

A Study of American Readers' Reception of Chinese Children's Books—In-depth Interviews Based on a Comparative Perspective between Chinese and American Readers

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to investigate the acceptance of Chinese children's books by American audiences through in-depth interviews. The study is defined as the investigation of two key questions: whether American audiences perceive the cultural proximity between China and the United States and influences their acceptance of Chinese children's books; and whether ethical phenomena presented in children's books influence American audiences' perceptions of Chinese children's books. The interview group discovered that the assumptions of Chinese audiences differ greatly from the actual perceptions of American audiences by comparing interviews with 53 Chinese audiences and 51 American audiences. In this sense, cross-cultural communication should emphasize analyzing cultural differences rather than focusing solely on cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural, American Audiences, Chinese Children's Books, Reception, In-Depth Interviews

1. Introduction

The role of books in China's exchanges with the world is becoming increasingly important. Through the "China Book Promotion Program" and the "Go Global" campaign, more Chinese books are reaching American readers abroad. It is unfortunate that there is still a deficit in the import and export of Chinese books, a situation that also reveals problems regarding poor market research and inadequate adaptation to the needs of local readers. Most scholars have focused on the macro level of cultural export and cross-cultural communication when discussing this issue, but they have not paid much attention to the micro level of the books themselves, focusing primarily on the translation strategies of the works.

A post-epidemic world needs to understand China and China needs to integrate better into the world, as multilateralism suffers and the world situation becomes more complex and volatile. As major world powers, the United States and China are increasingly interacting economically, culturally, and politically. Currently, books play a key role in shaping culture, influencing people's perceptions and worldviews, and helping them develop their worldviews and values. Furthermore, children's books serve as a mirror of American culture for Chinese audiences in addition to providing them with a deeper and more authentic understanding of Chinese culture. As a contrast, how has the 'Chinese style' been disseminated in the United States? Is it common for American audiences to read and enjoy Chinese children's books? How do American audiences perceive Chinese and American culture and how do they identify with Chinese children's books?

In the United States, "The Chinese wind is blowing strongly. There are more and more people learning Chinese than ever before." (Wang Chuan, 2009). The term "Chinese wind is blowing" is used only in this article to refer to the process of learning Chinese, and not to other forms of cultural transmission. As Zhang Debin (2009) points out in his article "The Chinese wind is not blowing in the United States," Chinese cultural products are uncommon on the American market, and the phenomenon of Chinese wind has little to do with popular culture. Based on these phenomena and judgments, an in-depth interview research study was conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 among American audiences. In the same period, the visiting team asked the same questions to Chinese audiences so that assumptions could be drawn from the perspective of American audiences and cross-cultural comparisons could be

drawn and relevant reflections could be made. In order to understand the actual acceptance of Chinese children's books by the American audience and its consistency with the assumptions made by the Chinese audience, the author reviewed the literature that could be gathered and pre-surveyed five audiences in China and the United States. The study was then focused on two basic questions: (1) Does the cultural proximity between China and the United States influence the American audience's acceptance of Chinese children's books? (2) Is the ethical phenomenon presented in children's books influencing American audiences' perceptions of Chinese children's books?

A premise was set for the interview team: "If you were an American, how would you respond to the following questions?" In an attempt to understand the assumptions of the Chinese interviewees, the interview team asked the Chinese audience the same six aspects of questions they used to interview the American audience. Their hypotheses are listed below.

1.1. American Audiences Believe That Chinese and American Cultures Are Closely Related and Generally Enjoy, Understand, and Identify with Chinese Children's Literature

According to the majority of Chinese respondents, Chinese children's books would be more popular and purchased at a higher rate in the US as a result of the similarities between Chinese and American cultures. "Many Chinese children's books have American pop culture characteristics and are similar to American culture, which makes them easier for American audiences to accept," said a 22-year-old university student from Jiangsu. A 42-year-old female college teacher stated, "Historically, Americans have enjoyed Chinese culture." Another middle-aged woman agreed that "70% of Americans should like Chinese children's books because the philosophy of life, food habits, and clothing are different, and they should be able to understand the thinking and complex and subtle relationships of Chinese children's book characters." Furthermore, Chinese respondents expressed the belief that Americans would enjoy Chinese history children's books particularly. The 33-year-old media personality stated: "I heard (in the newspapers) that children's books about Chinese history, such as Three Kingdoms and Crouching Blood, are widely available in the United States. These historical stories will be made known to them by this cultural identity." In the opinion of a 40-year-old foreign employee, Chinese children's books should create a trend in early education in the USA to a certain extent. They may be more interested in ancient educational topics because they value Confucian culture." An American college student of 20 years said that Chinese historical works would be of greater interest to Americans, particularly middle-aged men. As a 30-year-old male corporate employee commented, "Americans are often influenced by ancient Chinese culture, particularly middle-aged and older people, and should therefore be interested in children's books that discuss Confucius or ancient literature." Chinese classic storytelling children's books are often chosen for early education by older American audiences due to the similarities between China's history and theirs, as well as the values and virtues they have developed in common, while Chinese children's books on friendship, science, and geography are more frequently purchased by younger audiences. Among the respondents, more than half believed that Chinese children's books would have a greater impact on American audiences because of their cultural identity than other Asian children's books; Almost all respondents believed that American audiences would be more interested in children's books published on Taiwan than those published on the Mainland because "the creative style of Taiwan children's books is more similar to that of American children's books." In many ways, these books are closer to Chinese and international cultures, especially in the way they express some human relationships".

1.2. The Moral Values of China and the United States Are Similar, and the Ethical Phenomena Illustrated in Chinese Children's Books Do Not Influence American Audiences' Perceptions of Chinese Children's Books

It was agreed by all Chinese interviewees that ethical elements do not affect the acceptance and perception of Chinese children's books by American audiences. According to one female editor, 46, moral education for children is not much different, and moral qualities such as honesty, self-confidence, and responsibility are encouraged in China as well as respected in the United States." "On the whole, the values for children's upbringing in China and the US are relatively similar, despite differences in everyday expressions, according to Zhou, a government civil servant." According to a 19-year-old male university student from Hebei, "American values and culture are more individualistic, but they maintain traditional family values." Therefore, it does not affect their acceptance of the ethics presented in Chinese children's books." According to a female university student in Zhejiang who is 21 years old, Chinese children's books may reflect hierarchical concepts more than native American children's books, however,

it does not seem to affect Americans much in reading Chinese children's books." A male student from Beijing University said, "There are common values between the two countries. For example, many of the children's book themes present interrelationships between home and school." The male employee of a cultural institution in Guangzhou said, "There is no influence, although the ethics are more complex in China." Sun, the employee of a cultural institution, stated, "Pretty much, it does not affect me. When I read children's books, I do not think about it much." According to Lin, a corporate employee, "I believe American family ethics are very similar to Chinese family ethics." It is likely that the US will also consider this aspect when introducing Chinese children's books."

2. Methodology

Among the main qualitative research methods, the in-depth interview is used to understand the lifestyles and experiences of social groups through in-depth interviews with respondents, to determine the processes by which certain social phenomena are formed, and to propose solutions to social problems [1]. Through this study, the author attempted to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese and American audiences' receptivity and information about their motivations, values, opinions, perceptions, emotions, memories, etc. As a result, the in-depth interview method was used in order to interact with the interviewees in order to provide detailed answers to specific questions and to speculate about their causes, along with combining observations through paralinguistic observations (body posture, expressions, etc.) of the interviewees.

In-depth interviews are semistructured, with partially prepared open-ended questions; as the interview progresses, the interview questions are refined together with the interviewee. For the US audience, the interview questions were structured around the following six research questions: 1. Can you tell me how Chinese children's books are purchased in the United States? Discuss how much you and your family, friends, and colleagues enjoy reading Chinese children's books. 2. Do you have a favorite type of children's book? Is there a particular age group or gender that prefers them? 3. Please rank your favorite children's books from different regions of China in order of preference or frequency (e.g. Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan). 4. Please rank the children's books you have read from different countries based on how much you like them or how often you purchase them. 5. Please describe the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese children's books that you are aware of. Provide an explanation. 6. Do you believe that the cultures of China and the United States are similar and does their judgment of children's books affect your acceptance and perception? If so, please explain.

In contrast to quantitative research, in-depth interviews use smaller sample sizes. Gubrium and Holstein, two experts in qualitative research, recommends "an in-depth sample size of 28-40 to ensure focus, validity, and concentration" [2,3]. In other words, a sample size of around 30 is more feasible so long as the sample is valid. This study was designed with four regional distributions of interviewees to ensure a representative sample, namely Chinese in China, Chinese in the US, Americans in China, and Americans in the US. Further, American interviewers were added to the interview group members in an effort to determine whether there were any differences in the results of the interviews between American and Chinese interviewers with an American audience. In order to ensure sufficient research phenomena occurred, the study was designed to span a number of months, dividing the interview periods into November 2021, January 2022, March 2022, June 2022, October 2021, December 2021, etc.

Table 1: Distribution of interview team members and respondents.

Team members	Interviewees			
	Chinese people in China	Chinese people in the US	Americans in China	Americans in the US
Wang Mao (USA)		11 people		21 people
Jiang Yang (USA) Interviews in the USA				8 people
Haojing Zhu Interviews in China	6 people		4 people	
Haojing Zhu Interviews in China	13 people			
BSFU students interviewed in China	34 people		18 people	
	Total 53	Total 11	Total 22	Total 29

A total of five interviews were conducted in Beijing, Guangzhou, New York, and Houston, USA, but the selection of US respondents was based on their hometowns, covering as many US regions as possible, including Phoenix, Seattle, Orlando, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, Dallas, Cleveland, and Oakland.

The Chinese audience survey also attempted to cover all regions of China based on their hometowns. Chinese and American respondents held a variety of occupations, including students, teachers, employees, housewives, and civil servants. The following table summarizes the distribution of interview team members and interviewees.

The research was divided into four specific steps.

As part of the pre-survey stage, literature will be collected and pre-interviews will be conducted with Chinese and American audiences. According to the results of this phase of the survey, American audiences are less exposed to Chinese books in the United States, and Chinese books are primarily distributed on topics related to language learning, culture, and travel. Chinese children's books have not received much attention at present, so the research topic was focused on Chinese children's books.

A re-investigation stage is required in order to examine whether Chinese children's books are accepted by the American audience. A number of respondents focused on the ethical and cultural phenomena displayed in Chinese children's books, and used primarily American children's books when asked about cultural 'proximity' between China and the US and its impact on children's reading choices (even when not yet asked). In the survey, respondents primarily focused on the ethical and cultural aspects of Chinese children's literature. It was primarily intended for respondents to analyze the ethical and cultural characteristics of American children's books and Chinese children's books.

A specialised phase of research was conducted by conducting interviews with young people under the age of 45, who are the primary audience for Chinese children's books, regarding the ethical perceptions of Chinese children's books. The study aimed to determine whether American audiences are concerned with Chinese ethics and how they comment on them as well as the similarities and differences between Chinese and American ethics.

In the fourth step, qualitative data analysis will be conducted on data collected from the Chinese and American audiences at the same time in order to draw conclusions from a cross-cultural comparison. For the re-survey phase, a reasonable distribution of respondents was considered in assessing the Chinese audience in the US. In order to increase cross-cultural comparability, it was necessary to assume a Chinese audience that had not been to the US and did not know the US audience, so this portion of the interview data was filtered out. 104 respondents were available for analysis, 53 Chinese and 51 American (22 in China and 29 in the United States).

3. Results

During the pre-survey and re-survey phases, the visiting team conducted interviews with American audiences regarding their acceptance of Chinese children's books.

3.1. *Limited Exposure to Chinese Children's Books in the United States*

In general, Chinese children's books were relatively unknown to the American audience. "I found that Americans don't read Chinese children's books very much and do not understand them," the Chinese interviewer wrote in her notes after her field observations in the US. There are few Chinese children's books that appear on Amazon's sales lists, the largest book retailer in the United States, and they have few reviews when they are sold for purchase. American children are more likely to be exposed to Taiwan children's books than Chinese Mainland children's books, while few Hong Kong children's books and no Macau children's books are available. Chinese children's books purchased in the US are primarily aimed at children aged 3-8 and their young parents and cover topics such as language learning, interpersonal friendship, science fiction, and fantasy. However, Chinese children's books are not well promoted in the United States at the same time. When a 32-year-old female teacher visited Beijing, she read *The Illustrated Book of Traditional Chinese Stories*, but after returning to the US, she did not read any Chinese children's books. Since Chinese children's books are not well known in the United States, a 27-year-old graduate student stated that she had not read a Chinese children's book in over 10 years. A 41-year-old housewife stated that she "usually never chooses Chinese children's books" as she does not care about China and does not really understand the concept of Chinese education. According to another male student in China, *100,000 Reasons Why* has been advertised on Amazon. However, due to the lack of promotion, it is not as popular in China as American children's books. The majority of respondents preferred to purchase children's books from their home country, and among foreign children's books, American children's books were more receptive and concerned than Chinese children's books among respondents. Respondents' preference for American children's books is primarily influenced by the fact

that “there are many well-known American children’s books around the world, and I have been familiar with them since I was very young”, and “I can see from Chinese children’s books that Chinese people are still living in poverty and America is very developed, so I envy Amer

3.2. Young Audiences Are the Main Recipients

Generally, American audiences rarely read Chinese children’s books, and the majority of Chinese children’s books are purchased by young people under the age of 45 in the US. The majority of young American audiences prefer local children’s books for their children’s education; middle-aged and older male audiences rarely read Chinese children’s books, though some middle-aged and older women occasionally read Chinese family education-related picture books with their children. Most of the American respondents stated that their families do not read Chinese children’s books. A 24-year-old New Yorker stated, “My father did not buy Chinese children’s books, but he enjoyed watching Hong Kong kung fu movies.” A 21-year-old female college student explained, “My mother often reads Chinese mythology stories with me, but my father does not.” In addition, there is a limited audience of young Americans who enjoy Chinese children’s literature. He only tells me stories from American children’s books.” American children who enjoy Chinese children’s books read them or download them from the Internet. According to the American interviewees, their fathers do not have an interest in Chinese history, ““We have access to foreign children’s books through the internet, but my father and his family read only American children’s books and do not utilize the internet, because young people are taught Chinese and the older generation is not fluent in it,” “We have access to foreign children’s books through the internet, but they are not interested”. In order to maintain compatibility with American educational environments and cultural atmospheres, the mothers and aunts only read American children’s books.”ican life.”

3.3. The Majority of Demand Is for Chinese Language Instruction

Chinese children’s books were in high demand among young American audiences for the purpose of learning Chinese. “Most Americans who read Chinese books do so in order to gain a better understanding of the Chinese language,” said a 23-year-old male college student. As a matter of fact, I am the same way as many of my friends.” This interviewee mentioned a housewife in her 40s who enjoyed Chinese martial arts movies and was often trapped on the Chinese channel because she did not know Chinese. Children’s books are relatively easy to understand and are useful for beginners in Chinese to practice, imitate, and follow. One can learn grammar in the process, as well as some authentic Chinese expressions.” A 20-year-old female university student said she reads Chinese children’s books “since she is studying Chinese and can learn the language from it, as well as feeling the same emotions that are expressed in Chinese and American children’s books.” According to a 32-year-old female teacher, she reads Chinese children’s books because “I find them interesting, and I am able to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture through them”. A 45-year-old male staff member stated that “people in his neighbourhood do not usually read Chinese books” and that only “one of his colleagues who study Chinese reads basic Chinese children’s books”. Another 29-year-old male employee said that he “sometimes reads them because I want to learn Chinese and I read them 1-2 times a week” and that he “only has 2 friends around me who are studying Chinese”. Another 28-year-old female graduate student said that she reads Chinese children’s books “to learn Chinese and to learn how Chinese is presented in real life situations through Chinese children’s books”.

3.4. Family and Friendship Are the Most Prominent Themes

In the opinion of the American interviewees, most Chinese children’s books published in the US focus on the interpersonal themes of family and school, with friendship and family being the most prominent themes. Chinese children’s books are characterized by a human touch, according to interviewees. “Americans are used to how people behave in their own country and do not desire to see how Chinese children interact with each other.” “China and the United States share a different cultural and historical background, which has resulted in a lack of understanding between the two countries regarding early childhood education. Considering the differences in historical and cultural environments between China and the United States, the attitudes toward interpersonal relationships in early childhood education have been different in both countries.”, “Only people who like topics like family and friendship are interested, otherwise it is often difficult for people who are not interested to be interested to read the whole children’s book. This is especially true of adults learning Chinese, who have developed a native American measure of how to deal with people.” “Chinese children’s books tell more stories about the past,” according to a 24-year-old woman. As a housewife of 33, I feel the disadvantage of Chinese

children's books is that "the variety of content is difficult to stimulate reading." I do not know much about history, and Chinese children's books need to be updated. Many interviewees stated that when they arrived in China they had seen realistic children's books, such as *Today I'm a Flag-raiser*, *The Boys' Diary*, and *Fine Rice*, that had not been published in the United States. While a male student was in the US, he said, "I read Chinese children's books, but the topics were relatively few and they were all very old. The Chinese children's books are a lot richer than what I am familiar with in the US, as I discovered when I came to China." Consequently, the visiting team members switched to Amazon's Chinese book platform, where they discovered that the website provided a wide range of children's books on a wide variety of topics, and that many of the science children's books even included AR technology, such as *Dinosaur 3-D Book*, *AR Cognitive Cards: Chinese Characters Jump Out*, and *AR Children's Knowledge Map: Wild Animals of the World*.

3.5. Taiwan's Acceptance of Children's Books is Higher than That of Chinese Mainland's

Two of the 51 American respondents preferred mainland children's books: a 31-year-old housewife who had lived in Zhejiang with her husband, and a 27-year-old male employee who believed that "Mainland children's books are more helpful in learning Chinese"; the remaining 49 respondents preferred Taiwan children's books. Although some respondents did not read Chinese children's books or were unaware of the differences between mainland and Taiwan children's books, they were aware that Taiwan fantasy children's books were popular in the United States, while mainland children's books were less well known. A female international student even mistook all Chinese children's books sold in the US for Taiwan children's books, saying: "I never read any Chinese children's books while I was in the US. Rather, Americans favor Taiwan children's books. Among my favorite Taiwan children's books are "I Am a Fox Dog" and "Poetry Soul." When asked about the reasons, the interviewees discussed the following points: firstly, "the atmosphere of children's books in the Mainland is heavy, with more historical children's books and more cultural children's books, whereas Taiwan children's books make us feel relaxed"; Secondly, "I feel that contemporary economic development continues to be better in Taiwan, and children's books on the mainland are all old stories. Thirdly, "I think Taiwan children's books are similar to American children's books, and the science fiction and adventure themes are more interesting"; fourthly, "We can see our own lives in Taiwan children's books"; and fifthly, Taiwan children's books use similar illustrations to Japanese manga. An international student of 24 years old stated: "We are accustomed to reading children's books such as these because we have read comic books since we were young. Japanese comic books are very popular in the US."

4. Discussion

An interviewer noticed that many American respondents constantly discussed ethical phenomena in Chinese children's books. This led the interview team to conduct interviews with American audiences around this topic. With the exception of two American women who saw in Chinese children's books "a higher status for women and the main characters in American children's books are essentially white men", and a 26-year-old Denver resident who stated that "Chinese children's books have a more constructive approach to family leisure", most Americans have expressed negative remarks about the ethical issues presented in Chinese children's books. The main findings are presented below.

4.1. American Children's Books Lack Cultural Connotations and Figurative Communication

A cultural connotation consists of a collection of ideas and spirits, historical stories and religions; representative objects; educational concepts; customs (festivals) and local customs; significant characters and abilities; and life concepts. Almost all respondents who had lived in the United States believed that it was critical to "fully understand children's interests" and advocated that "safety and health education is essential", whereas nearly half of the respondents accepted that "supporting pre-school education" was significant. This indicates that Chinese concepts of education and life are widely accepted by Americans. Chinese children's books rarely address the concept of safety and health education, according to a 38-year-old full-time Chinese mother from Chicago.

Furthermore, respondents to the interview survey demonstrated a high level of understanding of some educational concepts and character competencies in the United States. This indicates that educational concepts and some character competencies are more readily accepted and digested during the adaptation process of imported children's books. In contrast, spirituality is popular, but difficult for readers to digest and understand. Also, the fact that the number of best-selling children's books in the US exceeds that of

China, with a lower percentage of cultural content, while the readership in the US is more receptive, indicates that the US is less effective at communicating figurative culture and more effective in communicating culture through spiritual markers. The main reasons for this are, on the one hand, the change in the buying public, with young parents being more educated and receptive to new things, and on the other, the social values that border on those of the United States, such as 'independence' and 'self-confidence', which are aligned with both American culture and the prevailing social concepts in China. Additionally, China shares social values with the United States, such as 'independence' and 'self-confidence', which are aligned with both American culture and Chinese social philosophy. It is evident that the best-selling children's books in the United States are based on educational concepts, concepts of life, character skills and representative things, whereas Chinese children's books are based on customs and customs, ideology and spirit, and are lacking in character skills and educational concepts. Chinese figurative cultural connotations dominate this mention, while American figurative cultural connotations gradually decrease.

4.2. There Is a Lack of Clarity Regarding the Age Stratification of Children's Books in China and There Is a Blurring of the Ethical Order between Elders and Children

Interviewees expressed appreciation for the family relationships represented in children's books, but felt that Confucian traditions such as 'the orderly order of elders and children' were not adequately represented in American children's books. During her discussion of Chinese children's books this morning, a 21-year-old international student said, "I was a bit surprised that in some of the books labelled as children's books, the sons behaved rudely towards their fathers. Chinese young adult books, for example, have episodes where the son and father smoke, which isn't allowed in American books." A 24-year-old Philadelphia youth stated, "When you smoke, you have to hide your cigarette behind you if you meet an elder on the road, even though the elder will laugh when he finds it." Chinese children's books do not specifically depict this situation."

According to respondents in the US, Chinese children's books are filled with honorific culture that regulates relationships through 'rituals', including language, etiquette, outlook, values, and ways of thinking. A young Chinese girl of 18 years of age stated, "In terms of language, young Chinese people are expected to use respectful language with their elders or they will be blamed. This is not evident in American children's books." In Chinese children's books, if you meet an older person, you often address your brother or sister, and even at school, you call your name with your brother and sister; whereas in American kids' books, you usually call them by their first name outside of the family." In terms of etiquette, in Chinese children's books, children's interactions are filled with adult manners, such as walking up and greeting each other even if they are some distance apart; whereas in American children's books there is no such episode." A 45-year-old male employee mentioned that China and the United States "are far apart and have very different cultures, different manners at meals and when dealing with each other"; another female student at the university, 24, said that China and the United States "have different values about the etiquette of elders and children".

4.3. The Absence of Group Elements in American Children's Books and the Ethical Problems Associated with Advertising in Chinese Children's Books

Some American interviewees indicated that Chinese children's books depict fixed food, uniform clothing, and distinctive national characteristics. A lack of these elements was found in American children's books that they found lacking in the expression of group elements such as unity, solidarity, and national identity. A 19-year-old male said, "In Chinese children's books such as *Who Stole My Buns* and *The Soul of Poetry*, there are close-up photographs of family meals during traditional holidays. But American children's books don't show particularly fixed ethnic foods." A 21-year-old Cleveland youth said, "In Chinese children's books, each school has its own uniform, whereas in American children's books, kids can dress in a way that's not strictly required." According to a 24-year-old youth, "Even in modern Chinese children's books, Chinese characters wear ethnic costumes, such as the cheongsam worn by the main character's mother at a kindergarten event. However, ethnic costumes are usually only found in historical and cultural children's books in America." Another 19-year-old Philadelphia woman explained, "Chinese children's books often have school plots in which children eat alone, encouraging them to develop independence; however, such plots are rare in American children's books, where classmates and friends eat together. In the United States, a person who eats alone is considered to be unpopular and isolated".

The majority of American respondents believed that Chinese children's books contained few

advertisements, and implicitly implanted advertisements are obvious and would be illegal in the United States. In the United States, advertisements for children's books are uncommon. They usually appear on promotional or end pages only and are not incorporated into the published content of children's books. In the opinion of a 33-year-old female international student, Chinese children's books contain strong advertising innuendos that conceal the name of the advertisement but imply a specific brand through harmonics and logos. American children's books don't do this. It affects my mood to read to my kids. American children's books are more focused on the audience's buying experience and the advertising is separate from the children's book." Secondly, American children's book ads depict mostly unrelated content to the mood of the children's book, usually celebrity advertisements, and do not allow prop placement. Chinese children's book ads usually include props related to the children's book's romance, with the product brand identity being more apparent.

5. Conclusion

A comparison of Chinese and American audiences reveals that there is a significant gap between the assumptions of Chinese audiences and the reality of American audiences, which leads to two conclusions.

There are two main reasons why the American audience is predominantly concerned with cultural differences between China and the United States, and their perceptions influence how they accept Chinese children's books. In the US, Chinese children's books are not widely disseminated as desired, resulting in a lack of satisfactory dissemination of Chinese children's books. Therefore, "Han Style" has little cultural significance within the US. Chinese audiences tend to believe that China and the United States share some similarities, which influences their acceptance of Chinese children's books in the United States. Chinese children's books, especially history children's books, are presumably more widely accepted in the United States than by American audiences. However, the majority of American audiences believe that there are significant cultural differences between the United States and China. This results to a certain extent in a lower acceptance of Chinese children's books, particularly history children's books, in the United States. There is an implicit presupposition in the Chinese audience's assumption that China and the United States are "culturally close". However, only three of the 51 American respondents felt that the Chinese and American cultures were "somewhat similar" and that this influenced their reading experience, and only three young people preferred Chinese children's books due to their "personal love of history". Furthermore, most young people chose to purchase Chinese children's books solely for the purpose of learning Chinese, and their motivation for purchasing them was primarily instrumental rather than cultural in nature. According to interviews, many Americans described the cultural differences between China and the United States through the lens of Chinese children's books with the term 'big scale'. It has been found that American audiences are more interested in American children's books than Chinese children's books, Taiwan children's books are more popular than Mainland children's books, and realistic children's books are more popular than traditional children's books. This indicates the influence of political and economic factors as well as historical changes on culture.

Secondly, ethics, as a crucial implicit element of culture, have influenced the American audience's perception of the acceptance of Chinese children's books, not only in terms of acceptance decisions, but also in terms of negative comments regarding Chinese ethics. Chinese audiences largely perceive little difference between Chinese and American ethics and tend to ignore the influence of American audiences' ethical perceptions on the reception of Chinese children's books. In contrast, American audiences emphasize the cultural differences presented by the ethical mirror image of Chinese children's books. There is a higher degree of collectivism in China than in the United States. Collectivism is characterized by a tight social structure in which in-groups and out-groups are distinguished. As a result, people expect their in-group (kin, clan, organization) to take care of them. As a result, they are loyal to their in-group. (Guan Shijie, Hu Xing, 1995:5) American audiences value ethical order, and they are open to foreign cultures. The act of understanding texts and constructing meaning is a negotiation with foreign culture within their own cultural context. They naturally focus on the ethical phenomena of Chinese children's books from their own personal perspective. It is also difficult for American audiences to form an objective perception of the ethical realities of contemporary Chinese society because they have limited access to Chinese children's books in the United States, and even less access to modern-themed Chinese children's books.

There is relatively scant academic research available outside of China on this topic, and even less qualitative research from an international perspective. The author has analysed the shortcomings in the study and generated some reflections: first, this study has attempted to take into account a reasonable distribution of age, gender, country, region, occupation and education of the interviewees and the

interviewees; however, the results of this study are currently only of sample significance due to the constraints of the research conditions, and it is not yet clear whether the results can be generalized. In order to evaluate this quantitatively, follow-up studies can be conducted. Secondly, the interviews and notes taken by the Chinese and American interviewers with the American audience were conducted alternately in Chinese, American and English. While the interviewees have confirmed the interpretations to a certain degree, it is still not possible to ensure that the meaning transfer is entirely accurate. In addition, American interviewers were employed as part of the study in order to balance the subjective cultural orientation of the interviewers. The results of the interviews between the American interviewers and the Chinese interviewers with the American audience were generally consistent in terms of the basic situation. However, they differed significantly in terms of the language used and the tendency to comment on emotions expressed in the interviews. It is noteworthy that the three American interviewees who believed 'Chinese and American cultures are somewhat similar' were all interviewed by Chinese interviewers. However, the eight American interviewees who were interviewed by American interviewers all believed 'Chinese and American cultures are very different'. In addition, Chinese respondents in Guangzhou were more similar to American respondents' actual perceptions than Chinese respondents in Beijing in terms of geography; in terms of age, young Chinese respondents were closer to the actual perceptions of American respondents than middle-aged and older respondents; as regards occupation, corporate respondents were closer to the actual perceptions of American respondents than those in the media, universities and government departments.

In the end, intercultural communication emphasizes cultural differences and should be viewed with an open, dynamic, self-critical and improving mindset. Liu explains that "intercultural communication is about communicating between different cultures, and since it does so, cultural differences are its inescapable premise, and the communication embodiment of cultural differences is even more crucial [4]." By ignoring cultural differences, one ignores cultural intensity, narrows the intercultural perspective, and creates cultural blindness through a melting pot mindset. Hooker states, "We must be aware that universalism narrows our perspective. In many places, it connects us to other cultures. However, universalism also hinders our general perception of other cultures because we fail to recognize the nature of the differences between cultures. [5]" Intercultural communication confirms that each individual has a relative subjectivity, whose power creates a movement of difference between individuals. It is through the transmission of the book medium that ethical elements become key visions of a particular culture. Moreover, at the linguistic, semantic, and paralinguistic levels, they become cultural symbols and collective identity markers, in addition to their power to communicate.

Acknowledgement

A Study of the Reading and Acceptance of Chinese Humanities and Social Sciences Books by American Readers" (No. 18BXW050), Chinese Social Science Foundation General Project.

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