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Traditional Chinese Culture Communication by Animation Film: Monkey King Hero Is Back

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to: (1) explore the representation of traditional Chinese cultural contexts in animation; (2) examine storytelling strategies used to communicate traditional Chinese culture; and (3) identify development approaches for promoting traditional Chinese culture through animation. A mixed-methods research design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to audiences to evaluate perceptions of cultural communication through the film. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews with 20 key informants, including academics, animation industry professionals, and audience representatives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, content analysis, and interpretive analysis, while methodological triangulation was applied to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

The results indicate that animated films effectively construct cultural contexts by integrating visual symbols, sound, narrative, and traditional spiritual values. Overall, 62% of respondents evaluated animation as an effective or excellent medium for promoting traditional culture. Audiovisual cultural presentation received a mean score of 3.29, while respondents' perceived ability to explain cultural characteristics improved after viewing (Mean = 3.22). Nevertheless, emotional engagement remained comparatively moderate (Mean = 3.19), suggesting that cognitive understanding exceeded emotional internalization. Qualitative findings further revealed that narrative adaptation, particularly the humanization of the Monkey King and the integration of contemporary animation technology with traditional aesthetics, significantly enhanced audience engagement. The study concludes that successful cultural communication through animation depends on the integration of authentic cultural representation, narrative innovation, and technological advancement to achieve sustainable cultural dissemination in both domestic and global contexts.



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Introduction

Monkey King: Hero Is Back a 3D animated film adapted from the traditional Chinese classic *Journey to the West*. It was released in China in 2015 and achieved an impressive box office revenue of 954 million yuan. The film also received several prestigious awards, including the Best Art Film Award at the 30th China Film Golden Rooster Awards and the Best Animated Feature Film Award at the 12th China Animation Golden Dragon Awards. It was later released in the United States in 2016 and in Japan in 2018. As the world's first 3D animated film based on *Journey to the West*, the film set a record for the highest overseas sales of Chinese animated films at the Cannes Film Festival. It was also the first animated film to be nominated for the Media Awards at the 18th Shanghai International Film Festival in 2015. Prior to its release, nearly one hundred Chinese celebrities publicly supported and promoted the film, marking an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of Chinese animation. Although time has passed, its record-breaking box office performance, innovative storytelling, and distinctive character design have generated widespread discussion among audiences, making it an important topic in academic research.



Figure 1 Monkey King Hero Is Back

Monkey King: Hero Is Back not only achieved remarkable success in terms of technology and artistic quality but also made significant contributions to cultural communication and innovation. It reflects the development trends and new creative practices of contemporary Chinese animated films. Its influence continues to this day and has left a profound impact on the animation industry. This study takes Monkey King: Hero Is Back as the main research subject, focusing on cultural communication to analyze how traditional Chinese culture is disseminated through Chinese animated films. Therefore, this research aims to examine cultural communication in the film to fill the existing research gap and to provide constructive suggestions for the development of the Chinese animation industry, as well as for the dissemination of valuable Chinese culture. The researcher is particularly interested in studying how traditional Chinese culture is communicated through this film. The study focuses on analyzing the expression of traditional Chinese cultural elements in animation, the strategies and effects of cultural dissemination, and possible approaches for the future development of Chinese animated films. Animation serves as a medium that conveys content through visual storytelling. Audiences consciously focus on narrative and visual elements, while unconsciously absorbing cultural content. Therefore, it is necessary to study effective methods and approaches for cultural dissemination through animation, as well as to promote innovation in Chinese animation culture in the digital era. This includes integrating

traditional culture with modern elements to create works that are both meaningful and accessible to contemporary audiences.

A deeper analysis of the film includes cultural elements such as philosophical ideas, moral values, social norms, and traditions, as well as their presentation through character design, scene construction, and dialogue. This demonstrates both the inheritance and innovation of culture, preserving the core of the original work while adapting it to modern aesthetics. As a result, traditional culture becomes more accessible and appealing to younger audiences. As both a cultural medium and an artistic form, animation not only disseminates culture but also plays a vital role in preserving Chinese cultural heritage. Cultural dissemination through animation is therefore not limited to the film industry but also holds broader cultural significance at the national level. Furthermore, it can be extended through various platforms such as the internet and social media, increasing the reach and influence of Chinese culture. This study addresses key questions, including whether animation is an effective medium for disseminating Chinese culture, whether *Monkey King: Hero Is Back* plays a role in cultural communication, and which elements of traditional Chinese culture are presented and how they are expressed in animation. Although there are existing studies on *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, research specifically focusing on cultural communication remains limited. This highlights the need for further study, especially in the current context where animation production tends to emphasize technology and visual effects over cultural content. In conclusion, this study is significant for developing approaches to cultural dissemination through animation, preserving cultural identity, and enhancing the global influence of Chinese animated films.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The study of traditional Chinese culture communication through animation film requires an interdisciplinary theoretical framework integrating communication, film, cultural, storytelling, and animation theories. In recent years, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on how animation functions as a medium for cultural transmission, particularly within the context of Chinese cultural revitalization and global media expansion. Communication theory remains fundamental in explaining how meaning is constructed and interpreted. The Encoding/Decoding model proposed by (Hall Stuart, 1997) continues to be widely applied in contemporary media research. Recent studies have extended Hall's framework into digital and transnational contexts, emphasizing that audiences in global media environments actively reinterpret cultural texts based on localized cultural experiences (Zhang & Liu, 2022). In the case of *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, traditional Chinese cultural meanings are encoded through mythological imagery and narrative symbolism, while international audiences decode these meanings through broader cultural lenses, demonstrating the continued relevance of communication theory in cross-cultural media analysis. Film theory also remains central in analyzing how cinematic techniques shape meaning. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2003) explain that narrative structure, mise-en-scène, and audiovisual elements construct film meaning. Recent scholarships have further emphasized the role of digital aesthetics in contemporary animation. For example, (Li, 2021) argues that advances in CGI and digital cinematography have significantly enhanced the expressive capacity of Chinese animated films, allowing for more sophisticated integration of traditional cultural elements into modern visual storytelling. This is evident in *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, where digital animation techniques are used to reinterpret classical mythology while maintaining cultural authenticity.

Cultural communication theory has gained increasing importance in recent research, particularly in the context of globalization and soft cultural power. (Henry Jenkins, 2006)



highlights the role of media in cultural convergence, and recent studies have expanded this perspective by examining how national cultures are strategically communicated through media industries. According to (Wang, 2023) Chinese animated films play a significant role in promoting cultural soft power by presenting traditional narratives in globally accessible formats. Similarly, (Sun, 2022) found that animation serves as an effective medium for revitalizing intangible cultural heritage by transforming traditional cultural elements into engaging visual narratives. These findings reinforce the importance of animation as a cultural communication tool. Storytelling theory continues to provide a strong foundation for understanding how narratives communicate cultural meaning. (Walter Fisher, 1984) proposed that audiences evaluate stories based on coherence and fidelity. Recent research has emphasized the role of emotional engagement and character development in cross-cultural storytelling. (Chen, 2021) argues that successful Chinese animated films adapt traditional narratives by incorporating universal themes such as identity, heroism, and moral growth, making them accessible to global audiences. In *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*; the narrative of redemption and heroism reinterprets classical mythology in a way that resonates with contemporary viewers while preserving cultural significance.

The concept of animation has also evolved significantly in recent years. Animation is now widely recognized as a powerful medium for cultural representation due to its ability to visualize abstract and symbolic content. (Wells, 2011) highlights the flexibility of animation in representing non-realistic worlds, and more recent studies have emphasized its role in cultural storytelling. According to (Zhao, 2024), animation enables the reconstruction of cultural memory through visual symbolism and stylized representation, making it particularly effective for communicating traditional culture in the digital age. This aligns with the case of *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, where animation techniques are used to transform classical literary content into a modern cinematic experience. The background and significance of *Monkey King: Hero Is Back* has also been widely discussed in recent research. The film is recognized as a milestone in the Chinese animation industry, marking a shift toward high-quality domestic productions. (Tang, 2020) identified the film as a turning point in Chinese animation, while more recent studies have further emphasized its cultural impact (Liu, 2023). found that the film contributed to the resurgence of interest in traditional Chinese mythology among younger audiences. Additionally, (Hu and Wang, 2022) argued that the film successfully integrates national cultural identity with global storytelling techniques, making it a model for future Chinese animated productions. In terms of related research, national studies have increasingly focused on the role of animation in cultural revitalization. subsequent studies (Li, 2021; Wang, 2023) indicate that Chinese animation has evolved from imitation of Western styles to the development of a distinct national identity rooted in traditional culture. These studies emphasize that cultural authenticity, combined with modern production techniques, is key to the success of contemporary Chinese animation. International research has also expanded significantly between 2020 and 2025, particularly in cross-cultural communication. (Zhang and Liu, 2022) examined how audiences from different cultural backgrounds interpret Chinese animated films and found that cultural familiarity influences interpretation, but universal themes can bridge cultural gaps. (Similarly, Kim, 2021) explored cross-cultural storytelling in animation and concluded that balancing local cultural elements with universal narrative structures enhances global audience engagement. Research on visual semiotics has also highlighted the importance of symbols, colors, and imagery in conveying meaning across cultures (Zhao, 2024).



In conclusion, recent literature (2020–2025) reinforces and extends traditional theoretical frameworks by incorporating perspectives on globalization, digital media, and cultural soft power. Communication theory, film theory, cultural communication theory, storytelling theory, and animation theory remain essential foundations, while recent research highlights the growing importance of animation as a medium for cultural transmission in the global media landscape. The case of *Monkey King: Hero Is Back* exemplifies how traditional Chinese culture can be effectively communicated through modern animation, making it a valuable subject for further academic investigation.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework is presented in the following figure. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, with the research design based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research.

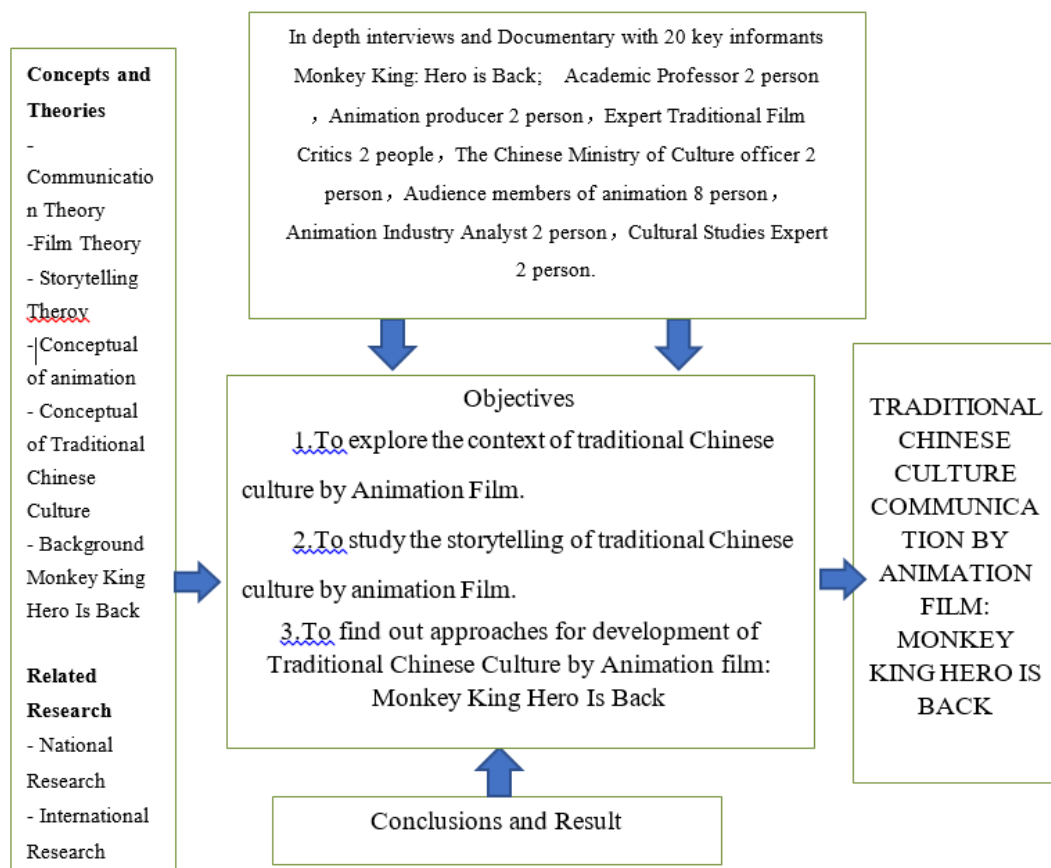


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Objectives

1. To explore the express in animated films of Traditional Chinese Culture from Monkey King Hero Is Back.
2. To study method of storytelling of Traditional Chinese Culture from Monkey King Hero is Back.
3. To study Communication effect of Traditional Chinese Culture from Monkey King Hero is Back.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of how traditional Chinese culture is communicated through Monkey King Hero Is Back.

Firstly, the qualitative method was conducted through in-depth interviews to explore expert perspectives on the representation and dissemination of traditional Chinese culture in the film. The participants consisted of 20 key informants from seven groups, including academic professors, animation producers, film critics, cultural officers, animation audiences, industry analysts, and cultural studies experts. These participants were purposively selected to ensure diverse viewpoints from both professional and audience perspectives.

Secondly, the quantitative method was implemented through a questionnaire survey, targeting animation viewers from different backgrounds. The respondents represented various educational levels, occupations, and income groups, reflecting a wide range of social classes. This allowed the study to analyze how audiences perceive and interpret the narrative methods and cultural dissemination presented in the film.

The research focused on three main aspects: (1) the representation of traditional Chinese culture in the film, (2) the narrative techniques used to communicate cultural meanings, and (3) the effectiveness of cultural dissemination among audiences. Data collected from both methods were analyzed and integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the film's role in cultural communication.

Based on the findings, this study aims to propose development pathways for the promotion and sustainability of traditional Chinese culture through animation films.

Population: The population of this study consists of viewers of the animated film Monkey King Hero Is Back in China. Based on estimated audience statistics, the total population is approximately 22,731,000 individuals. This population encompasses a diverse group of viewers in terms of gender, age, educational level, occupation, and income. Therefore, it is considered representative of animation media consumers within Chinese society.

Samples: The sample size for this study was determined using the formula proposed by Taro Yamane (1973) to calculate an appropriate sample size for quantitative research. The confidence level was set at 95%, and the acceptable margin of error was 0.05. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = required sample size

N = total population (22,731,000 individuals)

e = margin of error (0.05)



By substituting the values into the formula, the calculated sample size is approximately 400 respondents. Therefore, this study determines a sample size of 400 participants, which is considered sufficient to represent the entire population and allows the results to be statistically reliable and generalizable.

Research Instruments: The study employed a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was systematically designed based on academic principles to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of the data for analysis. It was divided into four main parts to comprehensively cover the variables related to the study of traditional Chinese culture. The first part collected demographic information of the respondents, such as name, age, and position. This information is essential for classifying the sample and analyzing the relationships between demographic characteristics and the variables under study. The second part consisted of 32 items related to traditional Chinese culture, which served as the main variable of the research. These items aimed to measure respondents' opinions, attitudes, and levels of perception toward cultural content. The third part included three items concerning narrative methods of traditional Chinese culture, designed to examine how cultural content is communicated and presented. The fourth part comprised three items related to development approaches for traditional Chinese culture, with the purpose of gathering suggestions and ideas for promoting and developing cultural practices in a modern context.

The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale based on the concept developed by Rensis Likert, consisting of five levels: strongly agree, agree, agree, agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The use of the Likert scale allows qualitative opinions to be transformed into quantitative data, facilitating statistical analysis and improving the accuracy of data interpretation. In addition, clear criteria for interpreting mean scores were established, where a mean score of 4.21–5.00 indicates strong agreement, with lower ranges corresponding to decreasing levels of agreement. This standardization enhances consistency and reduces potential bias in data interpretation.

Regarding the development of the research instrument, the process was conducted systematically. It began with a comprehensive review of relevant literature, theories, and previous studies under the guidance of the research advisor. These served as the conceptual framework for designing the questionnaire. Subsequently, the structure of the instrument was developed, and questionnaire items were constructed in alignment with the research variables. The draft questionnaire was then submitted to five experts to assess its content validity, ensuring that each item accurately measured the intended constructs. Following this, the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was employed to evaluate the alignment between each item and the research objectives. Experts rated each item as +1 (consistent), 0 (uncertain), or -1 (inconsistent). Only items with IOC values greater than 0.50 were retained, while those with lower values were revised to improve clarity and accuracy.

Afterward, a pilot test was conducted with 30 participants to assess the reliability of the instrument. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with an acceptable value set at 0.80 or higher according to Steven M. Downing. This step is crucial as it confirms the internal consistency and stability of the questionnaire, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings.

Finally, the questionnaire was revised based on the pilot test results and feedback and subsequently approved by the research advisor before being administered for actual data collection. This entire process reflects a rigorous and systematic approach to instrument



development, ensuring that the data obtained are of high quality and suitable for accurate and reliable analysis at an academic level.

Data collection: The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data from 400 people. In this data collection, the researcher collected the data by himself and checked the data (Edit Data) for completeness of the data by himself.

Statistical Data Analysis: The researcher followed a structured procedure for data analysis, primarily utilizing quantitative methods. The process involved the following steps:

1. The questionnaires collected were first reviewed for completeness. After verification, the data were coded according to the coding manual (Codebook).

2. The data were analyzed using a statistical software package for social sciences, which included the following: Personal Demographic Information: analyzed by finding the frequency and percentage.

Results

The findings are presented according to the three research objectives. The empirical evidence demonstrates that the communication of traditional Chinese culture through Monkey King: Hero Is Back operates through three interconnected dimensions: cultural context construction, storytelling transformation, and audience-centered validation. Together, these dimensions form an integrated framework explaining how cultural meanings are constructed, communicated, and interpreted through animated films (Figure 3).

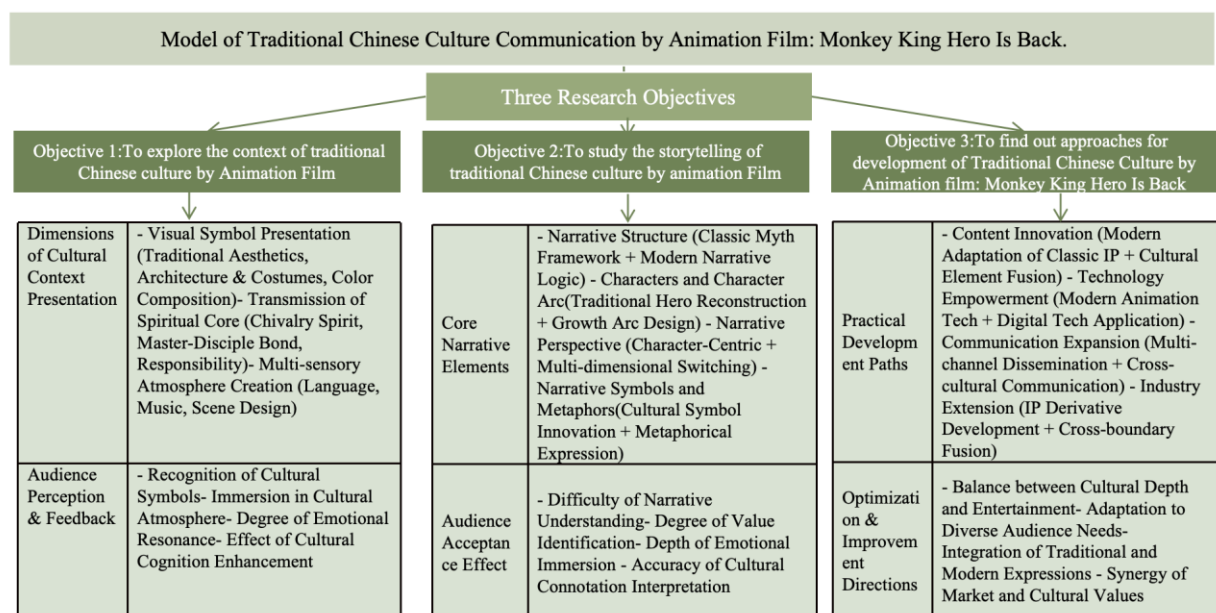


Figure 2 Research Framework Model of Traditional Chinese Culture Communication through the Animation Film Monkey King: Hero Is Back

Exploring the Expression of Traditional Chinese Culture in Monkey King: Hero Is Back

The first research objective examined how traditional Chinese culture is expressed in *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*. The findings indicate that animation functions as an effective medium for constructing cultural meaning by integrating both tangible and intangible cultural elements. At the visual level, the film presents traditional Chinese architecture, costumes, artistic aesthetics, mythological settings, and symbolic objects that reinforce cultural authenticity. Beyond these visible representations, the film communicates intangible cultural values, including the spirit of Xia (chivalry), moral responsibility, courage, compassion, and collective identity. These values are embedded throughout the narrative and conveyed through cinematic techniques such as visual design, music, sound effects, and emotional performance. The findings further reveal that audiences generally demonstrated a high level of cultural interest and positive attitudes toward traditional Chinese culture after viewing the film. However, the depth of cultural understanding varied according to participants' prior cultural knowledge and personal experiences. Viewers who possessed greater familiarity with Chinese traditions were better able to interpret implicit cultural meanings and symbolic references than those with limited cultural backgrounds. Overall, the findings suggest that cultural communication extends beyond the presentation of cultural symbols and involves the construction of meaningful cultural experiences that encourage audiences to engage with traditional values.

Examining the Storytelling Methods Used to Communicate Traditional Chinese Culture

The second research objective investigated the storytelling methods employed to communicate traditional Chinese culture. The findings demonstrate that storytelling serves as the central mechanism connecting traditional cultural heritage with contemporary audience expectations. The narrative successfully combines classical Chinese mythology with modern storytelling techniques, particularly character development, emotional progression, and the Hero's Journey narrative structure. Rather than portraying Sun Wukong solely as a legendary hero, the film reconstructs him as a multidimensional character whose internal struggles, emotional growth, and moral transformation create stronger audience identification and emotional engagement. In addition, symbolic storytelling plays an important role in reinforcing cultural meaning. Cultural symbols, including the Golden Cudgel, the Five Elements Mountain, and Buddhist and Taoist imagery, function as narrative devices that communicate philosophical concepts and traditional beliefs. These symbolic elements enrich the storyline by providing multiple layers of interpretation. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that audiences interpret these cultural symbols differently depending on their cultural familiarity. Participants with greater knowledge of Chinese mythology were able to recognize deeper symbolic meanings, whereas international audiences primarily appreciated the emotional narrative without fully understanding its cultural references. These findings suggest that effective storytelling requires balancing cultural authenticity with narrative accessibility, allowing traditional cultural values to be communicated in ways that remain engaging for contemporary global audiences.



Investigating the Communication Effectiveness of Traditional Chinese Culture

The third research objective examined the effectiveness of communicating traditional Chinese culture through animation. The findings indicate that successful cultural communication depends not only on cultural representation but also on audience interpretation and participation. Participants reported that emotional engagement with the narrative significantly enhanced their understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese cultural values. Emotional resonance encouraged audiences to connect with the characters and internalize broader themes such as responsibility, sacrifice, justice, and perseverance. The findings also demonstrate that communication effectiveness follows the principle of preserving the cultural core while innovating the form. Although essential cultural values should remain authentic, creative adaptation through contemporary storytelling, advanced animation technology, and digital media presentation increases accessibility for modern audiences. Furthermore, industrial development strategies—including intellectual property (IP) expansion, transmedia storytelling, digital distribution, and international market adaptation—were identified as important factors in extending the global influence of Chinese culture through animation. These findings confirm that cultural communication is most effective when traditional values are maintained while presentation methods evolve to meet changing audience expectations.

Research Contribution

Based on the empirical findings, this study proposes an integrated framework for understanding cultural communication through animation. The framework consists of three interrelated dimensions: cultural context construction, storytelling transformation, and audience-centered validation. Together, these dimensions explain how cultural meaning is constructed, transmitted, and interpreted through animated films. The principal contribution of this framework is the integration of previously fragmented perspectives into a single conceptual model. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize visual representation or narrative adaptation, the proposed framework identifies audience-centered validation as an essential component of cultural communication. The findings demonstrate that cultural meaning is not completed during media production but is co-created through audience interpretation, emotional resonance, and meaning-making processes. The study further proposes that successful cultural communication in animation requires a dynamic balance between cultural authenticity and creative adaptation. Intangible cultural values—including the spirit of Xia, moral responsibility, and collective identity—must be embedded within engaging narratives and strengthened through multisensory cinematic experiences. Consequently, the proposed framework extends existing theories of cultural communication by positioning audiences as active participants in constructing cultural meaning rather than passive recipients of cultural messages. This integrated perspective contributes to bridging the gap between traditional cultural preservation and contemporary media innovation, offering a theoretical foundation for future research in animation studies, cultural communication, and cross-cultural media production.



Discussion

Regarding Objective 1, which sought to explore the context of traditional Chinese culture as represented in animation films, the findings demonstrate that animation serves as an effective medium for communicating cultural contexts. Beyond presenting tangible cultural elements such as traditional architecture, costumes, visual aesthetics, and artistic styles, the film also conveys intangible cultural values, including xia (chivalry), responsibility, moral integrity, and collective ethics. These findings support (Hall's, 1997) theory of cultural representation, which argues that cultural communication involves a continuous process of encoding and decoding meanings, whereby audiences construct interpretations according to their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and social contexts. Consequently, viewers from different cultural settings may interpret the same cultural symbols and narratives differently.

The findings also correspond with concept of participatory culture, which emphasizes that contemporary media, particularly visual and digital media, encourage audiences to actively engage with, reinterpret, and disseminate cultural content. In the context of *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, animation creates an immersive audiovisual experience that facilitates emotional engagement while enhancing audiences' understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese culture. This suggests that animation functions not only as entertainment but also as a dynamic platform for cultural communication and intercultural understanding.

Regarding Objective 2, which examined the storytelling of traditional Chinese culture through animation, the findings indicate that narrative structure plays a critical role in making traditional cultural content accessible and meaningful to contemporary audiences. The film successfully integrates classical Chinese mythology with modern storytelling techniques, including character development, emotional conflict, and the hero's journey, thereby strengthening audience engagement and narrative coherence. This finding is consistent with (Campbell's, 1949) theory of the Hero's Journey, which proposes that universal narrative patterns transcend cultural boundaries and enable audiences to relate to culturally specific stories through shared human experiences.

Furthermore, the findings support (Bordwell's, 1985) narrative theory, which argues that narrative structure, plot organization, and point of view significantly shape audience interpretation and meaning-making. The adaptation of traditional mythology into a contemporary narrative framework demonstrates how narrative strategies can preserve cultural authenticity while increasing accessibility for modern audiences. In addition, the extensive use of cultural symbols, visual metaphors, and mythological imagery reflects (Barthes', 1977) semiotic theory, which suggests that signs and symbols communicate multiple layers of meaning beyond their literal representations. Within the film, these symbolic elements reinforce traditional Chinese cultural values while enriching audiences' interpretive experiences.

Regarding Objective 3, which focused on identifying approaches for developing traditional Chinese culture through animation, the findings suggest that sustainable cultural development depends on balancing cultural preservation with creative innovation. Rather than reproducing traditional culture unchanged, the film reinterprets classical cultural elements through contemporary animation techniques, narrative design, and digital production. This finding is consistent with (Pieterse's, 2004) concept of cultural hybridization, which argues that globalization facilitates the integration of traditional and modern cultural



elements, resulting in new cultural forms that remain rooted in local identities while appealing to global audiences.

Moreover, the findings align with (Nye's, 2004) concept of soft power, which emphasizes that cultural products can strengthen a nation's international influence by enhancing its attractiveness rather than relying solely on political or economic power. As demonstrated in *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, animation has become an important instrument of China's cultural diplomacy by promoting traditional cultural narratives through globally accessible media. The integration of intellectual property (IP) development, cross-media storytelling, and digital distribution platforms further illustrates how cultural communication has evolved into a multidimensional ecosystem that combines cultural heritage, creative industries, and technological innovation. These findings suggest that the successful international dissemination of traditional Chinese culture increasingly depends on the strategic integration of cultural authenticity, creative adaptation, and digital media technologies.

Overall, the findings indicate that animation is not merely a medium for entertainment but also an effective vehicle for preserving, reinterpreting, and disseminating traditional culture. Through the integration of cultural representation, narrative innovation, symbolic communication, and digital media strategies, *Monkey King: Hero Is Back* demonstrates how animation can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage while enhancing China's cultural influence in the global media landscape.

Conclusion

This study, titled "Chinese Culture Communication by Animation Film: *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*," aimed to investigate how traditional Chinese culture is communicated through animation by examining three key aspects: cultural context, narrative storytelling, and development approaches. The findings reveal that animation serves as a highly effective medium for cultural communication, capable of bridging traditional cultural values with modern audience expectations. In terms of cultural context, the study demonstrates that animation can construct a rich and immersive cultural environment by integrating both tangible elements such as architecture, costumes, and artistic styles and intangible cultural values, including chivalry (Xia), responsibility, and moral integrity. Through multi-sensory representation, animation enhances audience engagement and facilitates cultural awareness, although the depth of understanding varies depending on individual backgrounds and experiences. Regarding narrative storytelling, the study finds that the integration of traditional mythological structures with modern narrative techniques significantly enhances audience comprehension and emotional connection. The reconstruction of Sun Wukong as a dynamic character with emotional depth and personal growth allows audiences to relate more closely to the story. Furthermore, the use of cultural symbols and metaphors enriches the narrative and enables deeper cultural interpretation. In terms of development approaches, the study highlights that the sustainability of traditional cultural communication through animation depends on balancing cultural preservation with innovation. The application of modern technologies, narrative adaptation, and digital platforms enables traditional culture to remain relevant in contemporary society. Additionally, industrial strategies such as intellectual property (IP) development, cross-media expansion, and global distribution contribute to the broader dissemination and long-term sustainability of cultural communication.



Overall, the study confirms that animation is not merely an entertainment medium but also a powerful tool for cultural transmission and development. However, the effectiveness of cultural communication through animation relies on achieving a balance between cultural depth and audience accessibility, as well as integrating cultural values with technological and industrial advancements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for practitioners, policymakers, and content creators involved in cultural communication through animation.

1. Content creators should prioritize the integration of cultural values into narrative structures rather than relying solely on surface-level symbolic representation. Cultural elements should be embedded naturally within character development, emotional conflicts, and story progression to enhance audience engagement and understanding.

2. Animation producers should adopt innovative storytelling techniques that combine traditional narratives with modern narrative structures. The use of character-driven storytelling, emotional arcs, and symbolic metaphors can significantly improve the effectiveness of cultural communication.

3. There should be a stronger emphasis on technological innovation in animation production. The integration of advanced technologies such as 3D animation, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) can enhance visual appeal and provide more immersive cultural experiences.

4. From an industrial perspective, stakeholders should focus on developing cultural intellectual property (IP) and expanding it across multiple media platforms, including films, games, digital media, and merchandise. This cross-media strategy can increase both the cultural impact and economic value of traditional culture.

5. Policymakers and cultural institutions should support the animation industry through funding, policy incentives, and international collaboration. Promoting cultural exchange and global distribution can enhance the international influence of traditional Chinese culture.

Future Research

Future research should examine audience responses across different cultural contexts and apply quantitative or mixed-method approaches to validate these findings. Comparative studies of cultural animation from different countries and investigations into emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), VR, and AR, are also recommended to further explore their role in cultural communication and heritage preservation.

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