

602 Capstone Proposal – “Passport, Please!”

Paper 5: Intercultural Communication/Leadership and Diversity Section

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The “Passport, Please!” project is an Intercultural experience. Its core exemplifies the many hurdles a migrant needs to traverse when landing in a new country. “Passport, Please!” immerses players in the nuanced dynamics of immigration, shedding light on the diverse experiences of migrants and the biases they face during border control encounters. As players engage in dialogue with immigration officers, the game highlights how preconceived notions of communication norms can influence the officer's decisions, introducing another layer of complexity to the migrant experience. There is precedent for video games, putting the player in a place where social injustices are examined through the game (Hawreliak & Lemieux, 2020).

Central to the gameplay is recognizing potential biases immigration officers may hold towards migrants. These biases, influenced by stereotypes and preconceived notions, can impact the officer's perceptions and treatment of the migrant. By confronting players with the consequences of biased attitudes, the game prompts reflection on the importance of fairness and impartiality in immigration procedures.

One dimension of diversity explored in “Passport, Please!” is ethnicity. The game presents players with characters from various ethnic backgrounds, each facing unique challenges and prejudices. Immigration officers may harbor biases against certain nationalities, leading to differential treatment based on stereotypes or geopolitical tensions (Johnson, 2022). For example, a migrant from a marginalized or conflict-affected region may encounter greater scrutiny or suspicion compared to migrants from more affluent or politically favored countries (Shaw, 2011). By confronting players with these biases, the game prompts reflection on the importance of addressing systemic discrimination and promoting equality within immigration systems.

Furthermore, "Passport, Please!" delves into the intersectionality of ethnicity and perceived economic background in shaping the migrant experience. Immigration officers may unconsciously associate certain ethnicities with specific socioeconomic statuses, leading to differential treatment based on assumptions about the migrant's financial resources or social standing. For instance, a migrant from a lower-income background may face more significant skepticism or barriers to entry compared to a migrant perceived as affluent or privileged (Durante & Fiske, 2017). Through exploring these dynamics, the game highlights the complexities of navigating immigration systems and the need to address biases based on ethnicity and economic status.

Another dimension of bias explored in "Passport, Please!" is the skepticism and discrimination young females face when pursuing STEM jobs. Despite advancements in gender equality, women continue to encounter barriers and stereotypes that undermine their abilities and aspirations in STEM fields (Olier & Spadavecchia, 2022). Immigration officers may harbor biases against female migrants pursuing careers in STEM, questioning their competence or suitability based on outdated notions of gender roles and capabilities. For example, a female migrant applying for a STEM-related work visa may face greater scrutiny or skepticism compared to her male counterparts, reflecting deep-rooted biases that persist within society.

Subsequently, "Passport, Please!" delves into the impact of cultural communication styles on the migrant experience. Immigration officers may unconsciously favor communication styles that align with their cultural norms, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of migrant intentions or responses (Lavey & Cheng, 2021). For instance, a migrant from a culture that values indirect communication or non-verbal cues may be perceived as evasive or uncooperative by an officer accustomed to direct communication styles. Through exploring these

dynamics, the game highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and awareness in border control interactions, challenging players to recognize and overcome biases based on communication norms.

While "Passport, Please!" offers a compelling exploration of diversity and inclusion within immigration processes, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the depth and breadth of the player experience. One significant limitation is the availability of research and resources in the language of the migrant, which may hinder the game's ability to accurately portray the nuances of cultural norms, communication styles, and societal biases unique to specific linguistic communities. Without access to comprehensive research and firsthand accounts in the language of the migrant, the game may inadvertently overlook critical cultural nuances and perpetuate stereotypes or inaccuracies.

Furthermore, "Passport, Please!" may be limited in the range of experiences portrayed, particularly in its representation of diverse migration narratives. While the game introduces players to characters from various backgrounds and circumstances, there remains a need for a more comprehensive exploration of different migration experiences, such as refugees fleeing conflict or persecution, family-oriented migration, or migrants seeking asylum. By expanding the scope of experiences portrayed in the game, developers can provide a more inclusive and representative depiction of the migrant journey, offering players a richer and more nuanced understanding of immigration dynamics.

To address these limitations, future iterations of "Passport, Please!" could incorporate additional research and firsthand accounts from migrants, particularly those from underrepresented linguistic communities. By conducting more interviews with migrants and collaborating with experts in language and cultural studies, developers can ensure that the game

accurately reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives within immigrant communities. Additionally, expanding the roster of immigration officers and biases encountered in the game can provide players with a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges migrants face during border encounters. By incorporating more varied scenarios and interactions, developers can create a more immersive and impactful player experience that fosters empathy, understanding, and advocacy for diversity and inclusion within immigration processes.

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