

Research on the Influence Path of Two-Dimensional Cultural Image on Adolescents' Values

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Abstract: This study takes 344 adolescents in Beijing and Shandong as the research object, and uses the method of questionnaire survey and literature analysis to explore the influence path of two-dimensional cultural images on adolescents' values. The study found that the two-dimensional culture deeply penetrates the daily life of young people through a variety of communication channels. In terms of value influence, 49.42 % of adolescents believe that the two-dimensional culture brings 'positive influence is greater than negative influence', which is mainly reflected in broadening their horizons, affecting aesthetic standards and shaping positive life attitudes. The study constructs a four-dimensional influence model of content characteristics-contact mode-cognitive processing-value shaping, and proposes to guide the healthy development of young people's values by strengthening media literacy education and promoting cultural integration.

Keywords: Two-Dimensional Culture; Youth Values; Influence Path; Cultural Communication; Media Literacy

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of digital technology and the comprehensive popularization of the Internet, the two-dimensional culture has gradually evolved from a marginal subculture to a widely influential youth mainstream cultural form. According to the latest data of China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), the scale of secondary users in China has exceeded 500 million, of which teenagers account for more than 60 %. As a national cultural center, Beijing's secondary cultural participation of adolescents is as high as 87.3 %, which is significantly higher than the national average (China Youth New Media Association, 2024). This cultural phenomenon has attracted great attention from academia and policy makers, especially its potential impact on young people who are in a critical period of value formation.^[1]

As a composite media form that integrates visual art, narrative text and interactive experience, the two-dimensional cultural image constructs a unique symbol system and meaning space through various forms such as animation, comics, games and virtual idols. Previous studies have shown that adolescents interpret and internalize these cultural products through the 'encoding-decoding' mechanism (Hall, 1980), which may have a profound impact on their aesthetic orientation, moral judgment and social cognition. According to the *Youth Online Cultural Consumption Report* issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League in 2023, 62.7 % of young people recognize that secondary content has a certain or significant impact on the formation of their values.^[2]

The theoretical significance of this study is to expand the cross field of media effect research and youth culture research, and to construct a theoretical model of the influence of two-dimensional culture on values. The practical value is reflected in providing empirical policy recommendations for the work of the Communist Youth League, school education and family guidance, and promoting the formation of a collaborative mechanism for cultural education.^[3] At the methodological level, the research adopts a mixed research method combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, through 344 valid questionnaires and in-depth interview data, to ensure the scientificity and reliability of the research conclusions.

2. The development status of two-dimensional culture and the characteristics of adolescent contact

2.1 The localization development process of two-dimensional culture

The spread and development of the two-dimensional culture in China has undergone a transformation process from introduction and imitation to local innovation. In the 1980 s, the introduction of Japanese animations such as *Iron Arm Astro Boy* and *Smart Holiday* opened the embryonic stage of China 's two-dimensional culture. After entering the 21 st century, with the popularization of Internet technology and the maturity of ACGN (animation, comics, games, novels) industry, the two-dimensional culture has gradually formed a complete ecosystem. It is particularly noteworthy that in recent years, China 's secondary market has shown distinct localization characteristics. In 2023, the proportion of domestic original animation has reached 47.6 %, an increase of 23 percentage points compared with 2018 (iResearch, 2024).^[4] Works such as *White Snake : Origin* have successfully combined traditional cultural elements with modern animation technology to create a new national style aesthetic style with Chinese characteristics.

Technological innovation continues to promote the morphological evolution of the two-dimensional culture. The application of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence technology has transformed the two-dimensional experience from plane to three-dimensional, from one-way reception to interactive participation. Innovative forms such as the holographic concert of virtual singer Luo Tianyi and the open world design of the *original spirit* of mobile games have greatly enhanced the immersion and participation of young people. This phenomenon blurs the boundary between virtuality and reality, and provides new channels and possibilities for the dissemination of values.^[5]

2.2 The Basic Characteristics of Teenagers ' Contact with Two-dimensional Culture

Table 1: Basic situation of adolescents ' exposure to two-dimensional culture (N = 344)

Dimension	Category	Percentage (%)	Key Characteristics
Age Distribution	19-22 years	83.72	Predominantly higher education stage
Gender Ratio	Female	62.21	Significant gender disparity
Exposure Frequency	Daily exposure	35.17	Over one-third are high-frequency users
Primary Channels	Social media	82.85	Digital communication dominates
Exposure Duration	Over 5 years	34.3	Stable user groups formed

Through Table 1, we can learn that among the 344 adolescents surveyed, the 19-22 age group accounts for as high as 83.72 %, which is closely related to the fact that the age group is in the higher education stage and has more cultural consumption time and resources. In terms of gender distribution, female respondents accounted for 62.21 % and male respondents accounted for 37.79 %, reflecting that the two-dimensional culture is more attractive among female adolescents. The results of the questionnaire survey show that 87.21 % of the respondents currently live in cities in terms of geographical distribution, indicating that the spread of the two-dimensional culture is significantly related to the urbanization process.

Table 1 shows that in terms of contact frequency, 35.17 % of respondents are exposed to two-dimensional culture every day. The results of the questionnaire survey showed that 17.73 % of the respondents were interviewed several times a week. More than half of them (52.9 %) show that the secondary dimension has become an important part of the daily cultural life of adolescents. Table 1 shows that social media (82.85 %) is the main channel for teenagers to contact the two-dimensional culture, and 53.78 % of the respondents in the questionnaire survey also said that they contact the two-dimensional culture through the online video platform. It can be seen that traditional TV media is no longer the main route of transmission. The change of media usage habits makes the spread of two-dimensional culture more fragmented, personalized and interactive.

The contact duration data in Table 1 shows that 34.3 % of the respondents have been exposed to the two-dimensional culture for more than 5 years. The questionnaire survey results show that 35.17 % of the respondents have been exposed to the two-dimensional culture for less than 1 year, showing a clear polarization trend. In-depth analysis found that long-term contacts mostly form stable interest circles and consumption habits, while short-term contacts are more susceptible to popular trends. This difference may lead to a significant difference in the value acceptance mechanism.

2.3 The way and motivation of adolescents to participate in the two-dimensional culture

The survey data reveal the diverse ways in which adolescents participate in the two-dimensional

culture. 74.71 % participated in watching animation / comics, 56.69 % chose playing games, 23.55 % participated in online discussion, and 17.73 % participated in offline activities. This multi-participation model forms a complete ecological chain from consumption to production, from online to offline. It is worth noting that 15.7 % of young people are engaged in fan fiction. This creative activity not only strengthens cultural identity, but also cultivates media production capacity in the digital age.

In terms of preference elements, 70.35 % of teenagers prefer exquisite pictures and painting style, 61.63 % like unique role setting, 60.47 % focus on rich plot, and 51.16 % are attracted by creative world view. These aesthetic preferences reflect teenagers' comprehensive pursuit of artistry, narrative and imagination in the two-dimensional culture. Further analysis found that women pay more attention to role emotion and plot development ($\chi^2 = 8.32$, $p < 0.01$), while men pay more attention to worldview construction and technical performance ($\chi^2 = 6.45$, $p < 0.05$). This gender difference provides an important basis for targeted cultural guidance.

Motivation analysis showed that adolescents' exposure to secondary culture was mainly due to the needs of entertainment and relaxation (78.6 %), escaping from reality pressure (43.2 %), seeking identity (37.8 %) and acquiring knowledge (25.4 %). These motivations are highly consistent with the psychological characteristics of the adolescent development stage, which explains the deep reason why the two-dimensional culture continues to be popular among the youth group. It is worth noting that with the Z generation becoming the main user, the two-dimensional culture has gradually changed from a simple entertainment mode to a symbol of identity and a medium of social communication.

3. The influence mechanism of secondary cultural images on adolescents' values

3.1 The Multidimensional Manifestation of the Influence of Values

This study finds that the influence of two-dimensional culture on adolescents' values presents complex multi-dimensional characteristics. According to the survey data, 49.42 % of respondents believe that the positive impact is greater than the negative impact of the two-dimensional culture, only 3.49 % of respondents believe that the negative impact is greater than the positive impact, and 13.66 % of respondents believe that the positive and negative effects are equal. This result alleviates the society's excessive concern about the negative impact of the two-dimensional culture to a certain extent, but it also suggests that it is necessary to pay attention to its potential risks.

In terms of specific impact dimensions, 57.56 % of respondents believe that the two-dimensional culture has broadened their horizons and ways of thinking, 55.81 % of respondents say that it has affected aesthetic preferences and aesthetic standards, 45.35 % of respondents think that it has shaped a positive attitude towards life, and 43.9 % of respondents feel that it has enhanced cultural identity and sense of belonging. These data confirm the positive function of two-dimensional culture as a carrier of soft education. Typical cases such as the transmission of Partner Spirit in *The Pirate King* all show the unique educational potential of the two-dimensional image.

However, studies have also found negative effects that need to be vigilant. 8.43 % of respondents were completely unacceptable to the controversial content in the second dimension, such as violence and extremism, and 41.28 % of respondents still felt some influence although they could treat it rationally. In-depth interviews reveal that some teenagers unconsciously imitate the language violence and behavior of the characters in the works, or over-involvement in the virtual world leads to the degradation of real social skills. These phenomena confirm the acculturation theory (Gerbner et al., 1986)'s assertion that media content has a long-term impact on audience cognition.^[6]

3.2 The key link affecting the path

Based on the survey data and theoretical analysis, this study constructs a four-dimensional path model of the influence of two-dimensional culture on adolescents' values.

Path one is the content feature dimension. The two-dimensional works influence through three sub-paths: role shaping (such as heroic role triggering value identity), narrative structure (such as growth story conveying struggle spirit) and visual symbols (such as Moe style influencing aesthetic standards). The data in Table 2 shows that 61.63 % of adolescents pay special attention to 'role setting', which confirms the importance of role model mechanism.

Path two is the dimension of contact mode. It mainly includes three sub-paths: contact frequency

(high-frequency contacts have more significant changes in values), participation (creators are more affected than consumers) and social interaction (community strengthens value identity). The data in Table 2 shows that the value change rate of adolescents participating in fan creation is 34.7 %, which is significantly higher than 18.2 % of simple consumers ($\chi^2 = 9.87$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Four-dimensional path model of the influence of two-dimensional culture on adolescents' values

Dimension	Core Elements	Mechanism	Empirical Support
Content Characteristics	Characters/Narrative/Visuals	Symbolic meaning construction	61.63% focus on character design
Exposure Methods	Frequency/Level/Interaction	Usage intensity differences	34.7% change rate among creators
Cognitive Processing	Cognition/Emotion/Behavior	Psychological internalization	20.64% report behavioral changes
Moderating Factors	Individual/Social/Cultural	Influence effect moderation	Significant gender/urban-rural differences

Path three is the cognitive processing dimension. It mainly covers three psychological mechanisms : cognitive schema (new knowledge integration), emotional resonance (emotional contagion) and behavioral imitation (observational learning). In the results of the questionnaire survey, 57.56 % of the respondents agreed that the second dimension broadens the way of thinking. The data in Table 2 show that 20.64 % of the respondents admitted to having experienced changes in behavior or way of thinking, which verifies the explanatory power of social learning theory (Bandura, 1986).

Path four is the adjustment factor dimension. It mainly includes three types of adjustment variables : individual characteristics (age, gender, personality, etc.), social environment (family, school, peer influence) and cultural differences (degree of localization). For example, women scored significantly higher than men in ' emotional resonance ' ($t = 3.21$, $p < 0.01$), and urban adolescents were more likely to accept multiple values than rural adolescents ($\chi^2 = 5.76$, $p < 0.05$).^[7]

3.3 The value guidance of localization creation

The localization of Chinese two-dimensional culture provides a unique opportunity for the guidance of values. In recent years, *Wushan Five Elements* and other works of *Chinese choir* have integrated traditional elements such as ink painting and ancient poetry with modern animation technology, creating a unique cultural identity effect. In the survey, 62.21 % of adolescents supported encouraging the combination of two-dimensional culture and traditional culture , which was more obvious among respondents who participated in Hanfu activities (73.5 % vs 56.8 %, $\chi^2 = 7.89$, $p < 0.01$).

Technology empowerment enhances the effectiveness of the dissemination of values. For example, *Flying Skin* , a collaboration between *King Glory* and Dunhuang Academy, conveys traditional cultural aesthetics through game characters, so that 82.6 % of young players express enhanced interest in Dunhuang art (Tencent Research Institute, 2023). This game-based learning model provides a new idea for values education.

However, in the process of localization, it also faces the tension between globalization and nationalization. Some teenagers form aesthetic dependence on Japanese painting style, and have low acceptance of domestic works. Others show a strong sense of cultural protection. This differentiation suggests that local creation needs to respect the aesthetic habits of young people while maintaining the cultural core, and avoid simple preaching.^[8]

4. Guiding strategies and policy recommendations

4.1 Construction of multi-agent collaborative guidance system

Based on the research findings, this paper proposes to establish a four-dimensional collaborative guidance system of family-school-government-industry .

At the family level : the survey showed that 63.37 % of adolescents believe that parents should pay attention to their children 's interests. It is suggested that parents should establish an open and equal communication mechanism by watching and discussing the two-dimensional works together. For the 12-15-year-old group, parents can use the content grading tool to select the appropriate works to enjoy

together.

At the school level : 70.93 % of the respondents supported strengthening youth media literacy education . Schools should incorporate two-dimensional works into the case base of media education to cultivate students critical interpretation ability. For example, through the comparative analysis of *Those Years*, *Those Rabbits*, *Those Stories* and Japanese historical theme animation, the historical cognition and identification ability of teenagers are improved.

Government level : 50.87 % of young people think that it is necessary to improve the audit and supervision mechanism. It is suggested to improve the content classification system, establish a three-level early warning system of red, yellow and blue, and give financial support and promotion incentives to outstanding works that promote positive energy. Beijing can pilot the youth cultural product recommendation directory system.

Industrial level : 51.16 % of respondents expect more high-quality cultural products. It encourages enterprises to develop innovative products that integrate traditional culture and modern science and technology, such as the *Picture True · Wonderful Thousand Hills* game in cooperation between the Palace Museum and Netease, which not only maintains the artistic level but also achieves the goal of cultural communication.^[9]

4.2 Cultural integration and innovation path

It is a long-term strategy to promote the organic integration of two-dimensional culture and mainstream value.

Strategy one is content fusion. The results of the questionnaire survey showed that 62.5 % of the respondents agreed to strengthen the positive publicity of the two-dimensional culture. Therefore, we should support the creation of original IP that reflects the spirit of the times. The anti-epidemic theme animation *Chinese Doctor* has been widely praised by teenagers.

Strategy two is form innovation. VR / AR technology is used to create an immersive cultural experience. For example, the digital Dunhuang project has increased the willingness of young people to visit by 40 %. Beijing can take advantage of cultural resources to develop innovative products such as digital central axis.

Strategy three is community governance. We should cultivate a healthy and upward fan culture circle and employ network culture instructors to enter the main platform. The experience of B station 's positive energy plan shows that high-quality content recommendation can improve community ecology.

Strategy four is the evaluation system. We should establish a multi-dimensional evaluation index including artistic value, educational significance and market response, so as to avoid the only flow theory. Beijing Youth League School can take the lead in formulating *the Two-dimensional Cultural Product Evaluation Guide*.^[10]

4.3 Research and Education Support System

Perfect research and education support is the basis of scientific guidance.

4.3.1 Research assistant

The state should set up a special research fund to encourage colleges and universities to cooperate with industry to carry out follow-up research. As this study found, more than 5 years of follow-up data can accurately assess the long-term effects of values.

4.3.2 Teacher training

We can set up new media culture education courses in normal universities to improve teachers ' ability to use two-dimensional resources. Beijing can take the lead in piloting the certification system of youth cultural tutors.

4.3.3 Build a resource platform

The results of the questionnaire survey showed that 55.52 % of respondents wanted to get health content recommendations. Therefore, we should build an open two-dimensional education resource platform to provide works interpretation and teaching programs that have been reviewed by education experts.

4.3.4 International exchanges

We can learn from Japan's cool Japan strategy and South Korea's cultural founding policy experience, organize activities such as China-Japan-South Korea youth animation creation camp, and enhance cultural self-confidence in opening up.

5. Conclusion

In a word, the two-dimensional culture, as an important cultural context for the growth of teenagers in the digital age, needs to be guided by the open and inclusive attitude and scientific and rational methods of all sectors of society, so as to make it a fertile soil for nourishing the spiritual world of teenagers and cultivating the core values of socialism. As an interviewee said: 'A good two-dimensional work is like a mirror, let us see the real ourselves in fantasy, and think about serious life in entertainment. This may be the true meaning of the two-dimensional cultural value.'

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