

# Research on the current situation and value guidance of college students' Online Literature Reading—based on questionnaire survey and interview analysis in college students in 5 provinces of North China

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**Abstract.** In recent years, Online Literature has witnessed a flourishing development. On the one hand, given the mixed quality of online literary works, conducting research on the guidance of values in Online Literature can help college students develop a proper set of values. On the other hand, with the guidance of the Beijing Online Literature Center, we conducted a targeted survey among college students from 5 Northern-China provinces, obtaining first-hand empirical data and validating the genuine value orientation of college students towards online literary reading. It highlights the close connection between college students and online literary works, which ultimately provides practical and effective recommendations for guiding values in Online Literature. In conclusion, as the country begins to regulate the ecosystem of Online Literature, it is crucial to pay attention to the guidance of values in Online literary reading among college students.

## 1 Introduction

The Online Literature discussed in this paper mainly refers to "a new type of literary form based on the Internet era, which is different from traditional literary creation and has unique characteristics such as real-time feedback, openness, inclusiveness, innovation and change".<sup>[1]</sup>According to the "2022 China Online Literature Development Research Report"<sup>[2]</sup> released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on April 11, 2023, by the end of 2022, the size of the Online Literature market has reaching 38.93 billion, China's Online Literature users have reaching 492 million, online literary writers have exceeding 22.78 million, and overseas Online Literature access users have exceeding 901 million. However, despite the remarkable growth and prominence of Online Literature, there still exist significant research gaps that have not kept pace with the rapid advancements in this field. Thus, there is an imminent need to further explore and deepen the study of Online Literature.

## 2 The current status of research

The "Research Report" pointed out that both authors and readers have witnessed a distinct trend of "youthfulness" in the process of updating and iteration of Online Literature in recent years.<sup>[3]</sup>Approximately 40% of college students will take Online Literature as an important carrier for reading. Moreover, Nearly 51% of

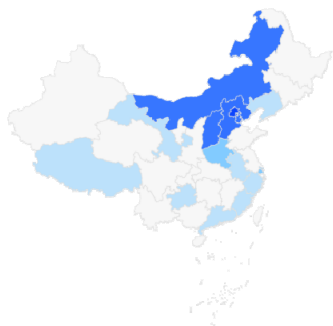
college students will take online literary works that conform to mainstream culture as their first choice, such as themes revolving around campus life, youthfulness and personal struggles. Additionally, There are also nearly 22%~25% of college students who tend to read joyful and relaxing works, hoping to improve their aesthetic taste, rather than expand their knowledge. The primary motivations for college students to engage with Online Literature are "leisure" and "utilizing fragmented time" effectively.<sup>[4]</sup>

## 3 Investigation process

### 3.1 Targets of investigation

The survey was conducted using the main methods of personal interviews and questionnaire surveys. First and foremost, the survey object is positioned as college students, and based on the results presented during the preliminary interviews, the scope of the study was narrowed down to college students in 5 provinces in North China (as shown in Figure 1). The questionnaire survey lasted for three months, and after targeted distribution of the questionnaires, the data was professionally collated and analyzed.

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**Fig. 1.** Distribution of samples in the questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered through the Questionnaire Star mini-program, the actual number of views of the questionnaire is more than 1,000 times, and the number of valuable recoveries is 668, while the remaining views were considered invalid and excluded from the analysis.

### 3.2. Investigation and research analysis of the current situation of college students' Online Literature reading in 5 North China provinces

Based on the survey conducted on the current situation of Online Literature reading among college students in 5 provinces in North China, we have analyzed the existing data, analyze the reading tendency behind the current situation of college students' reading, The following are the questionnaire topics and the corresponding results (as shown in Table 1).

**Table 1.** Content of the questionnaire on Online Literature

Question 1	When did you start reading?	Question 6	What kind of literature do you usually read?
Question 2	How often do you read?	Question 7	What kind of literature do you want to read?
Question 3	How many books do you read a year?	Question 8	How do you evaluate Online Literature?
Question 4	What do you know about it?	Question 9	How do you want it to develop?
Question 5	Why do you read it?	Question 10	How does it affect your values?

The questionnaire data show that the age when college students start to read Online Literature is mainly concentrated in elementary school, middle school and high school, but there are still a small number of students who begin to read Online Literature in college, which shows that the audience of Online Literature doesn't need to have a great knowledge reserve, and the easy-to-understand characteristics of Online Literature make it easier to be accepted by the public.

About 90% of the students usually read Online Literature, and about 60% of them "often read Online

Literature". Comparison of the questionnaire data shows that the number of students who read Online Literature is obviously more than those who never read it, which indicates that Online Literature has appeared in the reading life of most people. However, there are still 10% of college students who never read Online Literature, which shows that Online Literature is in a stage of gradual development and has not reached the age when everyone reads Online Literature.

When answering the question of how many Online Literature works they read in a year, 11.8% of college students read more than 50 books a year, 31.3% read 20-50 books, 25.13% read 10-20 books, and only 12.31% read less than 5 books, which is basically the same as the number of college students who read more than 50 books. Compared to the number of traditional Chinese literature read, this is really a surprising figure. The large number of readings can reflect the fact that the reading of Online Literature is becoming a new trend, with a quantitative advantage over paper books.<sup>[5]</sup>

In contrast to the desktop research, about 37% of the students have heard of Online Literature. However, it is surprising that 63% of students still possess a limited knowledge of Online Literature, which indicates that in the process of widespread dissemination of Online Literature, it has not reached a balanced development due to various reasons such as geography, urban and rural areas, etc. Moreover, this also indirectly reflects that the correct guidance for college students' cognition of Online Literature needs to be improved.

Most people read Online Literature for three main reasons: they want to spend their time happily (66.51%), have leisure time entertainment (59.74%) and enrich their insights (73.75%), which shows that Online Literature is not only a tool for entertainment, but also an important means for people to obtain knowledge. Readers can get pleasure from it as well as learn from it, then expand their horizons.<sup>[6]</sup>

The results of the research show that the majority of people (87.6%) read the type of Online Literature is the fantasy works, followed closely by popular literature (81.96%), and martial arts novels (81.16%). In contrast, historical fiction had the lowest readership rate(24.64%). By analyzing readers' favorite types of works we can explore the psychological factors behind their value orientation.

In the expectation of most college students, the Online Literature they want to read should firstly be Out-of-the-box thinking Online literature(73.59%) and conform to the logic of reality (64.57%). On the contrary, the demand for works with correct values (48.15%) and alignment with the mainstream culture (24.32%) instead takes the back seat. These statistics vividly illustrate the current value orientations of college students, and to a certain extent, they also reflect that Online Literature has not well played the role of guiding values that excellent literary works should have.

Most college students believe that Online Literature has various advantages, such as innovative plotlines (90.18%), rich content (85.51%), convenient to read (79.23%), easy to understand (79.07%) and so on. These

evaluations largely come from the characteristics of the medium of Online Literature dissemination, such as Jinjiang, Tomato Reading and other Online Literature reading platforms, which not only provide a convenient way for creators to create, but also make reading more accessible for the readers.

As for the development suggestions of Online Literature, nearly half of the college students hope that Online Literature develops in the direction of mainstream culture. It shows that college students' ideas match with the guidance of the CWA (China Writers Association), which is promoting the development of Online Literature in the direction of "mainstreaming, excellence and classicization", and such guidance has a strong sense of reality. However, as the previous data show, mainstreaming is not the first choice of college students in their own reading tendency, and the reasons behind such contrasting data are indeed worth our thinking.

From the data of the questionnaire, 90.02% of college students believe that Online Literature has influenced their values. During the interview process, numerous college students enthusiastically shared how Online Literature have had a positive impact on them, particularly when they are stressed or depressed. Furthermore, positive values conveyed through these works have the power to influence the readers' lives and significantly impact their future development.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **4 Direction for the future development of Online Literature**

### **4.1 Mainstreaming development**

In the era of information technology, short videos are playing an irreplaceable role in our life, and their attraction is indeed far greater than text reading. After the rapid growth of Online Literature in recent years, it has gradually come into the public's view. However, the production of Online Literature has also encountered certain issues. In order to alleviate the phenomenon of "incremental anxiety", some Online reading websites have begun selecting exciting short dramas, popular memes, or character tropes from online literary works and transforming them into micro-dramas, video comics, and audiobooks to attract readers. The IP change of Online novels is also developing gradually. As the "amplifier" of literary value, IP adaptation has always been an important path for industrial transformation, and it is highly likely that online literary IPs will play a significant role in the future as a major resource building upon the existing foundation.

### **4.2 Digital library**

The library's collection should not only consist of the classic literature but also keep up with the development of the times, providing students with more ways to contact Online Literature. The application practice of the "digital library" service of university libraries can bring

students a variety of reading options by introducing excellent online literary works, thus guiding college students to build a positive concept of Online literature, which will also be the future trend of university library services. This can guide college students to develop a positive and progressive perspective towards Online Literature, which is likely to become the future trend in the service approach of university libraries.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **4.3 Artificial Intelligence and Online Literature**

For creators, the development of AI technology is very fast, especially with the emergence of the latest ChatGPT, people have been able to utilize the tool to generate more fluent sentences and paragraphs. Making full use of the combination of new technologies and literary creation will enable the textual expression of literature to be integrated with various scenarios such as audio, video, virtual, augmented, etc., giving full play to the technological nature of Online Literature. This, in turn, can lead to the creation of high-quality online literary works.

## **5 Suggestions for the development of Online Literature**

### **5.1 Advice for college students**

College students should pay more attention to reality and avoid becoming obsessed with fictional worlds. When college students read Online Literature for the purpose of entertainment and rest, it is essential for them to distinguish fiction and reality. College students should not blindly get addicted to the fiction of Online Literature. Instead, it is advisable for students to choose literature that holds real significance and depth, fostering the pursuit of positive values and beliefs. Cultivate positive values, recognize the beauty of Chinese culture from the bottom of our hearts.

### **5.2 Advice for writers of Online Literature**

The issue of formulaic content will diminish the freshness and interest in a work for readers, as a result, some authors excessively cater to readers' demands, turning their online literary works into sensationalist and non-mainstream pieces. This can have a negative impact on shaping the values of college students. Therefore, the authors must maintain their moral boundaries, and it is crucial that authors do not cross the legal boundaries too.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Online Literature Regulators and Platforms**

As remarkable progress has been made in the construction of intellectual property laws in our country and the government's continuous efforts to strengthen copyright protection, Online literary platforms such as "Tomato Reading" are persistently cracking down on

piracy. Users are gradually awakening to the importance of copyright awareness, and the copyright environment is showing a positive trend year by year. The government should also strengthen the protection of copyright for online literary authors and establish an ecological governance pattern of "government guidance, industry self-discipline, technological empowerment, and public participation".<sup>[9]</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Every era should have a representative mainstream literary style, such as Tang poetry, Song Ci, Yuan opera in the past, and Online Literature should also become a representative mainstream literary style in the Internet era. Literature reading is one of the important ways of cultural activities, and good literature can guide readers to form correct values. As a tool for improving intellectual and moral qualities in contemporary literature, Online Literature deserves our significant attention.

At present, there are urgent issues to be addressed regarding college students' engagement in online reading, such as excessive focus on entertainment and leisure. Many online works only fulfill the needs of college students for leisure and entertainment to a certain extent, but fail to contribute to their healthy growth, which requires guidance from educational institutions, self-management by students, and a comprehensive and profound analysis of the influence of the Online culture. Only through the correct guidance from various aspects and the efforts of individual college students can students have the correct value point of view, read widely the works that can truly enrich their spiritual world, and constantly enhance their power to pursue their goals, so as to get comprehensive development and have a rich and full life.

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