

From Avatar to Actant: Player Agency, Identity Transformation, and Posthuman Play in Baldur's Gate 3

Xingyu Mi^{1,a,*}

¹King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R, 2LS, United Kingdom

a. 2586615184@qq.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The analysis situates itself within cyborg anthropology and posthumanism, interrogating the liberational potential of bodily transformations and player-avatar relations in Baldur's Gate 3 (BG3). It also examines BG3's inclusivity, questioning whether the game's audience transcends traditional gamer demographics to include marginalized groups, reflecting socio-cultural shifts in digital media. Employing a mixed-methods approach integrating qualitative interviews and quantitative textual analysis of the game's eight relationship-building characters, this paper examines the complexities of identity construction and bodily augmentation in virtual spaces. It explores how players leverage BG3's affordances to navigate and negotiate personal and social identities, effectively performing a 'second life' within the game's expansive world. The study critically assesses the extent to which these virtual embodiments reflect or diverge from players' real-life identities and how this process facilitates a form of posthuman play. Data gathered from online gaming forums and social media platforms, combined with insights from player interviews, reveal a significant trend of players using BG3 to explore aspects of their identities constrained in real life. Preliminary findings indicate that players frequently create avatars embodying their ideal physical forms, gender expressions, and relational dynamics. These virtual experiences provide a liberational space for players to experiment with and affirm their identities, reinforcing the view of video games as potent sites for posthuman exploration and identity transformation. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of shifting paradigms in game design, offering critical insights into the transformative potential of video games as sites for identity exploration and bodily experimentation.

Keywords: bodily moulding, player-cyborg relations, gamification, avatar.

1. Introduction

Video games have increasingly emerged as significant cultural artifacts, serving not only as entertainment but also as platforms for examining complex issues related to identity, embodiment, and social interaction [1]. Baldur's Gate 3 (BG3), with its intricate narrative and expansive world-building, provides players with a unique opportunity to construct and negotiate personal and social identities [2]. By offering various forms of character customization and relationship-building, games like BG3 allow players to explore and express aspects of their identities that might be constrained in real life.

As digital media consumption increasingly mirrors contemporary sociocultural dynamics, video games are leading this transformation, fostering more inclusive and diverse player communities [3]. In the realm of posthuman gaming, BG3 serves as a space for players to delve into identity, challenging conventional humanist boundaries and often blurring the lines between the virtual and the real. This study will emphasise the inclusivity of BG3's audience, investigating whether the game transcends traditional gamer demographics to embrace marginalized groups.

This paper will examine the emancipatory potential of bodily transformation and player-character relationships in BG3. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews with BG3 players and quantitative textual analysis of the game's relationship-building characters, this research aims to uncover the complexities of identity construction and bodily enhancement within the game world. Through these methods, the study will explore how players leverage BG3's features to create avatars that embody their ideal body form, gender expression, and relationship dynamics, engaging in a form of posthuman identity exploration.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research methods

This study will utilize a mixed research methodology, combining semi-structured interviews for qualitative research and questionnaires for quantitative research. The semi-structured interview method allows for a structured yet flexible approach, enabling respondents to share their views and experiences in depth while maintaining a core framework [4]. This method captures the nuances of participants' feelings and behaviors. Conversely, the questionnaire method gathers data from a larger sample using standardized questions, facilitating quick data collection and statistical analysis to identify patterns and trends [5]. Questionnaires typically include both closed-ended and open-ended questions, making this method effective for diverse fields, including social sciences and market research.

In this study, in order to fully explore the experiences of players of Baldur's Gate 3, particularly with regard to aspects of player agency, identity transformation, and posthuman play, two core research tools were used: a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. The semi-structured interview outline included a series of open-ended questions that covered basic information about players, their gaming habits, and their feelings about player agency in Baldur's Gate 3. In addition, the interviews addressed players' motivations for creating virtual characters, their changing identities within the game, the differences between virtual and real identities, and whether players used their game characters to achieve things they could not do in the real world. Finally, the interviews explored players' understanding of posthuman gaming and whether or not they thought Baldur's Gate 3 contained posthuman elements. The questionnaire addressed the players' age range, gender, weekly playing time, and how often they played Baldur's Gate 3. The questionnaire also included questions about the player's freedom of decision-making in the game, the impact of game options on the player's feelings, and how the player's decisions reflect personal choices. In addition, the questionnaire explored whether players explored different selves through their characters, whether identity changes reflected real thoughts, and whether players experienced real-life impossible identities through their virtual characters. Finally, the questionnaire investigated players' understanding of the concept of posthuman gaming, whether they thought Baldur's Gate 3 contained posthuman elements, and whether they thought video games were an effective tool for exploring posthuman themes.

2.2. Sample Selection and Data Collection

In order to ensure a diverse sample, this study took into account gender, gaming experience, and familiarity with Baldur's Gate 3. Such a sample selection strategy helped to reveal the diverse

experiences of different player groups in terms of player agency, identity transformation, and post-human play. A total of five participants' semi-structured interview information and 137 questionnaire data were collected for this study. The interview samples were limited in number, but each participant provided insights and rich information that contributed to our understanding of the complexity of player experiences. The large sample size of the questionnaire survey, on the other hand, provides us with a wide range of data support, making the findings more generalizable and representative.

2.3. Data Analysis

In conducting the quantitative analysis, this study focused on the demographic background information and conducted a frequency statistics analysis to understand the background information of the respondents. The scales used in this study were then tested for reliability and validity to determine the reliability and validity of the scales. Finally, descriptive statistics were analyzed for perceptions and attitudes regarding player agency, identity transformation, and posthuman play.

In conducting the qualitative analysis, this study will adopt the three-level coding method of Zagan Theory [6]. Firstly, in open coding, the researcher coded the collected information word by word without omitting any important information until the information reached saturation, and then, in order to discover the conceptual categories from the original information, the attributes and dimensions of the categories were identified by naming the categories, and then the objects of the study were named and categorized subsequently. Immediately after, the researcher's work in this coding process focused on “discovering and establishing various connections between conceptual categories in order to express the organic links between the various parts of the data. In axial coding, the researcher analyzes one category at a time in depth, looking for correlations around that category, hence the term axial.” After establishing the relationships between each set of conceptual taxa, it is also necessary to distinguish between primary and secondary taxa. Finally, through a systematic analysis, a core category is identified among all the conceptual categories found, and subsequent analyses are then focused on those elements that are related to this core category. The specific steps of core-based coding were to first identify a main line of primary data collected, and second to describe the primary and secondary taxa and their attributes and dimensions.

2.4. Ethical Considerations

In this study, we adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the morality of the study and the rights of the participants. All participants were fully informed prior to participation and were clearly informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any time. We adopted anonymisation to protect the privacy of the participants and to ensure that the data were used only for research purposes. At the same time, we ensured data security to prevent loss, misuse or unauthorised access. The results of the study will be reported fairly and transparently, free from any external pressures. We promise that this study will be conducted in strict compliance with the above ethical guidelines to ensure that the ethical nature of the study and the rights and interests of the participants are protected to the fullest extent.

3. Results

3.1. Qualitative analysis results

3.1.1. Basic information on respondents

The respondent sample consisted of five players, three male and two female, showing a relatively balanced gender distribution (Table 1). In terms of gaming experience, the sample included both

veteran and novice players, as well as those in between. Veteran players had an in-depth knowledge of the game, while the novice players' perspectives provided an early experience of the game. This diversity helps to understand the player experience in Baldur's Gate 3 from different perspectives. Although the sample size is small, the range of experiences covered provides a valuable perspective for the study.

Table 1: Basic information on respondents.

Interviewee	Gender	Contact time
Interviewee 1	Male	Experienced player
Interviewee 2	Male	Just contacted
Interviewee 3	Male	Senior player
Interviewee 4	Female	More than 1 year
Interviewee 5	Female	Several months

3.1.2. Word Cloud Analysis

The word cloud map (Figure 1) shows a series of keywords related to the player experience of BOD 3. Larger words such as "creativity", "personality customisation", "technology", "strategies" and "entertainment" are shown. "creativity", "personality customisation", "technology", "strategies" and "entertainment" suggest that these concepts are important in the player experience. These words reflect the high level of interest in creativity, character customisation, technological experience, strategy use and entertainment. At the same time, words such as "transmission," "expectation," "professions," and "interactive" also reveal the importance players place on in-game messaging, personal expectations, career choices, and interactivity. Overall, the word cloud map highlights the trend of players seeking deeper interactions and personalised experiences in Baldur's Gate 3.



Figure 1: Word Cloud Map

3.1.3. Tertiary coding analysis results

Table 2: Results of the three levels of coding for player agency, identity transformation and posthuman play

Level 1 Codes	Level 2 Codes	Level 3 Codes	Coding Implications
Player sovereignty	Decision-making and influence	Decision Impact	Player choices affect story development and character relationships.
	Explore and interact	Degrees of Freedom	Players can freely explore the world, communicate with characters and complete side quests.
		Battle Strategy	Players can adjust their team configuration according to enemy characteristics.
Role evolution	Character Development	Character Growth	Characters grow from a nobody to a hero.
		Camp Changes	Characters may change sides due to events.
	Capability Enhancement	Acquiring new skills	Acquire new skills and equipment by completing quests and battles.
Future and Reflection	Future oriented	Technology Fusion	Explore the fusion of humans and technology, such as artificial intelligence.
		Game Exploration	Video games as a platform for post-human exploration.
	reflect in depth	Philosophical Reflections	Challenge the definition of “human” and consider the impact of technological advances on human society.

The coding results were further analyzed in depth. In the in-depth analysis of the player experience of Baldur's Gate 3, it was found that player agency is at the core of the game experience, and that the player's choices have a profound impact on the game world, which is reflected not only in the direction of the story, but also in the relationships between the characters and the political landscape of the game world, and that the player's decision-making power and the high degree of freedom provided by the game allow the player to explore the game world in depth, interact with the NPCs, and complete various side quests. This exploration and interaction further enhances the player's immersion and makes them feel like they are truly in control of the game. In combat, players need to adjust their tactics and team configurations according to the characteristics of the enemy, and this strategic choice reflects the player's initiative and influence in the game (see Table 2).

Identity transformation is another important aspect of the player experience. In Baldur's Gate 3, players experience character growth and transformation, which includes not only the character's growth from a nobody to a hero, but also ability enhancements through completing quests and battles to gain new skills and equipment. These changes usually occur naturally as the storyline progresses, providing players with a rich role-playing experience. Character camp changes and identity shifts are part of the game's narrative, and they provide players with an opportunity to experience different identities and lives through their game characters.

The concept of post-human gaming is also reflected in Baldur's Gate 3. Although the game is primarily a fantasy title, it involves similar posthuman concepts such as the ability to use magic to transform the body and the existence of a combination of biological and mechanical beings. These elements challenge players' definitions of what it means to be human and prompt them to consider the impact of technological advances on human society. As an effective platform for post-human exploration, video games are able to present complex concepts in an intuitive and interactive way. To enhance this exploration, game developers can incorporate more philosophical reflections and social issues, allowing players to enjoy the game while reflecting on the world we live in and its future direction.

Overall, player agency, identity transformation, and post-human play are key experiences in Baldur's Gate 3, and together they constitute a deep engagement and emotional investment in the game. These elements not only provide players with a rich gaming experience, but also open up the possibility of games as tools for exploring and reflecting on real-world issues. Through these experiences, players are not only able to enjoy the game, but also to explore and experience different identities and possibilities in the virtual world, as well as to think deeply about the future of humanity in the real world.

3.2. Quantitative analysis results

3.2.1. Descriptive statistical analysis of demographic variables

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistical analysis of demographic variables, showing that the majority of participants are aged 18-24 (36.5%), followed by those under 18 (26.3%) and 25-34 (24.8%), with smaller proportions aged 35-44 (10.2%) and above 45 (2.2%). Males constitute 57.7% of respondents, while females account for 42.3%. Most participants spend 5-10 hours per week playing video games (53.3%), with 29.9% playing less than 5 hours, and smaller groups spending 11-20 hours (7.3%), 21-30 hours (6.6%), or more than 30 hours (2.9%). Regarding Baldur's Gate 3 (BG3) play frequency, 35% play several times a week, 28.5% play once a week, 19.7% play a few times a month, 13.1% rarely play, and only 3.6% play daily.

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the demographic variables, it can be found that the respondents were mainly concentrated in the younger age groups, especially participants aged 18-24 years old accounted for the largest proportion (36.5 %), followed by those aged 25-34 years old (24.8 %). In terms of gender distribution, there were slightly more male participants than female, accounting for 57.7% and 42.3% of the total sample respectively, but overall the gender ratio was more balanced. In terms of the amount of time spent playing video games per week, the majority of participants played between 5 and 10 hours (53.3%), while only a few would spend more than 30 hours per week playing games (2.9%). Regarding the frequency of playing Baldur's Gate 3, the statistics show that 'several times a week' is the most common frequency of playing the game among players (35%), followed closely by 'once a week' (28.5%). This suggests that the game is sticky enough to keep players coming back on a regular basis without overburdening them. The results of the demographic analyses show that the respondents were mainly young adults and showed a steady interest and moderate commitment to Baldur's Gate 3, suggesting that the respondents fit the characteristics of the research population for this study(see Table 1).

Table 3: Results of descriptive statistical analysis of demographic variables

variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 18 years old	36	26.3
	18-24 years old	50	36.5
	25-34 years old	34	24.8
	35-44 years old	14	10.2
	Above 45 years old	3	2.2
Gender	Male	79	57.7
	Female	58	42.3
Hours of video game play per week	Less than 5 hours	41	29.9
	5-10 hours	73	53.3
	11-20 hours	10	7.3
	21-30 hours	9	6.6
	More than 30 hours	4	2.9
Frequency of playing BG3	Rarely play	18	13.1
	A few times a month	27	19.7
	Once a week	39	28.5
	Several times a week	48	35
	Every day	5	3.6

3.2.2. Reliability analysis of the questionnaire

3.2.2.1. Reliability analysis

According to the results of the reliability test of the player experience questionnaire in Bode's Gate 3 in Table 4, it can be seen that the Cronbach Alpha is 0.896, that is, it has reached the standard of 0.7, so it is considered that the player experience questionnaire in Bode's Gate 3 has good internal consistency.

Table 4: Results of the reliability analysis of the questionnaire

Questionnaire.	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Questionnaire on the player experience in Baldur's Gate 3	0.896	14

3.2.2.2. Validity Analysis

According to the results of the validity test of the player experience questionnaire in Baldur's Gate 3 in Table 5, it can be seen that the KMO value is 0.873, which exceeds the validity test standard of 0.6, and the chi-square statistic of the Bartlett's sphere test reaches the significance level of 5%, so it is considered that the player experience questionnaire in Baldur's Gate 3 has good structural validity.

Table 5: Results of the validity analysis of the questionnaire

	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
		Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Questionnaire on the player experience in Baldur's Gate 3	0.873	935.556	91	0.000

3.2.3. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Perceptions and Attitudes of Player Agency

Based on the statistics of player agency in Baldur's Gate 3, it can be found that overall players hold more positive attitudes towards the freedom of decision-making in the game, the influence they have on the game world, and the reflection of their personal choices (Table 6). Specifically, about 38% of players felt they had a high degree of decision-making freedom in the game, while 35% felt their choices could significantly impact the game world, suggesting that the game succeeded in providing opportunities for players to feel engaged and able to shape the game experience. Meanwhile, some 33.6% of players say their in-game decisions reflect personal choices, further illustrating that games excel at personalisation and customisation. However, the data also reveals a degree of divergence, such as 23.4 % of players not fully agreeing that the game gives enough freedom, as well as almost half of players having reservations about the actual impact of their decisions, which could mean that despite the range of choices offered by the game, some players still feel that these choices do not result in the desired changes or consequences. Overall, the means for each of the items are above 3, suggesting that the majority of players have a positive view of the player agency offered in Baldur's Gate 3.

Table 6: Results of statistical analysis of player agency

Player agency	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	General (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean
I had a lot of freedom in decision making in Baldur's Gate 3.	2.2	23.4	16.1	38	20.4	3.51
The options in the game make me feel like I have influence over the game world.	4.4	15.3	14.6	30.7	35	3.77
The decisions I make in Baldur's Gate 3 reflect my personal choices.	5.1	14.6	14.6	33.6	32.1	3.73

3.2.4. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Attitudes towards Avatar Creation and Identity Transformation

Based on the results of the statistical analysis of avatar creation and identity transformation in Table 7, it can be seen that the majority of players (43.8%) stated that they created avatars in Baldur's Gate 3 in order to explore their different selves, which suggests that the game offers players the possibility to try out new identities. However, another 33.6% of players had a general attitude, which could mean that while they were not explicitly against it, they were not fully invested in this identity exploration. In addition, 8.8% of players strongly disagreed with this statement, possibly because they were more focused on the game itself than on identity exploration. Nearly half of the players (38.7%) agreed that each of their identity shifts in the game reflected their true thoughts, suggesting that identity shifts in the game were a way of expressing emotions and thoughts for many players. However, 28.5% of the players had a general attitude, which may mean that they sometimes try new identities in the game, but not every time. Meanwhile, 11.7% of the players disagreed with this view, which may be because they see gaming more as a recreational activity rather than a tool for self-expression. Taken together, we can see that Baldur's Gate 3 offers players a wealth of identity exploration opportunities, especially for those who seek to experiment with different selves and express their true thoughts.

Table 7: Results of statistical analysis of incarnation creation and identity transformation

Avatar Creation and Identity Transformation	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	General (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean
I created avatars in Baldur's Gate 3 as a way to explore my different selves.	8.8	8.8	33.6	43.8	5.1	3.28
Each of my identity shifts in Baldur's Gate 3 reflects my true self.	5.1	11.7	28.5	38.7	16.1	3.49

3.2.5. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Relationship between Avatars and Real Identities

Based on the results of the statistical analysis of avatars and real-life identities in Table 8, the mean value of 'Experienced real-life unattainable identities through avatars' is 3.36, indicating that on average, players tend to agree that they experienced real-life unattainable identities through avatars. This suggests that avatars provide players with an opportunity to explore and experience different identities that may not be feasible or limited in real life. The mean value of 3.39 for 'accomplished things through avatars that are restricted in real life' suggests that players generally felt that avatars enabled them to accomplish activities that are restricted in real life, which may include physical, socio-cultural, or legal restrictions. The mean value of 3.41 for 'The avatar I created reflects my ideal state in many ways' suggests that the majority of players believe that their avatars reflect their ideal state in some way, which may include idealised physical appearance, abilities, personality traits, etc. Overall, players use games such as Baldur's Gate 3 to explore and experience identities and activities that they may not be able to realise in real life, and in-game avatars have the potential to be a tool for players to express and explore their personal and social identities.

Table 8: Results of statistical analysis of avatar and real identity

Avatars and real-life identities	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	General (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean
I experience identities through avatars that are not possible in real life.	6.6	13.9	32.1	32.1	15.3	3.36
I have accomplished things through avatars that are limited in real life.	8.0	10.9	30.7	35	15.3	3.39
The avatar I created reflects my ideal state in many ways.	7.3	14.6	24.1	38	16.1	3.41

3.2.6. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Posthuman Game Experience

Based on the results of the statistical analysis of post-human gaming experience in Table 9, it can be seen that more than half of the players said that they understand the concept of post-human gaming, which indicates that most of the players have some knowledge of the topic. However, 13.9% of the players strongly disagreed with this statement, which could be due to their lack of understanding of post-human gaming or their lack of interest in the concept. Meanwhile, 15.3% of players had an average attitude, which could mean that they have heard of post-human games but have not delved

into them. Again, more than 50% of players believe that Baldur's Gate 3 contains post-human elements, suggesting that most players are able to recognise such elements during gameplay. However, 18.2% of players disagreed with this opinion, which could be because they did not notice the post-human traits in the game or they did not have a deep enough understanding of post-human games. To sum up the affiliation, it can be concluded that Baldur's Gate 3 contains some post-human elements and some players are aware of them.

Table 9: Results of statistical analyses of post-human game experience

The Posthuman Game Experience	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	General (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean
I understand the concept of post-human gaming.	13.9	10.9	15.3	32.8	27	3.48
I think Baldur's Gate 3 contains post-human elements.	5.1	18.2	24.8	27.7	24.1	3.47

3.2.7. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of relationship between video games and post-human identity exploration

According to the results of the statistical analysis of the relationship between video games and post-human identity exploration in Table 10, it can be seen that in terms of physical gain and identity transformation, 35.8% of players agreed that they had explored these concepts through games, and another 32.8% strongly agreed with this, with a mean of 3.66, which shows that most players believe that games provide opportunities to try out new identities and enhance their abilities. In response to the question of whether identity exploration was accomplished through gaming, 29.9% of players strongly agreed and 32.1% agreed with this, with a mean of 3.52, indicating that a significant portion of players did find room in games to achieve identity transformation. Furthermore, when assessing whether video games are an effective tool for exploring post-human themes, 41.6% of players agreed and another 11.7% strongly agreed, with a mean of 3.34. This data suggests that many players recognise the ability of games to provide a platform for experiencing and reflecting on identities and ways of being that transcend traditional human boundaries. Although 9.5% of players strongly disagreed with this, the overall trend suggests that the majority of players believe that video games are indeed effective in facilitating the exploration of post-human themes. Finally, when asked if they would recommend that video games provide more opportunities for identity exploration and transformation, 34.3% of players agreed, and another 17.5% strongly agreed, with a mean of 3.36. This not only reflects players' recognition of the identity exploration features currently offered by games, but also expresses their anticipation for more such content in the future. Taken together, these statistics strongly support the position of Baldur's Gate 3, and video games more broadly, as effective vehicles for post-human identity exploration. Not only do games allow players to experiment with new identities and states of being in virtual worlds, they also stimulate interest and reflection on the concept of posthumanity. To further enhance this role, developers could consider adding more in-depth customisation options and narrative elements to better meet players' needs for identity exploration.

Table 10: Results of statistical analyses of the relationship between video games and post-human identity exploration

Video Games and the Exploration of Posthuman Identity	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	General (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Mean
I explored the concepts of physical enhancement and identity transformation through Baldur's Gate 3.	10.9	13.1	7.3	35.8	32.8	3.66
I have completed an identity exploration through Baldur's Gate 3.	13.1	13.9	10.9	32.1	29.9	3.52
I believe that video games are an effective tool for exploring post-human themes.	9.5	12.4	24.8	41.6	11.7	3.34
I suggest that video games should provide more opportunities for identity exploration and transformation.	8.8	16.1	23.4	34.3	17.5	3.36

4. Discussion

The qualitative analysis of Baldur's Gate 3 (BOD 3) player experiences reveals significant insights into how the game engages players through agency, identity transformation, and post-human concepts. A diverse respondent sample, including both veteran and novice players, provided valuable perspectives, highlighting how different levels of familiarity with gaming affect engagement with the game's mechanics and storytelling. Word cloud analysis identified key themes such as creativity, personality customization, strategy, and technology, underscoring the appeal of personal expression, strategic depth, and technical innovation in the game. Tertiary coding further explored three central themes: player agency, where choices impact the game's narrative and world; identity transformation, where players witness their characters evolve through in-game decisions; and post-human play, which examines themes of technology and humanity through the game's fantasy setting. The implications of these findings suggest that Baldur's Gate 3, and similar RPGs, have the potential to function as more than recreational platforms. They offer opportunities for players to engage in identity exploration, philosophical reflection, and interaction with complex societal themes. For game developers, these insights point to the value of integrating more narrative pathways, complex decision-making, and thematic challenges into game design. This can foster deeper emotional and intellectual engagement from players, enhancing both the entertainment value and the social relevance of video games [7]. Future research could build upon these findings by exploring how different demographics, such as age groups or cultural backgrounds, interact with the themes of agency, identity, and post-humanism in RPGs, potentially leading to more inclusive and diversified game experiences.

The quantitative analysis of Baldur's Gate 3 provides a detailed understanding of player demographics, agency, and identity transformation. The data reveals that younger gamers, particularly those aged 18-24, are the most active, consistent with industry trends that highlight the prominence of this age group in gaming communities. Players appreciate the game's ability to deliver an engaging experience without requiring excessive time commitment, as reflected in the moderate

weekly playtime reported by most respondents. The game's mechanics, particularly in terms of player agency and avatar customization, are widely praised for enhancing immersion and personal expression, though some players express dissatisfaction with the level of control they feel over in-game outcomes. Notably, the game facilitates exploration of posthuman themes, with many players using their avatars to experiment with alternative identities, reflecting a broader interest in transcending real-world limitations. This suggests that video games like Baldur's Gate 3 are becoming significant platforms for self-exploration, allowing players to navigate complex questions of identity, agency, and transformation in ways that resonate with their personal experiences.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative potential of Baldur's Gate 3 (BG3) as a significant platform for identity exploration and bodily experimentation within the realm of posthuman gaming. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research reveals how players engage with the game to navigate their personal and social identities, utilizing avatar customization and relationship-building features to express aspects of themselves that may be constrained in real life. The qualitative findings underscore the game's appeal across diverse demographics, emphasizing themes of agency, identity transformation, and the interplay between technology and humanity. Quantitative data further indicates that younger players actively engage with BG3, finding value in its narrative depth and immersive mechanics. As video games increasingly reflect contemporary sociocultural dynamics, BG3 exemplifies how they can transcend traditional entertainment roles, fostering inclusive communities and offering a space for players to challenge societal norms and engage in profound self-exploration. Future research should continue to examine how various demographics interact with these themes, further enhancing the understanding of video games as sites of identity and agency.

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