods of time (*Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 1 + 2*, n.d.).

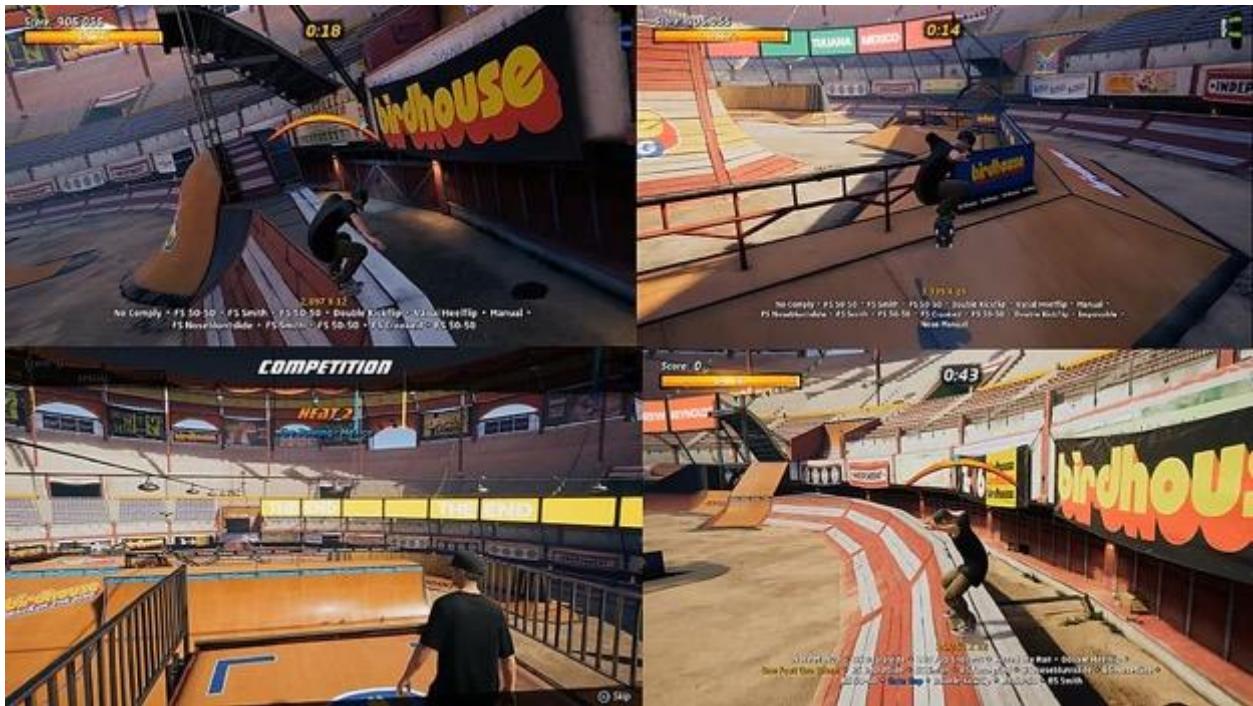


Figure 61 Bullringing *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 1+2*

*Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2* is a skateboarding game that features real-life locations as its settings. One of the levels is inspired by "The Plaza Monumental de Tijuana" or Bullringing by the Sea, a famous location in Tijuana, Mexico (Tony Hawk [@tonyhawk], 2015). In order to enhance the Mexican ambiance, the announcer in this level is of Mexican origin, and there is a bull roaming around the stage in the original version of the game. In the remake, they removed the bull entirely.

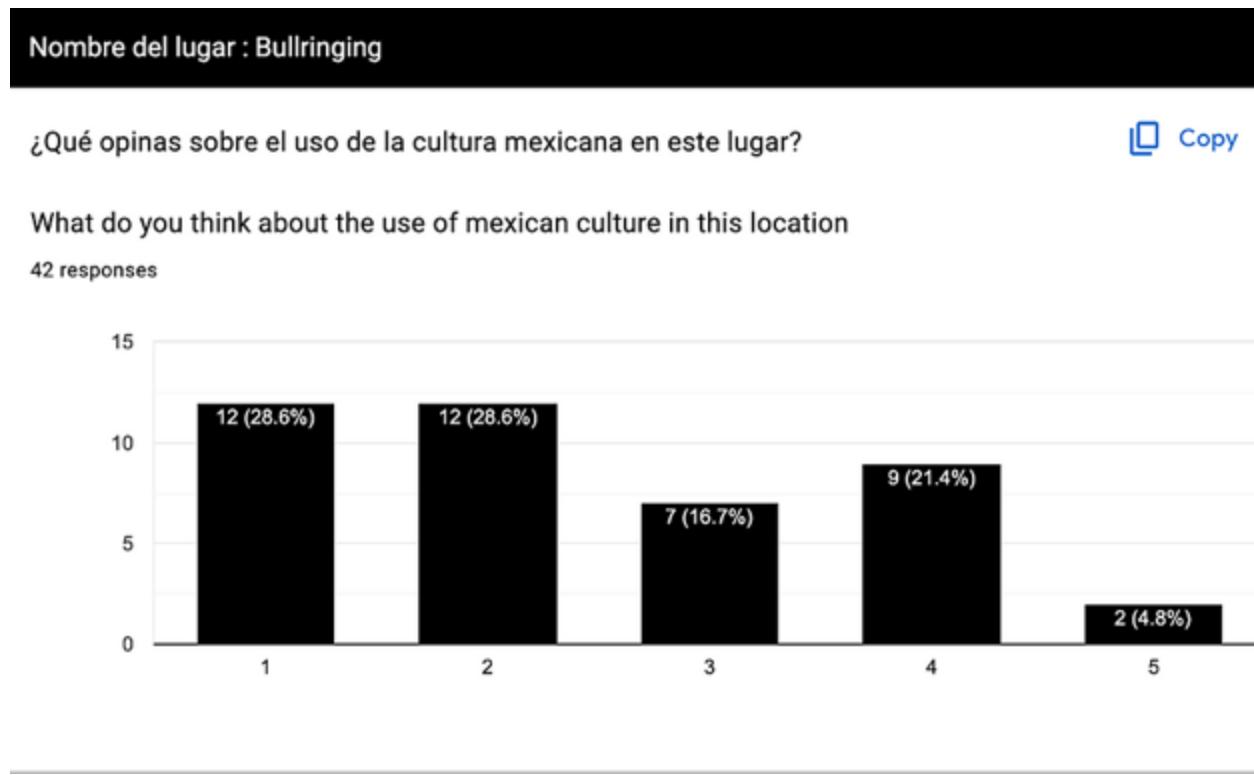


Figure 62 Gamers' opinion on the use of Mexican culture inside Bullringing

Based on the information presented in the bar graph, it is evident that the use of Mexican culture in the level was disliked by Mexican gamers. We asked participants which location in the game made them feel the strongest and weakest sensations of being in Mexico. Those who viewed Bullringing as the least authentic location provided several reasons that led them to feel it did not represent Mexico. Some participants found that not all of Mexico had that, while others felt that using it as a skateboarding track was highly disrespectful. There were also comments stating that it looked like a generic skate park and that the culture of bullfighting was more Spanish than Mexican. In addition, some felt that it could be any place in Ibero-America, and almost all stadiums worldwide

were identical. Some participants stated that it did not represent Mexico and that there was nothing Mexican about it, except for the location. Only one participant mentioned that it reminded them of Mexico.

### **3.4 Common Mexican Stereotypes**

The "Common Mexican Stereotypes" theme was selected since the survey contained three inquiries about stereotypes and design. The participants were inquired about the stereotypes present in video games about Mexico and their thoughts and feelings regarding these stereotypes. The second question pertained to video game stereotypes and how they felt about them. The third question aimed to gather the participants' opinions on the way Mexicans are designed in video games and how they felt about the way they were designed. Video games usually feature Mexico as a stereotypical country, as well as Mexican people as stereotypical characters, and we wanted to know their views on how they are portrayed and what they think of their portrayal in video games.

### 3.4.1 What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?



Figure 63 World Cloud for Survey Question “What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?”

In the survey's first question, people were asked, “What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games, and what does it make you feel?”. Based on the presented visual cloud, video games portray Mexico as a desert landscape ruled by cartels and neglected by its people.

The common theme among these negative opinions about the portrayal of Mexico in video games is dissatisfaction and criticism. Participants express their dislike for how

Mexico is depicted, mentioning that video games often portray it as dangerous (Participant 4) and as a deserted town, which alienates individuals who have never lived in northern Mexico (Participant 5). Other criticisms include the portrayal of Mexico as destroyed, poor, and ruled by cartels (Participant 6), the emphasis on superficial aspects of the country while neglecting its diverse geography (Participant 10), the association with drug cartels (Participant 25), and the overuse of stereotypes such as luchadores or drug dealers/gang members (Participant 36 and Participant 40). Participants also express disappointment with the portrayal of the Mexican economy in decline and inaccurate representations of modern Mexicans (Participant 43 and Participant 30). The common theme is a sense of dissatisfaction with the negative and stereotypical portrayals that do not accurately represent the country or its people.

The common theme in the positive opinions about the portrayal of Mexico in video games is the appreciation for familiarity, colorful representation, amusement, and the belief that certain aspects accurately represent Mexican culture. Participants express a sense of feeling at home (Participant 32), appreciate the vibrant and colorful depiction (Participant 30), find amusement in the portrayal of Mexicans wearing big hats and living in the desert (Participant 17), and view the presence of cheerful individuals who enjoy tequila and tacos as an accurate representation of Mexicans in general (Participant 25). The theme revolves around a positive connection, enjoyment, and recognition of cultural elements that resonate with the participants.

### 3.4.2 What kind of Mexican Stereotypes do you see in video games?

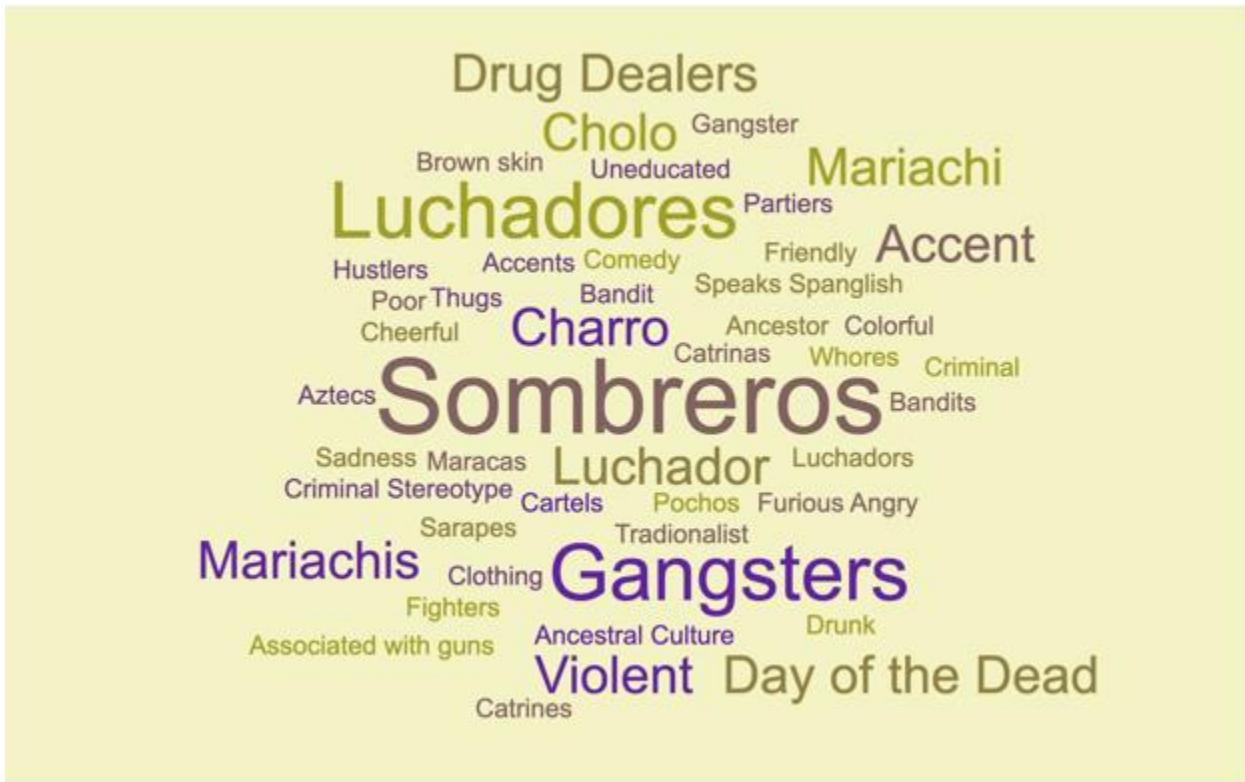


Figure 64 Word cloud for survey question “What kind of Mexican Stereotypes do you see in video games?”

We then asked them to identify the stereotypes they usually saw when video games depict Mexican people and express their feelings toward them. As seen in the above word cloud, Mexican gamers are frequently depicted in video games as wearing sombreros, luchadores, and gangsters. According to the survey results, most respondents were unhappy with how they were represented in video games.

The common theme among these negative opinions is the criticism of stereotypical and inaccurate portrayals of Mexicans in video games. Participants expressed frustration

with the prevalence of criminal stereotypes (Participant 4), the stereotypical depictions of Mexicans as gangsters or with exaggerated features like sombreros and big mustaches (Participant 43), and the discomfort caused by representations as charros or vandals (Participant 10). There is a strong desire to be portrayed as ordinary individuals rather than stereotypes like thugs, bandits, whores, or comedy relief (Participant 5). Participants also criticize the exaggerated and inaccurate portrayal of accents and cultural aspects (Participant 30) and express frustration when clothing becomes the primary marker of a character's origin but is inaccurately depicted or highlights undesirable features like criminality (Participant 38). The common theme is a rejection of stereotypes, a call for accurate and nuanced representations, and a desire to be portrayed as multifaceted individuals rather than one-dimensional caricatures.

The common theme in these positive opinions about how video games depict Mexicans is the appreciation of certain cultural elements, humor, and recognition. Participants express enjoyment in the portrayal of sociable and practical people who enjoy drinking and partying (Participant 22) and find humor in stereotypes like sombreros and luchadores (Participant 28). Participant 36 appreciates well-executed representations of mariachi hats and ponchos and finds amusement in a specific scene from *Metal Gear Rising Revengeance* that highlights the absurdity of wearing such clothing on a daily basis. They even express a desire to create a Chocobo-adorned outfit similar to Noctis' mariachi outfit from *Final Fantasy XIV*, combining their love for Final Fantasy and

their Mexican roots. Participant 12 acknowledges that mariachi, Aztecs, luchadores, and catrines are typical representations of Mexicans in the media and feels proud of being recognized by them, even if they acknowledge that some depictions may not always be accurate. The common theme is the enjoyment of cultural elements, humor derived from stereotypes, and a sense of pride in being recognized, despite some inaccuracies in the portrayals.

### 3.4.3 How do you feel about how Mexican people are designed in video games?

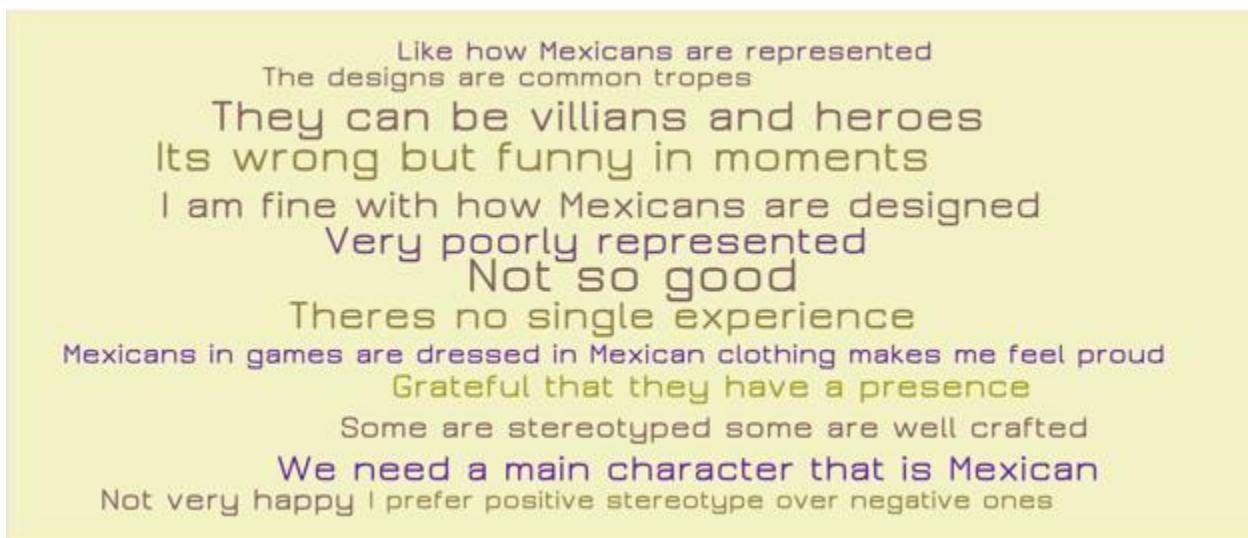


Figure 65 Word Cloud for survey question "How do you feel about how Mexican people are designed in video games?"

In the third question for the survey, we asked them about their perception of how Mexican people are portrayed in video games and how it made them feel. Based on the word cloud above, when it comes to how they are designed in video games, there is a very mixed tone.

The common theme in these positive opinions about how Mexicans are designed in video games is a sense of pride, appreciation, and recognition of cultural elements. Participants express pride in accurately portraying typical clothing and including Mexican culture (Participant 12 and Participant 39). Participant 17 emphasizes the importance of entertainment value, indicating that they are okay with the representation of fictional characters as long as the game is enjoyable. Participants 31, 32, and 41 all express feelings of pride in the representation of Mexicans in the game, whether it's the overall portrayal or the connection between personality/form and character type. The common theme is a positive sentiment toward the design of Mexican characters in video games, the pride felt in their representation, and the appreciation of cultural elements incorporated into their designs.

The common theme in these negative opinions about the design of Mexicans in video games is dissatisfaction and disappointment with the perpetuation of stereotypes and the lack of diverse and accurate representations. Participants expressed frustration that the design of Mexicans in video games is heavily influenced by stereotypes held by Americans about Mexico (Participant 1). Participant 3 believes that other types of characters should represent Mexicans, indicating a desire for more varied and nuanced portrayals. Participant 5 expresses disappointment with the portrayal of Mexicans as thugs, drug dealers, cartels, or arrogant individuals, particularly in contemporary settings. Participant 9 is disappointed with the tendency to represent Mexico in video

games using historical or colonial imagery instead of modern-day representations. Participant 42 strongly criticizes the design of Mexicans, describing it as horrible and perpetuating negative stereotypes. The common theme is the dissatisfaction with stereotypical portrayals, the desire for more diverse and accurate representations, and the disappointment with the perpetuation of negative stereotypes about Mexicans in video games.

The prevalent theme regarding the mixed opinions on the design of Mexicans in video games is a general sense of indifference coupled with a longing for greater diversity and more nuanced portrayals. Participants express varying degrees of indifference towards the design of Mexicans in video games, noting that there is no single experience or strong opinion (Participant 6 and Participant 10). Participant 13 acknowledges the presence of stereotypes but also recognizes well-crafted characters and views the acceptance of stereotypes as a common aspect of all cultures. Participant 14 expresses a desire for a main character that represents Mexicans in a way that goes beyond sombreros and tacos, showcasing a different side of Mexico. Participant 22 appreciates game developers who demonstrate an understanding of Mexican culture and avoid offensive stereotypes, even if the representation is not entirely accurate. Participant 36 expresses general indifference and highlights the diversity within the Mexican population, acknowledging that people may look different from the media portrayal. They also mention the compatibility of Mexican characters in-game environments such as *Red Dead*

*Redemption* and *Grand Theft Auto*. The common theme is a sense of indifference towards the design of Mexicans in video games, along with a desire for more diverse and nuanced representations that go beyond stereotypes and showcase different aspects of Mexican culture.

### **3.5 The Use of Mexican Culture In Video Games**

The survey's second theme centered on "The Use of Mexican Culture in Video Games" due to multiple questions concerning the portrayal of culture in video games. The survey presented the Mexican gamers with three questions. The first question aimed to assess their perception and emotions towards the utilization of Mexican culture in video games. The second question aimed to investigate whether Mexican culture has garnered increased visibility in video games. Lastly, the third question aimed to determine how Mexican gamers would feel if Mexican culture was portrayed more accurately in video games.

### 3.5.1 How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games?



Figure 66 Word Cloud for survey question “How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games?”

There were a few respondents who expressed reservations about the way in which their culture was depicted in video games, although the majority expressed appreciation. Some believed that playing video games that depicted their culture in a tasteful manner was also enjoyable for them. In opposition to it, those who objected to the idea cited a lack of representation in video games and stereotypical depictions of Mexican culture in video games.

Those who expressed positive opinions regarding the use of Mexican culture in video games. Participant 3 is happy to see Mexican culture represented in video games but would prefer to see more diverse representations to learn more about their rich culture. Participant 4 appreciates the representation of Mexican culture in video games

because it inspires curiosity and interest in the culture. As long as it feels natural and not forced, Participant 5 likes it. Even though they acknowledge that sometimes it can feel like caricatures, participant 9 likes the representation of Mexican culture. The usage is reasonable, but Participant 14 does not pay attention to it. Participant 15 enjoys Mexicans' humorous portrayal in the games. However, they feel that it does not reflect the culture's complexities. As for Participant 17, they think it's worthwhile to highlight traditional celebrations and things that attract foreigners. However, it may not be the most appropriate approach in the modern world. Participant 22 appreciates the attempt to include Mexican culture in video games and likes how it has been associated with some aspects they enjoy but admits they don't always succeed. Video games representing Mexican culture are an excellent idea, according to Participant 32. Despite stereotypical plots related to cartels, participant 36 is happy overall and appreciates any representation over none. They particularly like games that incorporate Mexican culture in a more traditional and friendly way, like *LittleBigPlanet* and *Super Mario Odyssey*. Video games have used Mexican culture in the past, but Participant 43 wants them to explore other aspects beyond the overused ones. They do not feel satisfied with it because they feel that many cultures in Mexico deserve to be explored.

The common theme among the participants is their varying opinions and perspectives on the representation of Mexican culture in video games. While some express appreciation and enjoyment for its inclusion, others desire more diverse and

nuanced portrayals. Some participants find the representation reasonable and enjoyable, as long as it feels natural and avoids caricatures. There is acknowledgment of the complexities of Mexican culture and a desire to explore aspects beyond stereotypes and overused themes. Overall, participants appreciate the attempt to include Mexican culture in video games, but there is a call for further exploration and representation of the diverse cultures within Mexico.

For the ones that expressed negative opinions about the use of Mexican culture in video games. Participant 44 believes that Mexican culture should be represented more creatively rather than simply by replicating existing representations. Mexican culture is more than a culture of criminals and hitmen, according to Participant 30. Participant 19 says the current representations are simply caricatures and are not thoughtful towards the people of Mexico. Drug lords, pochos, and catrinas are stereotypes that Participant 11 is tired of seeing repeatedly.

The common theme among the participants expressing negative opinions about the use of Mexican culture in video games is their dissatisfaction with the current representations, which they perceive as lacking creativity, thoughtful consideration, and perpetuating stereotypes. They highlight the need for more nuanced and authentic portrayals of Mexican culture beyond the repetitive and stereotypical depictions of criminals, hitmen, drug lords, pochos, and catrinas. There is a desire for a more respectful and accurate representation that reflects the rich and diverse aspects of Mexican culture.

### 3.5.2 Do you think Mexican culture has become better known in video games, and why?

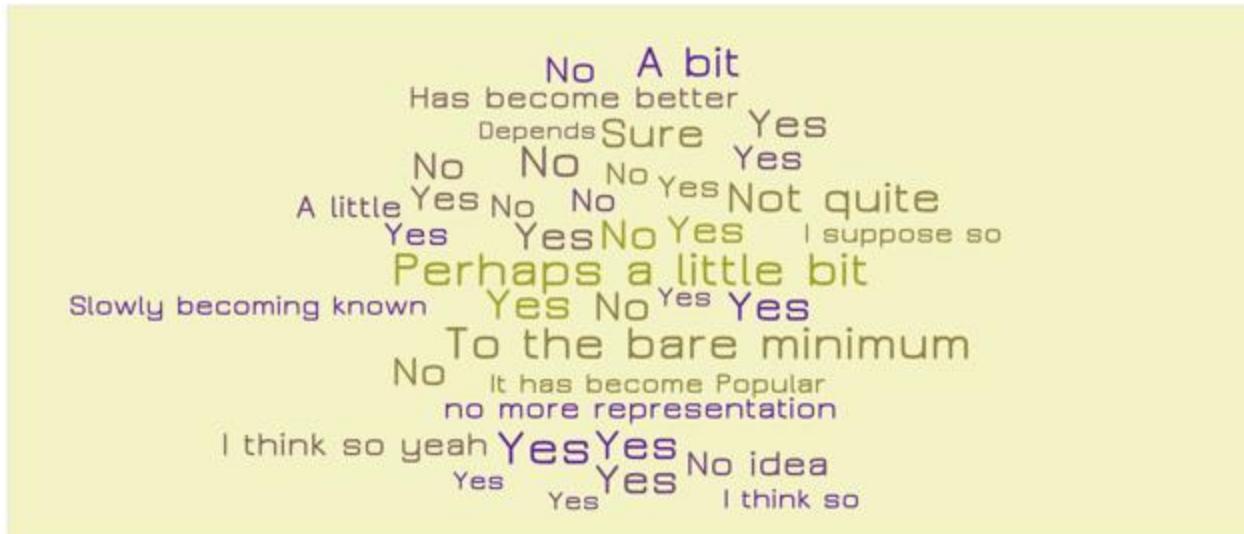


Figure 67 Word Cloud for survey question “Do you think Mexican culture has become better known in video games, and why?”

Mexican culture is increasingly recognized and highlighted in video games because of its vividness. In spite of clichéd or inaccurate portrayals, a majority responded positively, saying that video games can still generate interest in Mexican culture. Still, some argue that video games fail to portray Mexican culture adequately and rely too heavily on well-established tropes. A lack of cultural recognition can reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate negative attitudes within the Mexican community. Video games should accurately represent Mexican culture to promote cultural understanding and appreciation. As a result, Mexican culture has gained more recognition through video games.

While most individuals opine that video games have increased the visibility of Mexican culture, some argue that video games have not positively contributed towards it. Participant 3 asserted that there is a need for more representatives, while Participant 8 said “no.” Participant 11 disagreed, stating that the use of pochos is problematic. Participant 15 also disagreed but acknowledged that there are some positive examples of Mexican representation in video games, such as Manny in *The Last of Us Part 2*. Participant 18 expressed their belief that there has been a decline in representation. Participant 20 also disagreed, stating that Mexican culture is not well represented in video games. Participant 22 emphasized the need for more authentic representation, as the current portrayals rely on stereotypes. Participant 24 echoed the sentiment that there is a lack of depth in Mexican representation in video games. Participant 27 agreed that more is missing from the representation, while Participant 28 pointed out that popular games tend to focus only on cartels. Finally, Participant 34 also said “no” to the question of whether Mexican representation in video games is adequate.

The common theme among the participants is a general sentiment of dissatisfaction with the current state of Mexican representation in video games. While some acknowledge the presence of positive examples, such as Manny in *The Last of Us Part 2*, the majority feel that there is a lack of authentic, meaningful, and diverse representation. Participants expressed a desire for more representatives, depth, and a move away from reliance on stereotypes, particularly those associated with cartels. Many

participants believe that Mexican culture is not adequately portrayed in video games and emphasize the need for improvement and increased visibility.

Those who believe that video games have contributed to the recognition of Mexican culture have a very strong case to make. Video games have brought Mexican culture to people's attention, according to Participant 2. Participant 4 believes that more Mexican representation in video games can increase interest and curiosity about Mexican culture. Mexican culture is prevalent in video games, but Participant 5 notes that there are other ways to experience and learn about it. Video games provide exposure to Mexican culture, according to Participant 6. Participant 7 emphasizes the vibrancy and vastness of Mexican culture, which has become world-renowned. Despite sometimes incorrect or stereotypical representations in video games, participant 9 believes that people are more curious about Mexican culture due to video games. Participant 10 believes that video games give recognition to Mexico as a country. Participant 12 thinks video games are a powerful medium of communication for showcasing culture. Participant 13 points out that video games export culture worldwide. Video games have contributed to increasing public awareness of Mexican celebrations and lifestyles, according to Participant 17. While Participant 32 agrees that Mexican culture is represented in video games, they believe there are not enough creators. Participant 36 believes that while Mexican culture is represented in video games to some extent, it is still often overshadowed by negative aspects such as cartel-related stories and wrestling.

During the last few years, participant 38 believes Mexican representation has become more accurate in video games. Video games provide exposure and reach for people to learn more about Mexican culture, according to Participant 39. Video games have helped make Mexican culture more known, and Participant 43 is proud of his heritage. Participant 44 is happy with Mexican culture's representation in video games but hopes for better representation in the future.

The common theme among the participants who believe that video games have contributed to the recognition of Mexican culture is the positive impact of video games in bringing attention to and increasing awareness of Mexican culture. They highlight various aspects, such as exposure, curiosity, interest, showcasing celebrations and lifestyles, recognition of Mexico as a country, and the exportation of culture worldwide. Participants acknowledge that while there may be incorrect or stereotypical representations at times, video games have still sparked curiosity and made Mexican culture more known to a wider audience. Some participants express pride in their heritage and appreciation for the existing representation, while also expressing hopes for better and more accurate representation in the future. The overall sentiment is that video games have played a significant role in promoting and highlighting Mexican culture to a global audience.

### **3.5.3 How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately?**

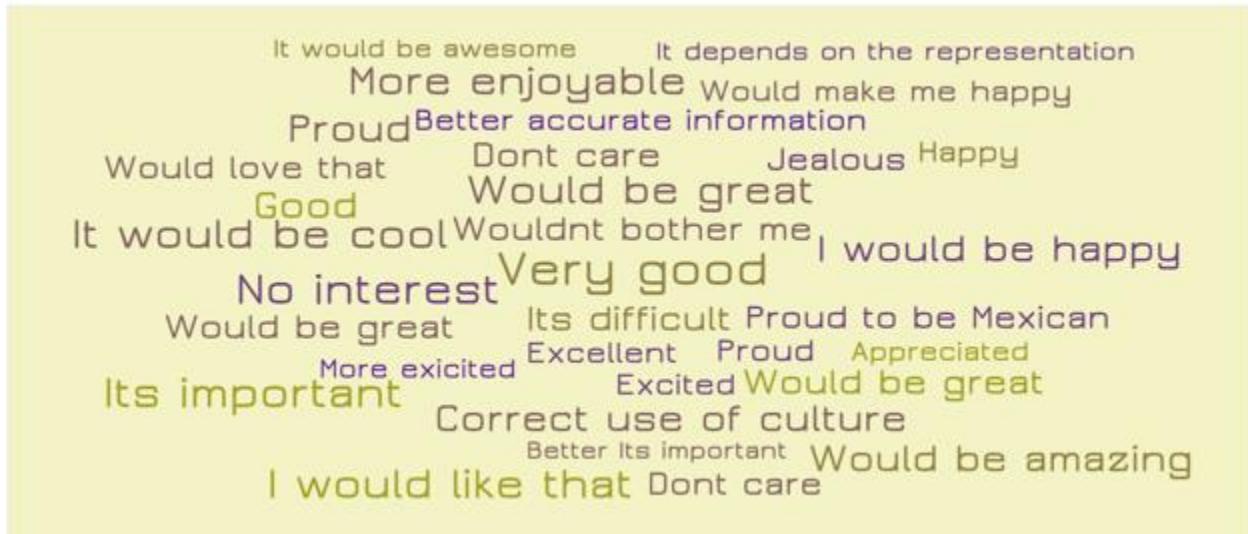


Figure 68 Word Cloud for survey question "How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately?"

Most respondents expressed a desire to see their culture represented more authentically in video games since it holds significance to them. Reasonably, they believe that an accurate representation would expand people's knowledge of Mexico beyond mainstream media portrayals. This would enhance its visibility on the international stage. Nevertheless, some argue that the effectiveness of such representations depends on how they are adapted to the game's plot and execution. For this reason, developers should collaborate with people from local cultures to ensure accurate and meaningful representation. This can help create more inclusive, meaningful, and ultimately successful games.

For those who desire more accurate video game representation. Participant 2 says it is critical for the game to represent Mexican culture accurately. The desire for players

to better understand Mexico was expressed by Participant 3. It would be pleasant to know their culture is accurately portrayed, said Participant 7. Participant 8 is interested in showcasing more of their country through the game. Mexico would gain more visibility internationally due to this, according to Participant 9. A game that accurately depicts Mexican culture, according to Participant 10, would be enjoyable. Participant 12 would feel proud if their culture was better represented. Participant 13 expressed frustration with the stereotypical representations of Mexican culture in the video game industry and would appreciate more authentic portrayals. It would be awesome if Mexican culture were more diverse and beautiful, according to Participant 14. Participant 18 says a broader audience would benefit from proper cultural representation. Participant 19 believed that accurate representation would increase their satisfaction as a video game consumer. Participant 22 expressed that they want to see accurate representations of Mexican culture but that there were more critical issues to worry about. Participant 25 argued that a more accurate representation would better represent Mexico. Participant 27 would feel proud to share their culture with others through the game. For Participant 29, sharing Mexican culture's positive aspects would be amazing. Participant 31 would be happy to see a more accurate representation of Mexican culture in video games. Participant 36 would like to see more representation of Mexican culture, including family values, religion, and small events. A game that accurately and genuinely represents the culture of Participant 39 would be appreciated. A deep dive into Mexican culture would

be fine for Participant 43. All of these participants want to see an accurate and positive representation of Mexican culture in the game that goes beyond stereotypical representations of Mexican culture and incorporates important aspects of Mexican culture. They are looking for a game that genuinely and accurately captures the nuances of Mexican culture.

The common theme among the participants who desire a more accurate representation of Mexican culture in video games is the importance of authenticity, pride, and a comprehensive portrayal of Mexican culture. They express the desire for games to accurately represent various aspects, including traditions, values, family, religion, small events, and the positive aspects of Mexican culture. Participants emphasized the need for a broader understanding and appreciation of Mexico domestically and internationally through accurate representation in video games. They seek to combat stereotypical portrayals and long for games that genuinely capture the nuances and diversity of Mexican culture. The participants express a sense of pride in their culture and a desire to share it with others through accurate and positive representations in video games. Overall, they emphasize the significance of authentic and comprehensive portrayals that go beyond surface-level stereotypes.

Taking a look at the mixed or negative responses from the survey. Media representation of Mexico depends on the type of characters portrayed, according to Participant 1, who cites that cowboy-type characters from the north represent them, but

not characters from the Mayan culture. An accurate representation of a diverse country like Mexico may be accurate for some but not for all, says Participant 4. Since Mexico is such a large country, Participant 6 thinks it would be cool but acknowledges that there is no single Mexican culture. Representing Mexicans with drug cartels, participant 21 believes that representing Mexico is unfavorable. Participant 34 believes creators should not be held to an incredibly accurate standard, as some stories require a realistic setting while others require a more surreal perspective.

The common theme among the mixed or negative responses regarding the media representation of Mexico is the acknowledgment of the complexity and diversity of Mexican culture. Participants highlighted that Mexico is a large and diverse country with various regional cultures and identities, and therefore, it is challenging to represent it accurately in a one-size-fits-all manner. They recognize that certain representations may be accurate for some aspects of Mexican culture but not for others. There is a sentiment that associating Mexico predominantly with drug cartels, as seen in some media portrayals, is unfavorable and perpetuates negative stereotypes. Some participants express the belief that creators should have creative freedom and not be held to an overly strict standard of accuracy, as different stories may require different approaches to representation. Overall, participants emphasize the need to consider the complexities and nuances of Mexican culture when representing it in media, considering its regional diversity and avoiding harmful stereotypes.

### 3.6 Mexican Representation and Cultural Appropriation

A final theme of the survey dealt with Mexican representation and cultural appropriation. Three questions were centered around representation and cultural appropriation of Mexican culture. In the initial question, Mexican gamers were asked to express their feelings about the lack of representation of their culture in video games. A simple yes/no question followed regarding their awareness of Latinos' underrepresentation in video games. A final question in the survey asked Mexican gamers what their feelings were about the appropriation of Mexican culture by video game developers.

#### 3.6.1 How does it make you feel about Latino underrepresentation in video games?

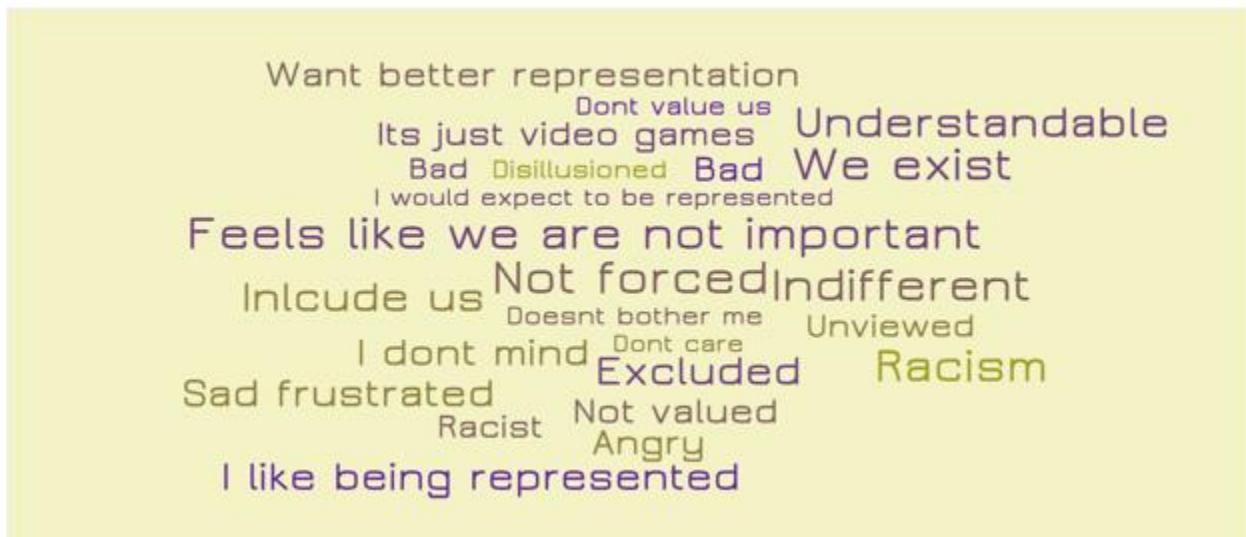


Figure 69 Word Cloud for survey question “How does it make you feel about Latino underrepresentation in video games?”

Most respondents who responded to the survey indicated that they wanted to have better representation in video games. In response to the question, Participant 2 said they appreciated reasonable Latino representation but disliked forced representation. Participant 3 believes there is a lack of representation of their culture in society. This results in less understanding of their culture, which must be considered. As long as the representation isn't forced, participant 5 is okay with being represented. Latinos are undervalued in video games, according to Participant 8. Participant 9 is disillusioned to see Latin cultures portrayed in ancient or mystical settings or negatively in non-Latin contexts, such as North American Cholos. Participant 10 says the lack of representation is rooted in racism. Despite Latinos' importance, participant 12 feels they are not a significant part of society. As a result of the lack of representation, participant 19 believes that Latinos are not valued or comprehended. Because Latin cultures have much to offer, participant 25 feels excluded. Now that Latinos are no longer a minority, participant 31 is angry that there aren't many games with Latino representation. Participant 32 says Mexican characters are poorly represented. Since Mexico is the primary location for representation, participant 36 expressed sadness and frustration, especially for other Latin cultures that receive even less representation. With so many potential characters and locations in Latin America, there is no shortage of potential plots. Participant 42 is disappointed they are not represented because it is their people.

Let's now examine the group of respondents who expressed a neutral stance towards the concept of increased representation in video games. The first participant expressed their dissatisfaction with France's "woke obsessions." Participant 4 would rather have more compelling characters and gameplay than Latino representation, but that would be even better if there were Latino representation. Similarly, Participant 6 considered representation for representation's sake to be dumb. Participant 7 felt ignored, marginalized, and disappointed. Participant 11 said they are indifferent, while Participant 13 also expressed their lack of concern since other cultures aren't represented. Participant 15 indicated they were not bothered by it but felt that Mexicans' image in video games could be improved. Participant 16 said they did not care, believing video games are just games. Some types of games would be more enjoyable with more characters, according to Participant 17. Participant 18 believes Mexican culture and Mexico could be used as a backdrop for games. Participant 26 said they did not care and disagreed that everything should be inclusive. Participant 41 did not care about representation and just wanted an entertaining game.

Did you know that there is a Latino underrepresentation in video games?

44 responses

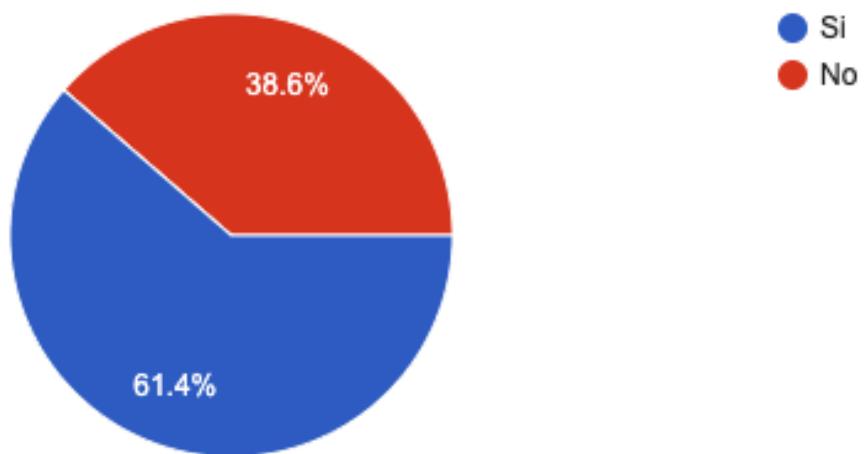


Figure 70 This picture demonstrates Mexican gamers' awareness of the lack of Latino representation in video games.

Going alongside the question about underrepresentation in video games, we then asked participants if they were aware that they were mainly underrepresented in games. Based on the results from the survey, which you can see in the pie graph above, 61.4 percent of the respondents agreed that they aware of the underrepresenting in video games, while 38.6 percent were not aware that they were underrepresented in video games.

### 3.6.2 How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on non-Mexicans?



Figure 71 Word Cloud for survey question "How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on non-Mexican?"

It can be a heavy topic when it comes to cultural appropriation, especially when it involves using other people's cultures. A question in the survey asked Mexican gamers about their feelings toward cultural appropriation. According to the results, a majority responded positively that other characters who were not Mexican used their culture, and it did not bother them. Furthermore, some people were uncomfortable with their culture being used on non-Mexicans.

The participants who demonstrated a positive outlook on incorporating Mexican culture onto non-Mexican characters in video games had a shared theme, emphasizing the importance of handling it with sensitivity, accuracy, and respect. For those who were comfortable with Mexican culture on non-Mexican characters. Participant 1 believes

cultural appropriation is nonsensical, while Participant 2 believes culture should be shared. Participant 4 says non-Mexicans can contribute to productive discussions by utilizing Mexican culture. Cultural appropriation was not an urgent concern for Participant 5, but it would be problematic if used negatively. Participant 6 used Sombrero Mario as an example since they thought Mario looked fantastic and did not care about cultural appropriation. According to Participant 9, preventing other cultures from incorporating aspects of Mexican culture does not help the culture and keeps it in a negative light. Participant 10 wishes for more Mexican culture in video games. Participant 11 believes it is fine as long as non-Mexicans are not portrayed as Mexicans. Anyone is welcome to participate in Mexican culture, according to Participant 12. As long as it is accurate, Participant 13 does not mind that they use their culture. As long as the use of their culture is respectful, Participant 17 does not mind. As long as their culture is not used mockingly, Participant 18 did not see a problem with it. Participant 22 appreciated Mexicans inside video games. When used mockingly, they did not like it. Participant 25 felt joy when other countries appreciated Mexican culture. Culture should be shared, not gatekept, according to Participant 26. Participant 28 finds it humorous and a nod to their culture when used in video games. Participant 32 expressed a desire for developers to create original Mexican characters. Participant 34 does not care about Mexican culture in video games and believes anyone can adopt the culture. Participant 41 loved seeing Mexican culture in video games. It was, however, advised that game

developers should be aware of what they are doing with the culture. If Mexican culture is done correctly, Participant 43 feels proud, but they feel upset if it is done incorrectly. Overall, the common theme is a positive attitude towards the use of Mexican culture on non-Mexican characters in video games, as long as it is done with sensitivity, accuracy, and respect.

The common theme among the respondents who opposed the use of Mexican culture on non-Mexican characters is a concern for cultural appropriation, mockery, and misrepresentation. For those who were opposed to the use of Mexican culture on characters that were non-Mexicans, according to the respondents from the survey. Participant 7 believes it is cultural appropriation and should not be allowed in mainstream media. Participant 8 perceives it as mockery. Participant 20 feels that their culture is not being represented, and Participant 27 feels that it is sometimes misused. While Participant 29 believes game developers are trying, Participant 30 finds their efforts insincere. The portrayal is often poorly executed, according to Participant 31. Participant 38 says the portrayal is not well done, especially when it's mocked or used as a cash grab, but they appreciate it when it is done well. The portrayal of Mexican culture on non-Mexican characters has mixed feelings for Participant 39, but they are grateful for the exposure. According to Participant 42, the white man is stealing more of their culture, while Participant 44 is angry that their culture is being mocked. Overall, the opposition

to the use of Mexican culture on non-Mexican characters stems from a desire for respectful and accurate representation.

### 3.7 Interactive Design Website

As part of this thesis, an interactive design website has been developed and can be accessed at [Home | Digitalmexican \(angelmartinpalomar.wixsite.com\)](http://angelmartinpalomar.wixsite.com/gamersandculture-of-games). This interactive website was created to assist individuals interested in integrating Mexican culture into their future projects. The methodology section of the thesis contains all the information that was added to the website.

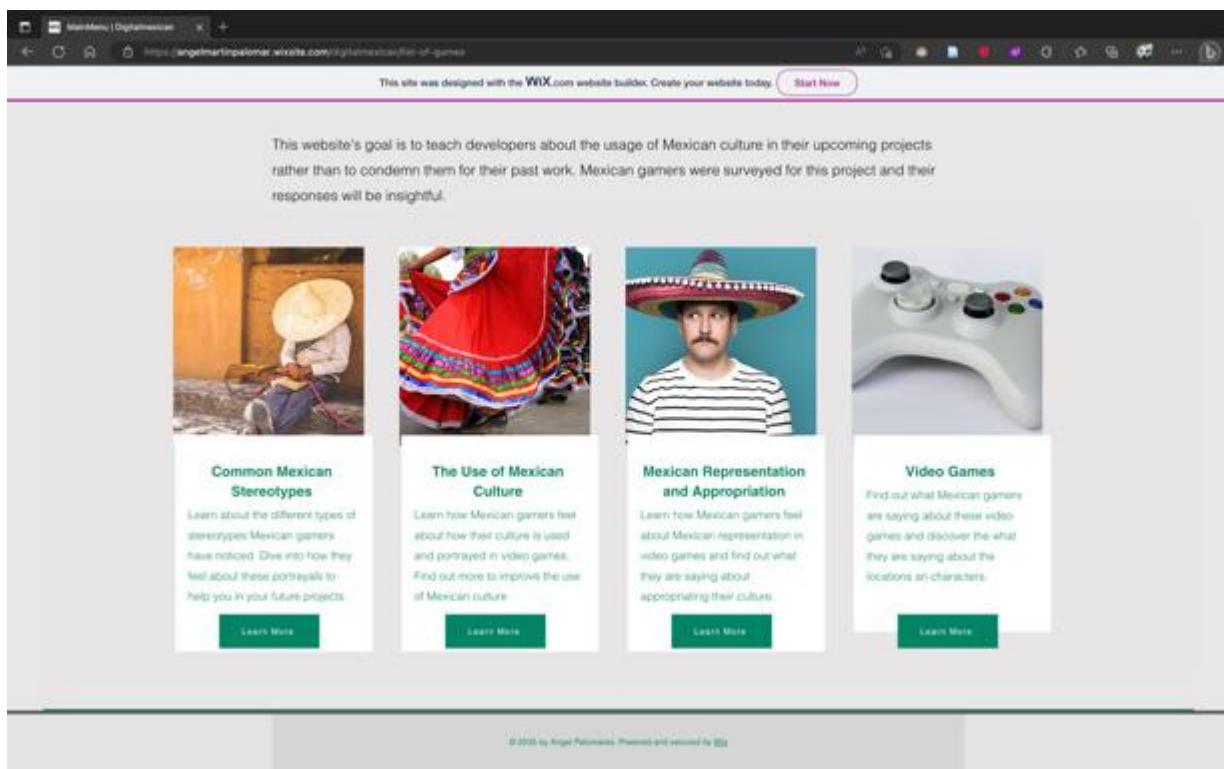


Figure 72 Interactive Website

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Mexican Characters

The top three characters that made them feel represented in the media were Tostarenan from *Super Mario Odyssey*, Rosa from *Fortnite*, and El Fuerte from *Street Fighter*. What particularly appealed to them about these characters was the inclusion of their culture within them. With the character Tostarenan what they really like is the appreciation for the representation of Mexican culture in a cute and inspired manner. With Rosa, they liked the acknowledgment of the character's connection to Mexican culture, mainly through the representation of the Día de los Muertos and its associated imagery. Lastly, with El Fuerte, the character's association with Mexican wrestling adds a sense of familiarity and cultural significance, which resonates with individuals who are familiar with or appreciate the sport.

The top three characters that made them feel least represented in media were T-Hawk From *Super Street Fighter 2*, Caesar Vialpando from *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, and King from *Tekken*. In relation to T-Hawk, what did not connect with Mexican gamers was the emphasis placed on the character primarily representing Native American culture instead of Mexican culture, which deviated from the intended portrayal stated in the game where he is identified as being from Mexico. For Caesar Vialpando, individuals feel that the character's design or portrayal as a thug does not accurately reflect Mexican culture or what it means to be Mexican. Lastly, they did not like the lack of recognition

or resonance with the character's representation as Mexican and a general dissatisfaction with the character's design.

#### 4.2 Mexican Locations

The top three locations that made them feel like it was Mexico were Nuevo Paraiso from *Red Dead Redemption*, Dorado from *Overwatch 2*, lastly Sand Kingdom from *Super Mario Odyssey*. For the Sand Kingdom, what they liked is the positive reception of the depiction of Mexican infrastructure and architecture in this location. How the use of music, characters, and other elements also adds to the authenticity of the representation. Some individuals acknowledge that the depiction may be seen as stereotypical but appreciate the accuracy of the vibrant colors and festive traditions. For Dorado, they liked the town's representation as a familiar and visually appealing portrayal of a typical Mexican town, with varying degrees of appreciation for its accuracy and representation. Lastly, Nuevo Paraiso, Mexican gamers appreciated *Red Dead Redemption*'s portrayal of Mexico, highlighting its historical accuracy and cultural significance. The individuals expressing these views found the depiction of Mexico in the game to be captivating, vibrant, and a true reflection of the country's rich heritage.

For the top three locations that made them feel least like it was Mexico were Bullringing from *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 1+2*, Mexican Temple from *Tekken 3* and Hospicios Cabañas from *Super Street Fighter 2*. For Bullringing, Mexican gamers felt a sense of detachment or disappointment with the portrayal of the location or cultural element in

question. Some stated that it lacks cultural authenticity or that it was disrespectful that they turned this stadium into a skate park. For Mexican Temple, Mexican gamers expressed a sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction with the portrayal of Mayan/Aztec temples in relation to Mexican culture. The respondents indicated that they felt Aztec culture does not adequately represent Mexican culture, leading to their feelings of disconnection and dissatisfaction. Lastly, when it comes to Hospicios Cabañas, they generally expressed dissatisfaction with the depiction of people, their attire, colors, and architecture in the given context.

#### **4.3 Common Mexican Stereotypes**

##### **Mexico's Portrayal**

Although people enjoy seeing Mexico depicted in video games, recent depictions have not been well-received. Rather than relying on outdated designs, people would prefer to see Mexico represented as a modern-day location. Poor portrayals of Mexico in video games are disheartening for people from the country and contribute to negative stereotypes. Developers should strive to create more authentic and accurate depictions of Mexico in video games. This can be done through careful research, consultation with experts, and incorporating feedback from Mexican players. This would help create a more positive representation of Mexico and its culture in the gaming world.

##### **Diversifying Mexicans**

When incorporating Mexican characters into your game, showcasing diversity in their depiction is essential. If your game relies on stereotypes, try to present them positively, as gamers from Mexico appreciate seeing their culture portrayed positively as a sign of respect. If possible, experiment with alternative depictions while avoiding stereotypical Mexican portrayals. Avoid relying on language and dialects rooted in racism or classism to represent Mexican characters better.

Instead of television, our study focuses on video games, and it reveals that Mexicans are cognizant of how they are depicted in this medium. This finding aligns with Rocio Rivadeneyra's research question, which explores whether Latino teenagers possess awareness regarding stereotypical portrayals of Latino characters but within the context of television.

## **Design**

Mexican gamers find that these characters are predominantly portrayed using American stereotypes, resulting in feelings of insult rather than representation. While including Mexicans in video games is acceptable, it's crucial to avoid stereotyping or using them as a token. Rather than perpetuating violent depictions of them, portray them in a friendly way. Developers should create characters that are diverse, accurate, and respectful of Mexican culture. This will help gamers identify with the characters, leading to better engagement and more positive experiences.

#### 4.4 The Use of Mexican Culture

##### Utilization of Mexican Culture

Mexican gamers value the inclusion of cultural elements in video games and see it as a positive way to showcase their heritage to a broader audience. They appreciate it when such elements are incorporated thoughtfully, as it can generate positive attention for Mexico. However, it is advised to refrain from incorporating Mexican culture if it does not fit well with the game's storyline and to approach it with respect rather than ridicule. Most gamers believe that cultural sensitivity is crucial in portraying Mexican culture accurately.

##### Culture Recognition

Mexican gamers have observed an improvement in the depiction of their culture in video games over time, but they also feel that game developers are only exploring the surface of what Mexico has to offer. Therefore, when creating a game, it is essential to showcase other aspects of Mexican culture to give proper recognition and satisfy the desire of gamers to see different facets of their heritage.

##### Accuracy of Mexican Culture

Mexican gamers value an accurate representation of their culture in video games but do not mind occasional creative twists. What matters most to them is that game developers explore various facets of their culture instead of relying on overused narratives. However, it is crucial to approach the portrayal of a culture with respect and

authenticity. Consulting with a cultural expert can be helpful in determining whether the portrayal is appropriate or not. Ultimately, the key is having fun while demonstrating respect for the portrayed culture.

#### **4.5 Mexican Representation and Cultural Appropriation**

##### **Latino Underrepresentation**

For Mexican gamers, gameplay is typically their primary focus. If a game includes a Latino character, it is seen as a positive addition. However, they do not want to feel like they are being forced into the narrative simply for the sake of representation. It is crucial to make the inclusion of Latino characters feel natural as if they are just regular characters in the story. Avoiding stereotypical portrayals is key unless the goal is to use satire. As long as the implementation is done well, the inclusion of Latino characters will be appreciated.

##### **Mexican Culture Appropriation**

Cultural appropriation can be a double-edged sword, but the takeaway is that people generally do not mind as long as it is done with good intentions. Although some may object to the use of cultural elements on non-Mexican characters, many will appreciate it if done with respect as a nod to their culture. This can be a way for people to feel represented and valued.

Similar to The Daily Caller's article that highlighted how Mexican individuals on Twitter expressed enjoyment regarding the incorporation of their culture in *Super Mario*

*Odyssey*, our findings indicate that some individuals also appreciate the representation of their culture in video games. However, the extent of enjoyment largely hinges on how game developers handle and present cultural elements.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Limitations and Future Research

Recognizing the study's intriguing findings, it is essential to note its limitations, which can serve as a roadmap for future research. The study examined a small group of Mexican gamers, yet it produced compelling results that could be useful to game developers and those interested in incorporating Mexican culture into their projects. However, expanding the sample size would offer more comprehensive insights into Mexican gamers' attitudes toward their culture's integration into video games. It may be advantageous to undertake a comparable investigation on different cultures to explore their perspectives regarding the utilization of their culture in video games.

Future studies should consider investigating distinct topics such as Stereotypes of Latinos and Latinas, the Underrepresentation of Latinos, Cultural Appropriation, and the Misrepresentation of Latin Americans in video games. These areas require further exploration to better understand their implications. Additionally, it would be valuable to extend this research to examine similar issues concerning different cultures in video games.

Expanding the range of analyzed games beyond the currently limited sample size is worthwhile. By exploring a broader selection, game developers can gain a comprehensive perspective on how Mexican gamers perceive the incorporation of their culture within the new games.

For future research, it is possible to gather a compilation of video games developed by Mexican game developers. Collecting this list and soliciting feedback from Mexican gamers makes it possible to assess how effectively these Mexican developers incorporate Mexican culture into their games. This examination can help determine the appropriateness of their cultural utilization.

Regarding the survey conducted, a limitation arose in the collection of non-IRB data. To enhance and advance future research endeavors, a significant emphasis could be placed on augmenting data collection procedures, particularly in terms of ethnicity and demographics. This would involve a deliberate effort to address and explore inquiries pertaining to colorism, the ages of players, and other pertinent factors that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. By actively incorporating these dimensions, researchers can enrich the dataset and broaden the scope of analysis, ultimately yielding valuable insights into the intricate interplay between diverse demographic factors and the research area at hand.

For future research, one could explore the phenomenological dimension of video games, specifically examining how they are experienced and perceived across distinct time periods. This exploration would shed light on the transformative nature of gaming experiences, as a game created in the 2010s, for instance, is now encountered with an altered perspective compared to its initial reception. By delving into this phenomenon, researchers can unravel the intricate dynamics and evolving nature of the player-game

relationship, offering a deeper understanding of the temporal aspects influencing the gaming experience.

Another area to explore in future research is the operational practices within the industry that focus on addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in content creation. An important aspect of investigation involves comparing how these practices are implemented in AAA (big-budget) productions versus small-scale productions. By examining the contrasting approaches of these two sectors, researchers can uncover valuable insights into effective practices that can be universally applied to foster greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in content creation across the industry.

Finally, in relation to the website for future research, one could employ the information it provides to integrate Mexican culture and then conduct a study to determine whether the use of the culture was appropriate.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the representation of Mexican culture in video games has evoked mixed responses from Mexican gamers. Certain characters and locations have resonated with them, while others have fallen short of their expectations. The inclusion of cultural elements, such as Mexican architecture, music, and traditions, has been appreciated when portrayed accurately and thoughtfully. However, there have been instances where the portrayal of Mexican culture has been deemed inaccurate, disrespectful, or disconnected from the lived experiences of Mexicans.

Mexican gamers have identified certain characters that have made them feel represented and acknowledged their cultural heritage. Characters like Tostarenan, Rosa, and El Fuerte have been positively received due to their inclusion of Mexican cultural elements, such as cute representations, Day of the Dead themes, and associations with Mexican wrestling. On the other hand, characters like T-Hawk, Caesar Vialpando, and King have been criticized for their lack of authentic representation or reliance on stereotypes that do not align with Mexican culture.

Similarly, certain game locations have successfully captured the essence of Mexico, eliciting a sense of familiarity and appreciation from Mexican gamers. Nuevo Paraiso, Dorado, and Sand Kingdom have been recognized for their historical accuracy, visual appeal, and incorporation of Mexican architectural styles and cultural elements. However, other locations like Bullringing, Mexican Temple, and Hospicios Cabañas have been met with disappointment and disconnection due to a perceived lack of cultural authenticity or inadequate representation.

It is important for game developers to consider the feedback and perspectives of Mexican gamers when depicting Mexican culture in video games. While there is a desire for representation, it is crucial to avoid stereotypes, present diversity within Mexican characters, and portray Mexico as a modern-day location rather than relying on outdated designs. Authenticity, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity are key factors in creating positive and meaningful representations of Mexico in video games.

Furthermore, Mexican gamers appreciate the inclusion of their culture in video games as a means of showcasing their heritage to a wider audience. However, it is important to approach the utilization of Mexican culture respectfully and avoid cultural appropriation or ridicule. Mexican gamers desire a deeper exploration of their culture beyond surface-level representations and value accurate portrayals beyond overused narratives.

Regarding the representation of Latinos in general, Mexican gamers emphasize the importance of natural inclusion rather than forced representation. They want Latino characters to be seamlessly integrated into the game's narrative, avoiding stereotypical portrayals unless intended for satirical purposes. When done well, the inclusion of Latino characters is appreciated and contributes to a more diverse and inclusive gaming experience.

Overall, the feedback from Mexican gamers highlights the significance of the accurate and respectful representation of Mexican culture in video games. By incorporating cultural elements thoughtfully, consulting cultural experts, and actively seeking feedback from Mexican players, game developers can create a more positive and authentic portrayal of Mexico and its rich cultural heritage in the gaming world.

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## Appendix A

**r/mexico** · Posted by u/DaddyIsStressed 1 month ago

Digital Mexican representation in video games Thesis Survey about Mexican Gamers

**Ask Mexico - Pregunta a México**

Esta encuesta esta diseñada para recopilar información acerca del sentimiento que provoca en los videojugadores la representación de la cultura mexicana y la personificación del mexicano mostrada en los videojuegos.

Esta información sera de gran ayuda para los desarrolladores de videojuegos y crear una representación de la cultura mexicana.

Tu ayuda sera gran utilidad y solo tomara un par de minutos completar el questionario.

Ayudanos a crear una mejor representación mexicana.

Para cualquier pregunta o comentario, envia un mensaje directo.

This survey intends to gather information on how Mexican gamers feel about how Mexico and Mexican people are portrayed in video games. The information gathered will be helpful for game developers in creating a better representation of Mexican culture in video games.

Your opinion will be very much helpful, and this survey will only take a couple of minutes to complete!

Please direct message me or leave a comment if you have any questions.

<https://forms.gle/bKJK2tMv9bDihQpa8>

16 Comments Share Save ...

**Post Insights**  
Only you and mods of this community can see this

2.6k	50%	6	4
© Total Views	Upvote Rate	Community Karma	Total Shares

Figure 73 Reddit post in r/Mexico for survey

A screenshot of a Reddit post from the r/truegaming subreddit. The post was made by u/DaddyIsStressed 27 days ago. It has 29 upvotes and no downvotes. The title is "[Master Thesis] Digital Mexican representation in video games Thesis Survey about Mexican Gamers". Below the title is a link titled "Academic Survey". The post content discusses the author's master's thesis at Drexel University, which aims to gather information on how Mexican gamers feel about the portrayal of Mexico and Mexican people in video games. It highlights common stereotypes in game design and the goal to produce an interactive website for designers. The author encourages anonymous feedback through DM, comments, or email. Contact information is provided, including name, school, department, and email. A link to a Google Form survey is included. At the bottom, there are options to comment, share, save, and more.

29 ↑ r/truegaming · Posted by u/DaddyIsStressed 27 days ago

[Master Thesis] Digital Mexican representation in video games Thesis Survey about Mexican Gamers

Academic Survey

Hey everyone, I am currently a master's student at Drexel University, and I am currently working on my master's thesis in Digital Media. The purpose of this survey is to gather information on how Mexican gamers feel about how Mexico and Mexican people are portrayed in video games.

Research Question

1. What do Mexican gamers feel about the portrayal of Mexican culture in video games?

Often, designers take what is well-known and popular and place them inside their games without knowing the background of it all and leading to characters and places depicting Mexican culture in a very stereotypical way.

My goal is to produce an interactive design website of design examples and case studies to guide designers using Mexican cultural elements through positive and negative feedback in digital media applications, focusing on but not limited to video games.

Your opinion will be very helpful, and any information or answers you give in the survey will be anonymous. They will only be used in analyzing data for my thesis. You won't need to share any personal at all times.

Please feel free to reach out through DM, commenting or sending me an email if you have any questions.

My contact information

Name: Angel Martin Palomares  
School Name: Drexel University  
Department: Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design School  
email: [amp584@drexel.edu](mailto:amp584@drexel.edu)

<https://forms.gle/bKJK2tMv9bDihQpa8>

11 Comments Share Save ⌂ ...

Figure 74 Reddit post in r/truegaming for survey

Identification	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
<b>Participant 1</b>	It depends a lot, in GTA they always appear as some gangster, I like the outlaw figure from RDR better		Too influenced by the stereotypes that Americans have about Mexico	The same.	Na	It depends on the type of representation, the cowboy-type characters from the north do represent me, but not characters from the Mayan culture, for example.
<b>Participant 2</b>	Colonial towns, Day of the Dead, drug cartels. It could be these if I had to obtain the 3 elements that most distinguish the country from others.	Characters involved in ancestral culture, characters with subtle Mexican details and Mexican American characters. Its good	It's okay. They could use less Aztec and Maya, because they are ancestors, not contemporaries.	I like it. People often overreact to colorful towns, sombreros, and maracas, but I really like it.	Yes. It has been brought to the attention center sometimes.	Better, I think it's important.
<b>Participant 3</b>	Futuristic, emotion.	Furious, angry.	Not very happy since they should be other types of characters.	Happy, we need more representations to get to know our rich Mexican culture.	No, more representatives are needed	Excellent, they would get to know our country better.
<b>Participant 4</b>	That Mexico is a dangerous place. It is sad but true in many parts of Mexico. I think only the people in that part can solve the problem.	The criminal stereotype shows up a lot in the games, they are a minority in the Mexican population, but unfortunately, they leave a great impact on the minds of the people when their terrible action appears on the news.	I prefer the "positive" stereotype over purely negative ones, but I think people in general understand giving others the chance to show their good side.	I like it, I believe that showcasing a culture more can help foster curiosity for that culture.	Yes as more people see more Mexican in video games they may become curious and seek out more to learn more about the mexican culture.	It's difficult to accurately represent a whole country since Mexico is so diverse that a representation may be accurate for some but not for everyone."

Figure 75 Participant results

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 1</u>	I don't care. I don't agree with the woke obsessions imported from France.	Cultural appropriation seems like another nonsense to me.
<u>Participant 2</u>	It's really not the case. I like it when it's reasonable that Latinos are there, but I really hate it when it's "forced".	Good. Culture is for sharing.
<u>Participant 3</u>	Bad, there are no representatives and therefore less knowledge of our culture.	Very bad
<u>Participant 4</u>	I can't say that I'm very upset. I would prefer that they focus on playing well and having good character first. If they can make it Latino, then great, if not, that's also great.	I agree with non-Mexican characters using Mexican culture as it helps to provide more opportunities for discussion. Police using Mexican culture only when they can or should will only cause problems.

Figure 76 Participant results (cont.)

Identification	<b>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</b>	<b>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games, and why?</b>	<b>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</b>
<b>Participant 5</b>	Deserted town. It makes me feel alienated because I don't live in Northern Mexico where this is the case.	Thugs, bandits, whores, comedy relief. We are not like that, we are normal people and we must be designed normal.	Not so good the reason why is because when they want to do history they always want to talk about Mesoamerica. But if they want to do something about present then they design us as thugs, drug dealers, cartels, people who are arrogant.	I like it as long as it is not forced	It has become popular, but there are other things besides video games	It's important, but I would like to see more stories told about Mexican culture. Our culture is rich and not just a typical trope.
<b>Participant 6</b>	Destroyed, poor, run by cartels. These are the stereotypes I see in games Deserted town.	Strong luchador type, like the guacamelee protagonist. It's cool.	I don't care either way, there's no single mexican experience.	It's cool since I recognise some of the symbols and influences.	Sure, exposure.	It would be cool I guess, but there isn't a single mexican culture, Mexico is a huge country.
<b>Participant 7</b>	Cartoonish, poor, broken down, criminals	Accent forward, uneducated, poor, criminal	I think that, Mexicans are designed this way because of american stereotypes	I like as long as its portrayed with facts	I think that Mexican culture is vast and it is slowly becoming world renowned because of its vibrance	Feel good knowing people are having an accurate look into my culture
<b>Participant 8</b>	They show only the bad of the country	Characters who only show sadness.	Very poorly represented.	bad	No	I would feel happy to show more of my country.

Figure 77 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 5</u>	I like being represented, but if it's forced, then I don't like it as much.	I don't care that much, but if they make fun of it, or use it in a negative tone, then not so much.
<u>Participant 6</u>	I don't care, representation for representation's sake is dumb.	I don't really care. Sombrero Mario is cool.
<u>Participant 7</u>	Unviewed, marginalized and disappointed	Think it is cultural appropriation and that it should not have a place in main stream media
<u>Participant 8</u>	Not valued	It seems like a mockery to me.

Figure 78 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
<u>Participant 9</u>	pechispanic cultures. It makes me feel somewhat intrigued by the designs.	Luchador, it makes me feel somewhat annoyed.	Somewhat disappointed, because Mexico is usually represented with cartoons from the country's past (pre-Hispanic and colonial/Viceroyalty past), and rarely from modern-day Mexico	I like it, although many times they are simple caricatures (Mexicans are either Aztecs/Mayans, wrestlers, or criminals), it still serves to generate curiosity about Mexican culture. And in some cases, they have broken away from these caricatures, or they fit well within the same game (nobody would expect a real Mexican in Mario Odyssey).	Yes, although sometimes the representation is incorrect or stereotypical, it increases people's curiosity about Mexican culture.	Very good, because this would help Mexico to be more present in the international collective.
<u>Participant 10</u>	That Mexico is a desert with cacti and houses in the middle of nowhere. I don't like it.	The typical charro with a mustache and very filthy. Or like vandals. It makes me uncomfortable	I don't really care, but they should create other characters with different recognizable elements of Mexico	I like it, but I do think it's heavily influenced by North American culture.	Yes, I think it gives a small approach and recognition to the country.	It would be more enjoyable to play them, to think that you are part of the video game.
<u>Participant 11</u>	Narcos, pochos or catrinas. It feels lazy	Drug dealers, pochos or catrinas. It's lazy.	Drug lords, pochos or catrinas. It is tiresome.	Drug lords, pochos or catrinas. It is tiresome.	No because thy use pochos	Jealous

Figure 79 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 9</u>	Somewhat disillusioned, because usually they are represented in ancient/mystical contexts (pre-Hispanic cultures) or in negative tones in non-Latin contexts (such as North American cholos).	Good, because the aspects of a culture are just that, aspects. They don't represent the culture in its entirety, and they don't degrade it when they're taken out of context. Preventing people from other cultures from using prints inspired by pre-Hispanic cultures, for example, doesn't help Mexican culture, it just keeps it in the same bubble that causes people to only know the negative aspects of Mexico that appear in the news.
<u>Participant 10</u>	I think it's racism. It makes me uncomfortable.	They should be used more, I would like that more.
<u>Participant 11</u>	Indifferent.	As long as they don't try to pass off non-Mexicans as Mexicans, it's fine.

Figure 80 Participant results (cont.)

<b>Identification</b>	<b>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</b>	<b>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games, and why?</b>	<b>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</b>
<b>Participant 12</b>	Most of the time Mexico is depicted as a poor, desetic, isolated place. And while that might had been true for small towns in the 1800-1900 is not like that anymore. Mexico would benefit from a more modern scenery like the one in <i>Forza Horizon 5</i> .	Mariachi, Aztecs, luchadores and catrines. Those are the more typical ways of depicting a Mexican person and while they are not always accurate they are important parts of the culture and I feel proud to be recognized by them.	Proud as long as any typical clothing is given the proper respect and effort to actually be accurate	I feel like it should be used more and move away from what's stereotypically shown since there's a lot more than that	Yes, videogames are an important medium of communication	Proud as I would feel better represented
<b>Participant 13</b>	Dessert, Day of the Dead, and the Aztec and Mayan towns. It makes me feel like they only see the "surface" of information since the country in the north(on the border with the USA) is just desert, and that's as far as they see when in reality, the country is mostly mountainous, and in the south, there is a jungle. As for cultural days, there is the Day of the Virgin, Day of the Children Heroes, Day of the Oil Expropriation, and Day of the Revolution, among others. Regarding towns, there are still hundreds throughout the country, and they are different in each state.	Sombreros, sarapes, maracas, mariachis, moerinos(brown skin color). These stereotypes are somewhat old since never in my life have I seen someone wearing a sarape and sombrero	Some of them are stereotypes, while others are well-crafted characters, and that's okay because all cultures have these stereotypes.	Neutral, it's not like the Mexican government imposes that culture be represented accurately	Yes, video games have a worldwide reach and culture is exported to the whole world	I would like that, since the video game industry is mostly run by Anglo-Americans and they only see what is near the border, which is why they always represent us with the desert or simply know the most popular things like the Day of the Dead or pre-Hispanic cultures

Figure 81 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 12</u>	Feels like we are not an important part to society while we actually are	We welcome everybody to be part of our culture, that's just how we are
<u>Participant 13</u>	I don't really care, to be honest, since there are many cultures that are also not represented or known.	It's okay as long as it's accurate and not the typical stereotype or they try to change things to their liking.

Figure 82 Participant results (cont.)

<b>Identification</b>	<b>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</b>	<b>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</b>	<b>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</b>
<b>Participant 14</b>	A lot of dessert and caucuses. I think even thought that is a reference of Mexico there's much more.	The accents, it can be either good or bad sometimes they try to make the character always the funny Mexican character other times it can add uniqueness to the character it just depends.	I feel we still need a main character that goes viral globally that is Mexican that can show people the other side besides the sombreros and tacos.	Overall the usage is good I don't think I notice it as much as the characters themselves.	Yes, but like I said there's much to explore.	It would be awesome because people could look at Mexican culture as something very diverse and beautiful rather than only guns, peppers etc.
<b>Participant 15</b>	We're all drunks and partiers, we are all bandits. It is clear to me that the quiet crowd does not reflect as much as the noisy few	Bandit / Cholo: at the end of the day if there are many cholos, bandits no longer. But the same thing happens in the US, I feel that there is a lack of representation of "normal people" who, in addition to being "normal people" are Mexicans.	It's not just in video games but also in other media where we're depicted in the same way.	I like it when we are represented in a humorous way like in the case of Mario, however, it doesn't reflect the complexity of what a Mexican is in its entirety.	No, but I think there are some examples like Manny in The Last of Us that show that Mexicans are not just the life of the party or the bandit, but normal people.	Well, it wouldn't really bother me either way, I would like it, but at the end of the day, I'm not going to make a big deal about not feeling 100% represented in a video game
<b>Participant 16</b>	The "lazy" stereotype is weird because it is the country with the longest working hours haha	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes, in part, it informs about the culture.	the game would be more realistic and immersive.

Figure 83 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 14</u>	I feel nowadays people are stuck playing first shooters or mainstream games that when they first came out we're not as inclusive so it's hard to just included other cultures in a franchise that's been there for years.	I feel like if you play a game where the MC is not Mexican or Hispanic then your allies or second character will be Hispanic for sure most of the time lol.
<u>Participant 15</u>	It doesn't exactly bother me because even though I am Mexican, I identify as American, but I do feel that the image of Mexicans in video games could improve.	I like the theme of wrestlers and the Day of the Dead, however, I think they could delve a little more into modern Mexico.
<u>Participant 16</u>	I don't care, they're just video games.	Good, it is an aspect that they liked.

Figure 84 Participant results (cont.)

<b>Identification</b>	<b>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</b>	<b>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</b>	<b>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</b>	<b>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</b>
<b>Participant 17</b>	That we wear big hats and it's all desert, I find it funny.	What is like in the 1950s or something like that, or that we are gangsters or fighters or mariachis. It seems a bit outdated to me, but it is still funny.	I think its okay the way they represent um after all they're just fictional characters and what really matters in the end is how entertaining the game is.	I think it's good, they highlight traditional celebrations and things that catch foreigners' attention. It may not be the best approach nowadays, but it's a good way to showcase our culture to the world.	I suppose so, in large part. Many of our celebrations are known or became popular for appearing in games or movies. This helps to show how we see life and its trivialities in this country.	Well, it would be great, although I don't think anyone would be interested if it is shown exactly as it is
<b>Participant 18</b>	I'm not sure I see many stereotypes outside of GTAs spectrum.	I think the early GTAs did a poor representation of Hispanics making them all seem like tattooed gangsters.	The design often seems like they are pulling from some common tropes. I think that is a safe choice.	I think the use of mexican culture in video games is a positive overall as it bring about a wider awareness of the people. An example I'd give is how Far cry exemplified the beauty of Nepal. However I think you're asking how I feel about the representation so far and in that regard I think there is still a lot left on the table.	I think from my knowledge it has been a steady decline.	I think it would be a wonderful thing to see my culture portrayed more accurately because it shares the culture with a wider audience in a correct and informative manner. There is always room for a twist on the culture. Again, I use Far cry in Nepal as a good example of sharing asian culture, language, geography, music, and wrapping it into a finely tuned game.
<b>Participant 19</b>	Having Mexico portrayed as a rural and poor place is untrue. There are many urban centers with international people and companies based there.	Being represented as gangster is problematic and makes me feel like an outsider.	Mexican people are just lumped in a bucket with all other types of Hispanics. It doesn't make me feel represented.	It is not done thoughtfully. The characters are caricatures.	It has become better but it still has a long way to go. There is a little more variety in characters now.	It would make me feel more represented & valued as a consumer of video games.
<b>Participant 20</b>	It does not represent the Mexican culture	Violent hat wearers.	Bad.	Bad; they underestimate the culture of Mexico.	No, because it is not well represented	Good, because it would be the true representation

Figure 85 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 17</u>	It doesn't generate any particular feeling for me, but having more characters in certain types of games would add more hours of fun.	If it's done with respect, it doesn't matter to me if a character uses it or not. They look good.
<u>Participant 18</u>	It sounds like what I'd have expected. It's an unfortunate thing because I think there is a lot that can be done using the culture and country as a backdrop.	I think there is nothing wrong with cultural appropriation. If someone takes joy in celebrating a culture that is fine, it's when they do it as a mockery that it makes the act insulting. So if I see a character dressed like Frida Kahlo or some kind of traditional garment that's wonderful, if I see one using the dress and language to poke fun at the people or culture it is another thing entirely.
<u>Participant 19</u>	It makes me feel like they don't value us or understand us.	I feel they just use our culture to their advantage but they do not use it purposefully or thoughtfully.
<u>Participant 20</u>	Bad	not represented

Figure 86 Participant results (cont.)

Identification	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
Participant 21	Mariachis and cartas is very worn out	The wrestlers are also burned out.	They are good but they are always the same.	Good it is cool.	Perhaps a little bit	Well, it wouldn't be the best since we are also associated with the drug cartels.
Participant 22	Big desert, which means they haven't met the southern half of our country.	Well, we have the drug dealer/chole and the lucha libre fighter. I like the latter, because is a very popular sport, and have a very unique feeling or image. Remember "Mucho lucha" cartoon? We loved that show around here.	For the most part, I don't care. Some people do understand our culture and do it pretty well (Grisa fandango), while others don't have a clue (Mario party something) and keep slapping stuff like maracas in a mariachi outfit. That's like dressing an orchestra director with an electric guitar and punk crest haircut. Said that, I understand not all people do the same research, and as long as there no serious intention to be offensive, I appreciate the effort to understand our culture, and even something like a poncho and hat is better than generic "good guy" #2501.	Like I said, not all people understand our culture the same way we don't fully understand the Japanese or French culture. I appreciate the attempt to look at our culture, and I like how mexican culture have been associated with some of the aspects I like the most. I mean, I love dia de muertos, I love when games are inspired in that to create sections of their game. Usually they don't get quite right all (except for Coco), that film is the best dia de muertos film ever made and was made by people outside México! LOL, and usually I see honest mistakes over intentionally offensive content.	Not quite. Do we know how authentic sushi or pizza look because fast food chains? Since here. Just because Mario is wearing a poncho and mariachi hat, he isn't helping to get a good idea on what's the mexican culture.	At one hand, I would like to see more accurate representations of our culture. If anything, because I'm proud of some parts of our culture, hence pointing at this or that game and saying "yup, that's how my country behaves" would be fun. Some times for the better, some times for the worse, like when drug dealer cartels are the bad guys. I can't deny their existence. At the other hand, however, even if 99% of people start believing mexican = drug dealers, I wouldn't care that much, because at the end of the day, we have more important problems than caring about what someone think about us in the other side of the globe. I mean, if a real cartel guy is pointing at me with a gun, do you think I would care about not being labelled as drug dealer on my next vacation? "Hey, put that gun down, aren't you ashamed of perpetuating racist stereotypes about our cou... *bang*
Participant 23	I only play this game <a href="https://store.steampowered.com/app/450540/Hot_Dogs_Horseshoes_Hard_Grenades/">https://store.steampowered.com/app/450540/Hot_Dogs_Horseshoes_Hard_Grenades/</a> and there is nothing Mexican in it	n/a	n/a	n/a	no idea, once again the only videogame I've ever played in my life is h3, a realistic VR firearms simulator, literally nothing else	no interest, I play because I love the realistically simulated firearms, when I want to remember my youth culture (I've been living in the US for more than 3 decades) I simply drink a bottle of nacilla from Jalisco, which my mother brings me every time she visits Texas

Figure 87 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 21</u>	I don't know	It's okay, I don't think it's something bad.
<u>Participant 22</u>	<p>Don't care. As I said, we have more urgent problems to spend time looking what's the last name of this or that guy. Mexican population have an incredible variability, not all of us are short, brown skin with black hair (although, funny, I look like that), there are blonde with caucasian features and dark skin with african feature mexicans. If we want to identify with someone, we won't give a sheet about the last name of said character, or even if looks like us. Do you think when we were kids, we wouldn't play to be the power rangers because we didn't have asiatic and redhead friends?</p> <p>Do you think we don't cosplay as dragon ball characters because we aren't blonde? Anecdote: when I was a kid, I used to play the pink ranger, because nobody else would want to be her. And no, today I'm a cis man and the most stereotypical mexican looking person you could imagine. Is nice to have Miles Morales as the main character, but we don't hate any of the first spiderman films just because nobody is latin. Trivia: king of fighters is incredible popular hero since the 90's. Guess what? The most popular characters are the japanese characters, like lori or Kyo.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Robert who?</p>	<p>I like them for the most part. People with ill intentions are very transparent, and usually not very creative, so is easy to identify when someone tries to denigrate mexicans by the use of stereotypes. And most games don't have that intention, so is nice to see us on screen. King from Tekken is really great. Mario with poncho and hat is silly, but nothing worth to feel offended. Ramon from KoF is supposed to be mexican, but doesn't really looks mexican at all.</p>
<u>Participant 23</u>	no idea, again I play h3 for the guns, there are no characters in game (well there are hotdogs, but I play in the shooting range, so only paper and metal targets)	n/a

Figure 88 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
<b>Participant 24</b>	Nothing in particular	Nothing in particular	Nothing in particular	Good, knowledge is power	No, theres not much depth into Mexican representation in Videogames	If they are going to use Mexican culture it should be correct
<b>Participant 25</b>	Cheerful people who like tequila and tacos, the truth is that it doesn't bother me, because in reality most of us Mexicans are like that.	The Mexican "charro" with a hat, tequila, and mustache.	Overall, I like how Mexicans are represented in video games	I love that video game developer take into account Mexican culture.	Yes, because they represent a part of Mexico.	That would be great, because it would represent us even better.
<b>Participant 26</b>	a drug cartel, although I do not like it being represented that way unfortunately that is how it is, thanks to the drug cartels that run Mexico	drunk, loud and party people, and I love this because we are practically that people who love to drink and party	I dont mind the way they are design, give them a moustache and sombrero or beer and you have a Mexican	I dont care if they do represent Mexican culture in video games, I mean its a good feeling when they do but I do not need to validate my culture to others. Not everyone is a fan of it stated	a little with games like Red Dead Redemption and recently Call of Duty they are more widely known across the gaming industry	I would not care, I find more enjoyment if developers dont represent the culture more accurately and do a satire of it, the reason why is because that would mean they would need a better understanding of my culture to accurately make fun of it thus giving them a reason to research and
<b>Participant 27</b>	like our ancestors	Like the ancestors.	They don't show that Mexico has evolved.	They should show how we have progressed	No, I feel like there's more missing	Proud to pass on our culture
<b>Participant 28</b>	Desert and cartel. I really dont care about these stereotypes but I think someone might find them offensive	Sombreros and luchadores i find those stereotypes funny	They are built with the characteristics of the average Mexican, which I consider to be correct, but it may bother some people.	I consider it's a nod to Mexico and I agree with that.	No, the most popular games only involve Mexico with cartels.	I would feel good if they also take other aspects of Mexican life

Figure 89 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 24</u>	Nothing in particular	Nothing in particular as long as its correct
<u>Participant 25</u>	Excluded, because Latinos have many interesting things.	Happy, it always brings me joy to see people from other countries appreciate Mexican culture.
<u>Participant 26</u>	I dont care, I dont mind if they are or they aren't represented not everything needs to be inclusive.	I dont mind, if anything I would like it, if for example a white character or black or asian character's would use Mexican culture more, I am in the believe that Culture should be share and not gatekept. Also I am a big fan of satire
<u>Participant 27</u>	ad. Because Latinos have many achievements.	Sometimes its use is not appropriate.
<u>Participant 28</u>	I think it's understandable because these games are made in the US.	I consider it a nod to the culture and I find it funny.

Figure 90 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
<b>Participant 28</b>	The feel like old and abandoned towns.	Something related to the Dead (La muerte)	Its wrong, but funny in some moments.	There are some games which the make a good effort, it feels nice.	Depends... If they do it the right way.	It would be amazing!!! I think that we have issues like everyone.. There are bad things for sure, but there are also nice things that are worthy, and they should be shared.
<b>Participant 29</b>	I think that more than anything the outfit of the ancestors do not represent the Mexicans of today, it makes me feel bad that they do not think of us enough to create a true Mexican character	I think the accent when speaking is very strong and does not represent anything about a Mexican in many cases, and it makes me feel singled out.	I believe that Mexicans in video games are represented as very old-fashioned and not updated to modern times.	Doesn't make you feel good seeing how Mexicans are always used for a stereotype of being bad or a hitman, I feel like we're more than that	I think so, but more on the wrong path than the good one. They always portray the bad side of Mexicans.	I think, I would feel proud to be Mexican.
<b>Participant 31</b>	That it's dusty and we are all drug dealers	Drug dealers and hustlers or wearing sombreros , it's not how we are	It's very well done and it makes me proud	If done correctly, I'm proud , badly and I'm upset	Far cry six, did it excellently	It would make me happy
<b>Participant 32</b>	I think it's good and it makes me feel like I'm in my town	I think it is correct, it makes me feel good.	Very well represented by its colorful nature	Very good idea to represent this culture in video games.	Yes, I believe there is only a lack of more creators.	It should be not only with famous characters, more should be created.

Figure 91 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 29</u>	We exist, but there are also many kinds of mexicans.	They are trying
<u>Participant 30</u>	I think as long as they represent Latino characters well, I don't really care if there are many or few.	I think they are very fake.
<u>Participant 31</u>	Angry, we are not a minority anymore	Annoyed, it's always done badly
<u>Participant 32</u>	In reality, there are hardly any representations of Mexican characters.	I would feel proud of the developers if they create new characters from Mexico.

Figure 92 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
<b>Participant 33</b>	very colorful	Very traditionalist.	Mexicans are represented in things that are traditional in the country such as Day of the Dead, Revolution, Lucha Libre, etc.	Good	A bit, since they only frame the best known traditions and Mexico is a country with a lot of culture and history.	It would be great, it would serve as a way to spread Mexican culture
<b>Participant 34</b>	all ways dealing with drugs, drugs are a universal thing that many cultures deal with so i find it not very fitting	vizual and the day of the dead kind, i find them really generic.	they can be villains and heroes so i find that its good,	it depends on how important the culture is to the game, to require a in depth representation and others don't.	No	i dont really care to be honest, i dont think holding creators to be incredibly accurate is detrimental to artistic freedom, some stories require a realistic setting and others a more surreal lens.
<b>Participant 35</b>	the Mexican culture	Colorful and clothing	You handle a very marked stereotype.	Good because they showcase part of Mexican culture.	Yes, because of the popularity they generate.	I would feel more identified and happier that people get to know a little bit about Mexican culture
<b>Participant 36</b>	A lot of video games assume that Mexico is either full of lochadores or full of drags/gangs. I really wish we would at least stay away from that scene especially if the character will be the only representation we have from Mexico. When the game is about said topics then it's fine since there's a narrative to tell but i still wish we would see Mexican representation in video games that aren't immediately tied to those genres of games	Probably the whole mariachi hat and Pancho set but to be honest - it's kinda type when done well. The scene i remember immediately is Raiden (MGRB) honestly thinking he could be smoky in Mexico while wearing a Pancho and Sombrero then he passes by actual Mexican citizens and they just look like any other normal person - it's a farce scene and shows how ridiculous it would be to wear an outfit like that an everyday guy. Noctis (FFXIV) had a whole mariachi outfit adorned with Chocobos and honestly (as a FF fan with Mexican parents) i wish i had the time to actually make that outfit!!	Overall i feel indifferent, people all over the world will look different than what is shown in media. Which is why seeing characters like Angel and Ramon from KOF isn't as crazy bc there's also Mexican citizens who look "more" European (or essentially white). Red Dead Redemption Mexican characters fit the era the game is set, GTA also makes the character fit into their environment.	Overall happy, I'll take any representation over 0 representation even if it means i have to deal with the usual story of cartel related plot. Games like Little Big Planet or Mario Odyssey is a nice tone change and makes me appreciate those games further with their attempt to coin in Mexican culture in its most traditional and friendlier aspects.	To the bare minimum yes, but i think most people tend to still focus on it's negative aspects instead of the enriching history it has. Most people will have a very shallow view of Mexican culture due to only being exposed to cartel related stories and wrestling which is a shame since Mexico is clearly much more than that.	Happy and relief that there's a character that can be more than just a gangster or wrestler. Would be overall happy if there's more representation in family values, religious inspiration, holiday references or even just small events or mentions of things like that.
<b>Participant 37</b>	hats and tacos feel fine	Probably the hats, tacos, skin color, atmosphere, etc	idk	idk	n4fobs	idk

Figure 93 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 33</u>	I don't know	Good.
<u>Participant 34</u>	i think its racist to think that. you have to ask yourself why would you force anyone to make a game with certain requirements that make you feel represented. people dont have to make you or anyone feel seen.	i dont care. what is does it mean to be mexican anyway? someone born there? someone who has family there. someone who moved there from another country and has adopted the culture? cultures almost a living thing where anyone from anywhere can have aspects of it if they want to adopt them.
<u>Participant 35</u>	They should include a little more weight related to culture	It generates a greater impact.
<u>Participant 36</u>	Overall sad and frustrated, i especially feel bad for other Latino cultures that are even less represented since Mexico is the go-to location when it comes to Latino representation. Latin America is very diverse and there's a lot of potential for characters and locations.	Ridiculous, especially if the game developers were being serious about it. Scenarios like Mario in Odyssey or Raiden in MGRR are done well enough and fans overall understand it's not meant to offend anyone.
<u>Participant 37</u>	Idk	Idk

Figure 94 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>What stereotype about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</u>
<b>Participant 38</b>	Day of the Dead stuff, I don't like it because it's a heathen celebration instead of Christian, it's not a good direction for Mexico to celebrate death culture such as 'Santa Muerte', it will lead to trouble.	Usually the clothing, several of the games listed the characters don't speak so they show their origin in their clothing. The only part that's annoying is when the clothing is wrong, or exaggerates an aspect of the culture that shouldn't be celebrated such as criminality.	When the game is exaggerated the developers go for exaggerated characters that focus on aesthetics, not developing the characters as realistic people.	It's nice to see when it's done well. For example, I want to hang around with the companion Raul from Fallout New Vegas because it's like hanging around with a friend or family member.	I think yes as the world has become exposed to more Mexican culture, it's shown in videogames more and more accurately as time goes on. For example T-Hawk looks like a Native American in Street Fighter 2, not really Mexican, but the later Street Fighter games have Mexican wrestlers in accurate costumes.
<b>Participant 39</b>	That we are often high-energy people, regardless of whether it was portrayed negatively or positively.	Many times there is the violent character of gangsters or the cheerful and friendly character. It bothers me because they only show two extreme sides when there is more to being violent or friendly.	Mexicans in video games are dressed in very obvious Mexican clothing and I often feel proud that they are able to include the culture through the designs, even if it is very stereotypical.	Most of the time I have no problems with the use of Mexican culture in video games. In fact, I encourage it because it makes the game feel bigger than it is.	I do believe that Mexican culture has become better known over the years thanks to video games. The exposure and reach that video games have in the world allows people to learn more about the culture and I appreciate that.
<b>Participant 40</b>	That we are mostly cholos, or cartel affiliated. It doesn't really picture Mexico or mexicans in a good light and I don't enjoy that.	Being associated with guns. El amno bandito (BioShock) Mule Kick, Speed Cola (COD zombies) Despite loving COD zombies and their song jingles us Mexicans are more than just guns	I'm am fine with how Mexican people are designed, some of us are super pale while others dark tans, many of us are short and plenty of us are tall.	If its done in good taste I enjoy it. Such as the sand kingdom from mario odyssey	No comment

Figure 95 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 38</u>	I had not considered it as a problem. If it's a problem then Latin American developers should make more games with these characters in them.	If it's done mockingly or as a cheap money-grab like I suspect the Fortnite characters are, then it seems lame and not well executed, but when it's done well I am very glad and it increases my enjoyment of the game.
<u>Participant 39</u>	I think it makes sense that there isn't much representation of Mexican culture in video games because there hasn't been as much interest compared to other cultures like American or Japanese. So, it doesn't bother me when I see very little representation of Mexican culture in today's video games.	Mexican culture on a character who is not Mexican creates a complex reaction because, although I don't agree that Mexican culture can be added to any character, at least I'm grateful that Mexican culture is getting some kind of exposure
<u>Participant 40</u>	Honestly, I'm am quite surprised to learn of this. Learning this I feel indifferent to the fact, as I can think of many TV shows and movies that have Latino representation.	If the game is done in good taste that accurately depicts mexican culture without it being mexican, I am fine with. Ex: "Ghost of Tsushima" is not a Japanese game but it depicts the samurai era fairly well and many Japan-natives enjoy the game and praise it.

Figure 96 Participant results (cont.)

Identification	<u>What stereotypes about Mexico do you see in video games and what does it make you feel?</u>	<u>What kind of Mexican stereotypes do you see in video games, how do they make you feel and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the way Mexican people are, designed in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture in video games, and why do they make you feel that way?</u>	<u>Do you think Mexican culture has become better known over the years in video games and why?</u>	<u>How would you feel if games represented your culture more accurately and why?</u>
Participant 41	Declining or desert areas, these stereotypes make believe that all regions of Mexico are like this	It has a name in Spanish and mixes speaking English and Spanish (Spanglish). It seems to me that this stereotype has been used quite a bit and is now something normal.	Grateful that they have a presence, and the personality or the form is linked to the type of character.	Most people focus on Day of the Dead, Lucha Libre , criminals, and Sombreros. We know that this is what attracts the most attention, but we have many cultures, such as the Wixarika culture.	Yes, especially in GTA. Seeing different types of Mexican characters makes us see that like anywhere we are diverse	They are pleasant surprises and more when they take the time to do it correctly
Participant 42	The hat and feel frustrated	Gangster, and mad	Horrible, because it's just continue the ideas of those stereotypes.	I like, as long it's use historically accurate it's not a problem.	No because it's only in movies they talk about Mexico not in games	More excited to engage with the games I think, because it's fun and familiar.
Participant 43	The Mexican Economy is in a state of decline due to poverty and deterioration. As a citizen of my country, I find it sad to see my country portrayed this way	That we are portrayed as gangsters, or that we are always wearing sombreros and sarapes with big mustaches. I do not look like that, and it makes me feel angry.	Their design isn't too appealing to me; I feel they are poorly thought out. It makes me feel that my culture is just a mockery.	I like that they use the culture. But I want them to tackle other aspects of our culture instead of the ones that have been beaten to death. Does not make me feel good since there is so much culture in Mexico	As a result, it has helped, but I also like it because it makes me proud of my culture.	Would be fine with me since I want them to deep dive into the rich history that we have.
Participant 44	They portray Mexico as a desert. It makes me angry since where I live, it is just a city	The stereotypes of drunks and sluggish individuals. As I put a lot of effort into my work, I am neither of them and find it disrespectful.	Happy as long as they treat the culture with the respect it merits.	They shouldn't replicate what has already been done because our culture is rich.	It has, makes me happy. But I want it to be better represented.	I would love if they focused more on other aspects of our culture.

Figure 97 Participant results (cont.)

<u>Identification</u>	<u>How does it make you feel about Latinos not being represented as much in video games, and why?</u>	<u>How do you feel about the use of Mexican culture on a video game character that is not Mexican, and why does it make you feel that way?</u>
<u>Participant 41</u>	I don't give it any importance. What matters is how entertaining it is. I have never thought about being represented in video games.	I love that they do it, just be aware of what they're doing, for example, we don't celebrate Cinco de Mayo like foreigners do
<u>Participant 42</u>	Sad because they're my people	Hate, because now the white man is stealing more of my culture.
<u>Participant 43</u>	I did not know that Latinos were underrepresented inside games. But now that you point it out, I want them to include us more. Makes me feel undervalued.	If it is done correctly then it will make me feel proud. But if they do it wrong then it will make me sad and angry because it will be like they spit on my face.
<u>Participant 44</u>	Don't care as much. I play games because I find them fun, but if they want to represent us it just makes it better.	Makes me angry. It is our culture, and they shouldn't be using it to make fun of.

Figure 98 Participant results (cont.)