

Chinese High School Students' Reception of American TV Series and Their Impact

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Abstract. In the era of increasingly developed Internet, American dramas are spreading more and more widely, and there are more and more kinds of them. This paper examines how young people reacted to American dramas when they were first introduced to China and the results that resulted from the broadcasting of the initially introduced American dramas, leading to the question of why CCTV in China did not later introduce American dramas with multiple subject genres. The researcher mainly studied the reception of information about American dramas by Chinese high school students, distributed questionnaires, and analyzed the data. According to the survey, most of the interviewees (Chinese high school students) processed the information about American dramas appropriately, and more or less produced the phenomenon of cultural adaptation, which is reflected in the fact that the contemporary Chinese high school students' aesthetics, consumerism, and the concept of love are different from the previous traditional concepts.

1 Introduction

Prior to undertaking the present study, the researcher conducted an analysis and investigation into the reasons why contemporary Chinese high school students are inclined to watch American dramas. The findings revealed that 92% of high school students perceive American dramas to be replete with subject matter. The vast majority of respondents (89.1%) indicated that American dramas can provide insights that are not readily apparent in Chinese dramas. The most fundamental reason for these findings is that the censorship systems for dramas in China and the United States are different. These systems limit the information that dramas can convey to viewers. The extent to which Chinese high school students can receive this unique, foreign information will be examined in a later section.

The researcher identifies the primary censorship standard for Chinese TV dramas as the prohibition of narratives in which the antagonist ultimately receives a positive resolution. This stipulation mandates that any portrayal of a malevolent character must either be morally justified or demonstrate a genuine transformation through repentance or corrective actions. It is imperative that the content of the play does not exhibit an excess of extravagance or scenes of opulence. Similarly, the portrayal of antagonists and negative characters should not be presented in a manner that is complimentary or sympathetic. Furthermore, the characters

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in the play should not be depicted as being in the initial stages of romantic love, smoking, or drinking if they are below the college level. The regulations governing the portrayal of homosexual love, same-sex intimacy, psychic images, and gory scenes in media content are numerous and rigorous. These restrictions apply to college students and above. The researcher then proceeded to delineate the standards for censorship of television series in the United States. Content pertaining to sexual activity, violence, gore, and profanity is evaluated according to the established regulations, which are classified into four principal categories: The TV-G rating is suitable for all audiences, while the TV-PG rating is intended for children under the guidance of a parent or guardian. The TV-14 rating is designed for children under the age of 14 who are also under the guidance of a parent or guardian. Finally, the TV-MA rating (also known as TV-M) is intended for individuals aged 17 and above.

The majority of high school students in China obtain information about Chinese TV dramas through a variety of channels, including pop-up advertisements on various apps, information pushed by film-viewing apps, the development and sale of TV drama derivatives (such as toys and clothing), tweets published by online writers producing relevant content, and discussions or recommendations by friends. The majority of Chinese high school students obtain information about American TV dramas via a single channel, which includes online video platforms and online news sources. Some students obtain information through social media or offline recommendations from friends. Although the channels of dissemination are relatively limited, the data from the questionnaire indicate that American TV series are widely disseminated among Chinese high school students.

The most significant distinction between Chinese and American television dramas lies in their content. In China, certain types of content are explicitly prohibited from being broadcast, whereas in the United States, the content is either permitted or prohibited based on the age of the viewers. For instance, violent and bloody content is allowed for adult audiences in the United States, whereas in China, regardless of the age of the viewers, such content is censored and cannot be broadcast. Consequently, Chinese television dramas are not permitted in China. In terms of subject matter, the United States TV series is comparatively more diverse, whereas Chinese TV series are predominantly focused on romance, with an audience demographic that is primarily younger. This is reflected in the output of classic works, with Chinese high school students discussing horror, gore, and other subjects such as film and television, and noting that the majority of these are produced abroad. It could be argued that there is a paucity of Chinese works in this area. Conversely, when discussing romance films, the number of Chinese works that can be named is considerable.

The results of a recent survey indicate that a significant majority of Chinese high school students have viewed at least one U.S. drama. This finding suggests that U.S. dramas are widely accessible and consumed among Chinese high school students.

This study examines the reception and influence of Chinese high school students on American dramas. There is a notable discrepancy between American and Chinese dramas, with the former offering a unique perspective that may not be accessible to students in the latter context. China's TV drama censorship system restricts the range of information types received by Chinese students. The ability of Chinese high school students to receive this restricted information is a topic worthy of further investigation. It would be beneficial to ascertain whether the scope of China is restriction on this type of information can be altered if Chinese high school students are able to access this type of information, and whether it has a positive impact.

2 Literature review

In reflecting on the 1980s and 1990s, we may consider the initial influx of American dramas into China and their subsequent broadcast on TV channels, which were initially approved by

CCTV due to the limitations of electronic technology. Despite the censorship of Chinese TV dramas, a significant discrepancy existed between the values expressed in these films and the prevailing national conditions in China. At that time, the social background and the youth group were experiencing significant pressure. In response, they began to imitate the plotlines of American dramas as a means of relieving stress, including those involving flying daggers, theft, and other similarly negative themes. This resulted in the broadcasting of these dramas being terminated. Since then, CCTV has largely ceased broadcasting American dramas [1]. Nevertheless, this has not impeded the dissemination of subsequent American dramas within China.

The researcher collated the studies of pertinent scholars from preceding years and discovered that the findings of the questionnaire, entitled "Survey on the Study of American Drama Audience in China," which was made available online in 2009, indicated that the primary demographic of American drama viewers was concentrated within the 15-25 age bracket [2]. It can be concluded that as early as 2009, Chinese teenagers constituted the majority of China's U.S. drama-viewing population, a trend that has become increasingly evident in the current year of 2024. American dramas represent a significant conduit through which Chinese high school students can gain insight into American culture, social structures, and ideological values [3]. Furthermore, Chinese high school students demonstrate a keen interest in foreign cultures and a willingness to engage with new and distinctive information.

The growth of online media has created a new avenue for American dramas to circumvent the censorship of Chinese TV dramas, directly entering the Chinese market. These film and television works exhibit a diverse range of forms and content, while also displaying distinctive American cultural characteristics [4]. American dramas encompass the portrayal of all social classes, reflecting the principle of realism in the discussion of social class issues in American dramas. This style of filming, which challenges conventional norms by combining writing and filming, has garnered recognition from numerous individuals and institutions [5]. The distinctive scheduling format of American dramas, which is designed to present a condensed and interconnected narrative, allows for a dynamic and engaging viewing experience. The interweaving of plotlines within a single episode creates a compelling and immersive story, even when the viewer is constrained by time. This format effectively addresses the challenge of limited leisure time faced by Chinese high school students, who often have limited opportunities to watch TV dramas in a single sitting [6]. The period of secondary education is characterized by a desire for autonomy and the freedom associated with the American drama culture. This is a natural phase of development for adolescents, who are seeking to establish their identity and exercise their autonomy [7]. This is one of the reasons why Chinese high school students like to watch American dramas. Whether or not Chinese high school students receive this new information has an impact on their cultural values, some people believe that the loss of traditional Chinese cultural concepts due to identification with American culture is a phenomenon of cultural erosion [4]. When new ideas and cultural values are introduced into China from outside, it is a challenge to the traditional Chinese way. Under this challenge, the Chinese audience is divided into two groups, the "new school" and the "old school". According to a survey, 96% or more of high school students in China belong to the "reformists" who are more favorable to Western products, eager to receive new information and culture, and even a small number of them are overly favorable and have expressed some extreme language and behavior.

When a person's exposure to a foreign culture leads to a change in their own values/consumption/relationships and everyday behaviour, this phenomenon is called acculturation[8].In this study, the developed Internet technology has greatly contributed to this phenomenon, and with the survey, it was learned that Chinese high school students have more or less seen this phenomenon, some imitated the main character's way of dressing in American dramas, and the aesthetics changed, and some people's view of love changed, and

the relationship in American dramas is mostly spontaneous, and the view that love is the most important thing.

As a group, high school students are in a period of physical and mental development, their ability to discriminate information is poor, their cultural/consumer values are highly malleable, and they are easily influenced by various concepts hidden in American dramas [9]. Chinese scholars believe that if Chinese viewers of American dramas endanger traditional Chinese culture because of their admiration for American culture, this is called a cultural security crisis in China, and the country must stop it [10].

Although many scholars have studied the reception of foreign TV dramas by different groups in China, few scholars or related articles have studied the reception of American dramas by Chinese high school students as a group.

3 Methodology

The research method used in this study was a quantitative research survey in which the researcher asked nine single-choice, five multiple-choice, and one open-ended fill-in-the-blank questions about one of the respondent's favorite American television shows. The selection criteria were that the questionnaires often took more than four minutes to complete, the fill-in-the-blank questions were more than 20 words long, and the questionnaires were created using the "Wen Juan Xing Star" app and distributed through various social media and online video platforms (Weibo, Xiao hongshu, etc.). The distribution period was five days and 126 questionnaires were returned, of which 83 were valid, invalid questionnaires being judged to be less than 1.5 minutes in length and with consistent or regular answers to multiple choice questions.

4 Results

At the beginning of the questionnaire, the researcher asked the respondents whether they had ever watched American dramas, and the results showed that ninety-seven percent or more of the high school students had had such an experience, a phenomenon that indicates that the majority of Chinese high school students have watched one or more American dramas, and that information about American dramas has spread particularly widely among this group. When asked how respondents usually get information about American dramas, online video platforms were chosen by the largest number of people (79.2 percent), followed by social media and online news (66.3 percent and 40.5 percent respectively), with only 10 percent of people getting their information from TV programs. When it comes to the types of American dramas that respondents like to watch most, suspense and action dramas topped the list with 29.7 percent of the total, while romantic dramas were chosen by the fewest number of respondents at only 9.3 percent, suggesting that Chinese high school students' viewing of American dramas is aimed at getting new and alternative information rather than romantic dramas, which are already saturated by the Chinese TV drama industry. The researcher investigated what platforms they usually watch American dramas on, and the results showed that 47.5 percent use RenRen TV, 36.6 percent use Bilibili to watch, and 14.8 percent use TikTok, the results are relatively homogeneous, although there are limited platforms to watch American dramas in China, it still doesn't affect the spread of them, before watching an American drama, most people like to check the online Before watching a U. S. drama, most people like to check the online reviews of the drama, and most of the reviews are written by bloggers on domestic short video platforms, which proves that the Internet is the main culprit in promoting cultural adaptation [3].

5 Discussion

The impact of the introduction of American dramas on Chinese high school students is mostly reflected in the change of cultural values/aesthetics or life patterns of high school students, for example, Chinese high school students unconsciously change their way of speaking, unconsciously imitate the dress of the characters in the dramas when watching American dramas, and pursue independence in their life/thinking and other behaviors after watching American dramas.

There are three aspects of this problem that need to be addressed, the first of which is a single source of access to information about American drama. One of the main reasons for this problem is that China has strict standards for TV series to be on the shelves, and these strict standards make it impossible for most American TV series to be on the shelves, and the essence of not being able to be on the shelves is that these TV series are not approved by the Chinese TV series censors. If it is a Chinese-compliant TV series, people can see the promotion around it everywhere, such as in-game insertion ads, and some offline products for co-branding activities, there are a lot of ways to promote it. This result has advantages and disadvantages, the first disadvantage, American drama contains a lot of Chinese TV series that dare not shoot the content, such as sex education, China's film and television industry talk about this topic is not obscure shy, resulting in a lack of sex education for many students, this time the United States drama is very good to make up for the vacancy; the second point, in the case of a single publicity channel has not yet affected the dissemination of the Chinese, then the disadvantage is that it is inconvenient to get relevant information. There are advantages to this outcome, as not banning foreign TV dramas can reduce cultural encroachment to some extent, and the researchers believe that China could slightly relax its screening standards for foreign TV dramas and impose a slight age restriction, for example, some TV dramas that contain scenes of gory violence could be restricted to viewers over the age of 20 if the scenes in question do not account for more than two-thirds of the drama. The single plot of domestic television dramas is the second problem. The essence of this phenomenon is the problem of China's TV drama audience. People in the working stage in China have almost no time to watch TV dramas, and although junior and senior high school students watch TV dramas, their viewing time is still not worth mentioning compared with the old retired people; in other words, the main force of watching TV dramas in China is the retired people, and most of the retired people in China prefer the romance genre to TV dramas. Most of the Chinese retired people's preference for TV dramas is mainly romance. As China's aging population grows, the market for romantic dramas is getting bigger and bigger, so much so that there is now a world of difference in the quality of all kinds of TV dramas in China, and in this trend, from the very beginning of liking to watch high-quality romantic TV dramas to the end of good quality TV dramas are only romantic dramas, and the quality of TV dramas is not good enough. However, according to the results of the survey, Chinese high school students like the type of TV series ranked love class ranked last, Chinese TV series can not meet the needs of students, which is the reason why American dramas are very popular among high school students, for this point, this thesis suggests that China's film and television to enrich the variety, involved in a variety of themes, in order to better promote the development of China's film and television industry. The third aspect concerns the limited platforms on which American drama can be viewed. Some similar APPs that specialize in watching foreign films and TV are fewer, and even some APPs broadcast American dramas without copyright, so it is very difficult for people to watch all kinds of copyrighted American dramas, and the researcher suggests that foreign film and TV platforms should be given help to watch foreign films and TV without suppression, and advocates the establishment of a regular copyrighted foreign film and TV platform.

6 Conclusion

This paper used quantitative research (questionnaire survey) to study the reception of information about American dramas by Chinese high school students. The researcher found that the vast majority of Chinese high school students are very willing to receive information about the culture and other information conveyed by American dramas, which is reflected in changes in consumption/cultural values/views of love and spiritual aesthetics. For the future, the researcher hopes that China can relax the examination system for American dramas and learn the method of dividing the age of American dramas, for a diversified spiritual life is essential for a person, and how to enrich the spiritual world of the Chinese people, the Internet (network media) has the right to decide, if everywhere you can see the publicity is only a kind of theme, it also loses the significance of the existence of TV dramas.

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