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Constructing an Immersive Virtual IP-Themed Restaurant from an Experience Economy Perspective: A Case Study of the Final Fantasy XIV-Themed Hydaelyn Cafe

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Abstract

This paper investigates how Hydaelyn Cafe enhances the immersion and participation of Final Fantasy XIV players through the construction of offline contextual experience and online instant interaction. Hydaelyn Cafe recreates the scene of The Last Stand, the restaurant in the game, through the design of the scene and the presentation of the food. Through these designs, Hydaelyn Cafe brings the visual and atmospheric elements of the game world into reality, allowing players to enjoy an immersive experience in the real space. By encouraging interaction between players through role-playing, give aways swaps and other activities, Hydaelyn Cafe reinforces players' sense of belonging to the gaming community. In addition, Hydaelyn Cafe's official Weibo account successfully capitalises on this social aspect by communicating with players instantly, showcasing players' photos, artwork and immersive interactions and providing emotional value, successfully capitalising on the interactive nature of this social media. Based on Pine and Gilmore's experience economy theory, this paper analyses how Hydaelyn Cafe enhances the emotional value of its customers through multi-sensory experiences and respect for player subjectivity. The paper points out that Hydaelyn Cafe can evoke players' emotional memories by recreating the game scenes, so that the emotional responses in the experience economy can be realised. The findings suggest that the online and offline immersive experiences at Hydaelyn Cafe successfully merge the virtual with the real, enhancing players' subjectivity and emotional connection.

Keywords: Experience economy, MMORPG, immersive experience, Final Fantasy 14, theme restaurant, Weibo.