



**TEACHFOR  
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FINAL PROJECT REPORT: CHARACTER BUILDING RELIGION**

**The Lessons Video Games Can Teach:  
Why its Loss Would be Detrimental**

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# **Chapter 1: Insights into the Project**

## **1.1. The Background of this Issue**

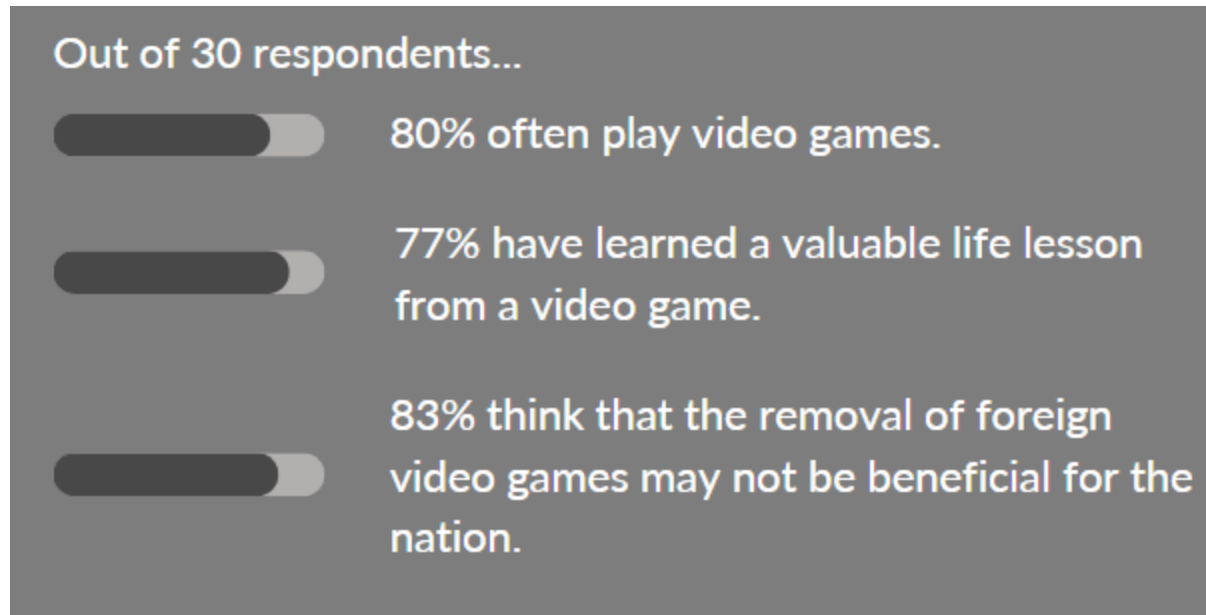
Since the dawn of time, as humans, we have spread traditional and spiritual values through many different mediums. Back then, preaching was and still is one of the most popular forms of spreading religious values. Then, television became the most popular method of entertainment. Thus, for religions to spread their values more effectively, movies were made so anyone could watch and learn about a certain religion along with their values. The Passion of Christ (2004), for example, is still regarded as one of the best religions films, as it depicts the sacrifices Christ made realistically for everyone to see [1].

Now, one of the most popular mediums of entertainment that the majority, if not all the youth interact with often, is video games. Approximately 40% of the world plays video games, and 38% of that age ranges from 18-34 [2]. Games such as Minecraft, Fortnite, and Call of Duty became worldwide sensations as many played them. This medium has such an ever-growing following, so it would only be right for it to have spiritual values spread through it through interesting stories.

However, difficulties have arisen, and video games have become a medium that gets more and more difficult to use effectively.

## **1.2. The Numbers Behind it**

Indonesia is no exception to this. A simple survey, ranging from high school students to university students, was held by us to see what they thought about video games and their experiences from them.



**Figure. The Results of the Survey**

The numbers are clear; at least one video game has had an impact on the majority, telling an interesting narrative that led them to gain spiritual values and better themselves. The importance of video games that raised a generation of people should not be underestimated as a medium to tell stories and spread values that one maybe would not be able to get.

### **1.3. Facts and Supporting Data**

Some difficulties include the arduous tasks a developer must go through in order to not only develop their game but also have it succeed. The market for video games is incredibly oversaturated, and finding success is very slim. Not to mention the international market being extremely competitive, making game development in Indonesia very off-putting. One might wonder how this is a religious/spiritual issue.

Well, a lot of large studios have been pandering to the masses, creating a large, perpetual machine where consumers are fed the bare minimum of what is necessary. Not only does this hinder good games with meaningful messages from becoming popular, but it also creates a bad name for games.

Regulations implemented by Indonesia will be touched upon later. However, the general consensus is as follows:

1. KOMINFO (Ministry of Information and Technology) blocking popular international video game distribution platforms.
2. A new, pending regulation to limit the access of foreign video game publishers in Indonesia.

## **Chapter 2: The Analysis of Regulations Across the World**

### **2.1. Indonesia's Attempt to Support Local Development**

In 2022, a controversy occurred regarding the decision of KOMINFO (The Ministry of Information and Technology) to block popular international video game distribution platforms such as Steam and Epic Games. This was done as an attempt to:

1. Incentivize Indonesian players to purchase and play locally developed games instead.
2. Halt the spread of hoaxes through these channels (as they have communicative features).

This block was done in tandem with a block on PayPal and Yahoo as well. This decision was frowned upon by the general public for many reasons.

1. The ability to block sites for those reasons would create a dangerous standard that allows the government to limit access to any website, thus increasing censorship and limiting the spread of information.
2. Concerns regarding the fact that user data could possibly be handled purely by the government instead.
3. Banning international video game platforms would not allow any outside influence, thus highly limiting inspiration and innovation.

Having outside influence is always good to ensure that you can learn from those with different experiences from yourself. As the younger generation grows up with video games, limiting foreign influence may introduce a stopgap in understanding foreign spiritual values.

For example, the Japanese believe that there are Gods and spirits in every corner of their surroundings. River gods/spirits that save farmers during a drought, or gods that guide those who want success towards it. It is an interesting foreign culture that is not practiced in Indonesia.

This is a highlight of the game Ghostwire: Tokyo [3], and despite it not being a primary component of the game, it is something that players learn intuitively. This is why video games are a very valuable medium of entertainment for players, and a method for those who want to spread spiritual/religious values. People hate it when a message someone is trying to convey is forced in front of their faces, and so having the player go through an experience and find out these messages for themselves is the best way to spread a message. A bit corny, since this means the best way values are taught is by allowing players to find out for themselves. More games will be discussed later on in the document.

The second regulation would call for foreign publishers to establish a local presence before they distribute their games in Indonesia. Companies would have to register as limited liability companies, or their platforms would be blocked. This is yet another regulation that adds unnecessary pressure on companies that, if put into effect, will be beneficial only to the government and not to the developers in the country. If anything, it will have the opposite effect.

This kind of regulation would just add to the cost of operations for the companies and have the following result: The publishers do not agree, which will mean their games will not enter Indonesia. I have detailed why this is an undesirable result. Not only that, but local developers may miss out on collaborations with international publishers. This is just a regulation beneficial to no one but the government. There is no reason to burden video game publishers.

Video games aside, the blocking of social media sites that do not conform to government regulations is a decision that may not be the best for the population. One of the most important spiritual values is to realize that you should think for yourself. Having someone else decide what to do for you is never something that you should allow.

## **2.2. What the World is Doing**

The question is what is the rest of the world doing to support their video game industries. Well, for one, South Korea does so by funding its gaming industry instead. This way, the esports scene thrives, which in turn helps the industry. By providing their support, game developers can focus on creating more games with good messages without burden.

Japan helps through other means. Historically, protecting the intellectual rights of video games has been very difficult. Since they have a global reach, different intellectual laws apply wherever they go. Countries with weaker intellectual property enforcement are extremely susceptible to piracy. Another reason is just how complex IP (Intellectual Property) components are. There are so many different components that fall under different regulations. Game code falls under patents, artwork and music belong to copyrights, and brand names/logos need to be trademarks. With so many different components to protect, it can be difficult, as each one requires a different legal process. Thus, Japan helps their developers by having a robust legal framework for video game IPs and by having international cooperation to ensure that the process is much more simplified whenever needed.

Lastly, the UK goes a step further with international cooperation. They send their developers overseas to international conferences and events to learn more from those who know the most in their respective industries. This is such an excellent move since it supports my point that international experiences are the best way a domestic developer can learn and grow.

## **Chapter 3: The Values They Bring**

### **3.1. The Value of Video Games in Teaching Spiritual Values**

Video games have a large influence on the lives of newer generations. As a large majority play video games often, the chances of their values being formed by video games is very high. As a lot of the old generation would like to try to stop this by banning video games, it would be wiser to embrace this change and teach values through these platforms. Attempting to force people into learning against their will is never the answer. Instead, let them find out the answers for themselves. This chapter dives into three games that, although conveying some excellent spiritual values, do not do so in a way that forces the message to the player. These games are Persona 5, Yakuza 0, and Cult of the Lamb. Of course, this will include spoilers for all three games.

### **3.2. Persona 5**

Persona 5 is a Japanese RPG published by ATLUS. It follows the protagonist, named Ren Amamiya, who is falsely accused of assaulting a politician. In actuality, he was saving a woman who was being assaulted by said politician. However, with money and connections, the politician managed to spin the narrative, making our protagonist a criminal. Ren is convicted, and as penance, is forced to move cities to Tokyo and attend a new high school.

On the way to his first day, Ren meets Ryuji Sakamoto, another student of the school he was attending, Shujin Academy. As they both make their way towards their school, the path somehow leads them to a castle where Kamoshida, the Olympic medalist gym teacher, was a king. It turns out they have the ability to enter the cognitive world and enter palaces, a manifestation of warped distortion based on the strong, corrupt thoughts of someone. Kamoshida had been abusing students on the volleyball team to force results, and although the teachers knew, they covered it up since Kamoshida's reputation precedes him. As Ryuji is almost killed and Ren is restrained as he is forced to watch, he reflects on how he has been wronged, and



resolves his will to rebel against the distortions of society. This awakens his persona, a manifestation of the user's personality. Ryuji shortly gains one as well in another pinch.

When they manage to escape, Ren and Ryuji try to investigate the issue, but are met with the threat of expulsion when Kamoshida finds out. As Shiho, another student, attempts to end her life to escape Kamoshida, Ann, Shiho's closest friend, accidentally finds out about the cognitive world as well. The three, along with a companion they met trapped in the cognitive world named Morgana, decide to "steal Kamoshida's heart" in the cognitive world, which would trigger a change of heart in the real world and make him confess to his crimes [4].

As the game goes on, Ren meets more companions and changes the hearts of distorted individuals within society. They form a group called the Phantom Thieves, as they steal the hearts of people with distorted desires and take advantage of the weak. There are so many spiritual values one can obtain from this game. For example, once the user awakens to their Persona, a physical mask forms on their face, a metaphor for how they conform to societal norms by hiding behind a mask. To summon the Persona, the user must rip off their mask and reveal their true selves. This reflects a lot about individuals within our society. We can ask the question of who people truly are, deep inside, beneath the mask they put on to abide by the norms.

Another major value comes later on, towards the end of the game, when the protagonist comes across a dilemma as they attempt to steal the heart of society itself. The cognitive world, named Mementos, is an amalgamation of humanities conscious and subconscious desires. This gave birth to a Treasure, which is the aspect of humanity that desires to be controlled, the sin of sloth. This aspect forms a god—not an omnipotent one, but one born from these desires names. The events of the game turn out to be a prejudiced test by this god to see if humanity truly wants nothing but to be controlled. Our protagonist, Ren, is the ace of humanity chosen by Igor, a representative of the God of Persona, or the very first being born from the collective unconsciousness. This provokes a thought within the player about whether it's better for society to have one collective thought and be controlled by Yaldabaoth or to fight for change within society as an individual with the ability to make a difference. The game teaches us to think for ourselves and not conform to societal norms if it means fitting in.

### 3.3. Yakuza 0

Yakuza 0 is a game set in the 1980s, taking place in two locations, Tokyo and Osaka, with two protagonists, Kazuma Kiryu and Goro Majima. These two men go through different trials and tribulations, each with their own struggles.

Kazuma Kiryu is a low-level Yakuza, without status, and just another name in the large masses. As he is hired to collect the debt of someone who owes them, he does what he is meant to do and beats up the client. The next morning, it turns out the client was found dead in that very alley, and the lieutenants are not happy with this. They want Kiryu to turn himself in, but he knows that he is innocent, as that man died from a gunshot wound, despite Kiryu not carrying a gun. Not only does Kiryu have a target on his back, but his father figure and captain of the lieutenants are being considered for demotion as he was the one who took in Kiryu.

To make matters complicated, the client was killed in a small plot of land called the Empty Lot, a patch of dirt in the center of the Kamurocho Shopping Area. The area is essential to the Kamurocho Revitalization Project, which would bring in a substantial amount of money to whoever completes it. The Empty Lot is the only land that no one could locate the owner of, which is necessary since that person could claim legal rights over that ground if the project was completed without their consent. So, Kiryu is thrown into a three-way internal war between the Yakuza over control of this land.

Meanwhile, Goro Majima is the “Lord of the Night”, the manager of The Grand, the most popular cabaret club in Sotenbori, Osaka. He was forced into this role as penance due to his attempt to betray the Yakuza years ago. On the night he met his quota, his superior Sagawa raised the required amount to 500 million yen. Sagawa then gives him the option of continuing his work or assassinating Makoto Makimura, a ruthless human trafficker who takes advantage of college girls. Although he has never killed anyone, Majima reluctantly takes the offer.

His investigation leads to a massage parlor owned by a man nicknamed the God Hands. He runs into a blind girl working there and is offered a massage. He agrees, only for Makimura to enter the room after it's over. They fight, and as Majima wins, other Yakuza flood the room and kidnap the blind employee. It turns out that she was Makoto Makimura all along, so Majima saves her, but then realizes Sagawa lied about the human trafficking.

He is faced with a brutal dilemma: whether to save Makoto or kill her and earn his place back in the Yakuza. Majima then finds out about the Kamurocho Revitalization Project and the fact that Makoto, who inherited it from her grandfather, is the true owner of the Empty Lot. The story of Yakuza 0 is so well written with dilemmas and morals the protagonists must face that the player forgets that they are also unconsciously learning a message [5].

Both characters display resilience and perseverance. Kiryu, being framed for a crime he did not commit and forced into battle against powerful superiors, keeps a steel will to clear his name and protect those he cares about. Majima, held captive in his job and being made to follow strict, unreasonable orders, held out just to seek redemption. Despite it all, he risks it all to protect this girl he just met and ensure her safety as the entire Yakuza comes for her.

One other value is self-discovery and facilitating their own personal growth. Throughout their respective journeys, Kiryu finds the kind of person he wants to be as he fights through and goes through trials to save those he cares about. Majima goes through the most growth when he meets Homare Nishitani, a man who simply does not care about anything and lives his life freely. Despite initially being someone forced into pretending to be a calm, collected manager, Majima is inspired by Nishitani to live life how he wants and is reborn as “The Mad Dog of Shimano”.

A notable value learnt is keeping humility and staying humble. Kiryu is one of the strongest characters throughout the series, yet he does not look to his fists to solve every situation. Instead, he tries to resolve it through peaceful means. He never lets his power inflate his ego and remains one of the most grounded characters. Majima, on the other hand, is forced to learn humility through his fake personality and job. However, these lessons impacted him as a character, keeping him humble and helping others later on as he grew as a character.

Yakuza 0 is famous for having an incredible amount of side stories for the player to do, and many have distinct lessons that teach players the value of different things, like valuing their lives or staying perceptive even in moments of weakness. It truly is a game filled with spiritual values that do not force themselves on the player.

### 3.4. Cult of the Lamb

This game is more simplistic in its approach to providing spiritual values. It provides them in a more straightforward way. The protagonist, a lamb, is set to be sacrificed by a group called the Bishops of the Old Faith. However, just before death, you are saved by The One Who Waits, a godly being who has been chained. It saves you from the brink of death and gives you the power to start a cult and destroy the Bishops, who imprisoned it.

Throughout the game, you save people from the cult of the Bishops, and they join your following instead. You bring them back to your base, where it is the player's job to take care of your followers, ensure the base is sanitized, keep everything orderly, and make sure your followers are loyal to you. Then, you can assign them to help build and sustain your cult.

In the end, however, you come to realize that The One Who Waits saved you not out of goodwill but instead to use you as a pawn to destroy the Bishops and become an almighty deity once more. The player, who has been relying on this entity to bestow powers upon them, realizes what its true nature really is. It serves as a test of the consequences of the player's actions throughout the game and their moral compass [6].

Simply put, you learn the consequences of your own actions as you do good and questionable things to help the cult grow. In the end, the player reflects on what they have done and asks themselves whether it is truly worth it.

## Chapter 4: Possible Solutions

### 4.1. Solutions

Abandon the proposed changes. Increasing the operating costs for foreign video game publishers has no benefit for local publishers. We would completely reject this law for these reasons:

1. The publishers do not pay for these costs, thus pulling their games away from Indonesia.
2. This means that there are fewer international games on the Indonesian market.
3. Less international games mean less outside inspiration and less room to learn from others who know better.
4. Players would want to find other ways to obtain these foreign games regardless, using possibly less ethical means.
5. The chances of Indonesian games being played more do not increase by a sizable margin in comparison to the losses incurred by this law.

The current law, as a matter of fact, requires no changes. Instead, the government should just introduce programs to help local game developers.

1. Start advertising local games that should be spread more. If the games have good messages and convey them properly, then they will be successful. People just need to know about it.
2. Subsidize game development. It is an arduous task, so any little bit will help.
3. Help the game developers by flying them out to international conventions so they can learn more about game development, just like the UK does.

## **4.2. Conclusion**

Many games have positive messages, and since the younger generation plays video games a lot, they end up learning from it a lot too. In order to solve a spiritual crisis within society, games with uplifting messages told in a good way can really help. However, games development is still heavily undervalued in Indonesia due to the scarce marketing of games in general. The government can aid this by helping developers gain more experience and expose their work for people to know about.

## **4.3. Reflection**

To be honest, as a group, we learned a lot more. In order to portray games properly, we had to choose from a lot of excellent ones, and it was no easy task. Playing those games and learning a bit more about ourselves and what we can do for society was truly eye-opening. Having these experiences was a privilege, and with this project, we hope that other people can also see the value these games have when it comes to conveying spiritual and religious values.

### **The Link of the Poster:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGGcm\\_Wj88/BBLRxep8vVBsnKCUBFXL9A/edit?utm\\_content=DAGGcm\\_Wj88&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGGcm_Wj88/BBLRxep8vVBsnKCUBFXL9A/edit?utm_content=DAGGcm_Wj88&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

### **The Link of the Video:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1coxb9VIxFXxaxIoMKllu-Qg90P8f9kai/view?usp=drivesdk>

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