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Research on the construction of national cultural image of AI short videos from the perspective of image community

Xiaoran Jia*
School of Management, Communication University Of China, China
***Corresponding author E-mail: 2814164736@qq.com**

Abstract:
The continuous evolution of AI technology provides new ideas for the construction of national cultural image. This article takes the three adapted versions of the novel A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality as an example. First, by comparing the technical basis and narrative differences between the three in "literary drama, martial arts drama, environmental drama" and other drama types, it analyzes the cultural symbol presentation and narrative style characteristics of the AI short video version. Furthermore, through a questionnaire survey, we explored the image-building effect of AI videos and the audience's sense of national identity. Finally, combined with in-depth interviews, the audience's perception path of "Chinese traditional cultural images" in the AI short video version was explored from a psychological level. This article aims to clarify how technological iteration reshapes the presentation of cultural symbols and its impact on the audience's cultural cognition and identity, and provides theoretical and practical reference for cultural communication in the new technological era.

Keywords:
Image community, AI short video, National cultural image, Technology, The Legend of Mortal Cultivation as Immortality

1 Introduction

As AI technology gradually matures, human imagination has also ushered in new changes in screen presentation supported by technology. In particular, the continuous rise of online literature in our country, represented by the literature of cultivating immortals, has also provided imaginative material for AI videos. We have observed that AI short videos are constantly enriched in the field of video practice in novels about cultivating immortality, and online fantasy novels about cultivating immortality, including *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality*, have begun to materialize.

The phenomenon of combining the culture of cultivating immortals with new AI technology has brought new questions to the research: Does the technological material basis of AI short videos reconstruct the national cultural image? Compared with the traditional cultural image, does the national cultural image supported by AI short video technology have a greater improvement in image construction effect? From a psychological

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perspective, how does the traditional Chinese cultural image in this AI short video affect the audience's perception and attitude towards national culture? This deserves further in-depth study and discussion.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Research related to community theory

The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies first systematically proposed the concept of "community" in his 1887 book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Society). He distinguished the concept of community from the concept of society. Max Weber used a series of concepts to construct his own theory of community when discussing the relationship between the economy and social groups. Emile Durkheim proposed the concepts of "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity" and the "social solidarity" theory of community. It can be said that the origin of community theory has a distinct historical background and historical characteristics.

With the development of society, community theories mostly focus on exploring a community with a shared future for mankind and a community of the Chinese nation. At the level of research on the Chinese nation's community, scholar Fan Xiaochun (2025) based on the perspective of Marx's theory of spiritual production, analyzed the logical mechanism and practical requirements for consolidating the consciousness of the Chinese nation's community, and pointed out that it should start from realistic individuals, real communities and spiritual productivity. In terms of a community with a shared future for mankind, two scholars, Qin Qiwei and Han Pengjie (2025), analyzed from the levels of value connotation and practical theory, and pointed out that it is necessary to use the global mind-set pattern of "viewing the world from the perspective of the world" to provide Chinese solutions for global governance and demonstrate the responsibility of a great power in the modernization process. In addition, Qingjue and Bai Yunteng (2025) proposed that we should build two communities, the "Community of the Chinese Nation" and the "Community of a Shared Future for Mankind", and adhere to the core essence of advocating "truth", doing "goodness", only "accuracy" and daring to "fight" on the basis of exploring shared meanings, and further grasp the strategic initiative of international publicity.

So far, in the research on community theory, we can observe an obvious blank phenomenon in terms of image commonality, and relevant research is still lacking.

2.2 Research on AI short videos

The development of AI video generation technology has gone through several key stages: In the embryonic stage of the technology, researchers focused on video synthesis methods based on preset rules, but faced the limitations of single generation effects and insufficient scene adaptability. In 2014, the proposal of Generative Adversarial Networks (GAN) pushed the field into the stage of algorithm innovation. With the development of Diffusion Models and Transformer model architecture, AI-generated video content has gradually moved from early simple image animation synthesis to a stage that can achieve high-resolution, long-term, and high-reality complex videos. In 2024, Open AI released the video generation model Sora, marking that AI-generated videos have initially reached a quality level that can directly face the audience in real scenes. Chinese technology companies have also launched a series of video generation software, such as Kuaishou

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Keling AI, Bytedance Dream, Zhipu Qingying, etc., allowing users to create short videos conveniently.

At present, domestic research on AI short videos is still in the exploratory stage. Research on this topic will show a significant growth trend from 2023 onwards. Yu Guoming and Teng Wenqiang (2023) combined the perspective of information ecology to clarify the internal logic of the current iteration of short videos empowered by generative AI, and proposed that driven by the law of evolution, generative AI as a knowledge medium empowers the evolution of short videos to show three major characteristics: gradualism, group intelligence, and circularity. Based on the perspective of generative AI empowering ordinary users, Dai Mengting (2025) discussed that generative AI can lower the threshold of creation and promote content diversification. However, at the same time, this technology also brings about problems such as content homogenization, copyright disputes, and the spread of false information.

To sum up, most of the research on AI short videos analyzes the problem from a macro perspective, focusing on its impact, challenges and innovative applications; however, it ignores the micro perspective, and there are few discussions on specific situations and its impact on audience cognition.

2.3 Research related to the construction of national cultural image

2.3.1 Research on the macro construction of the overall national cultural image

This type of research may explore the influencing factors, necessity, and urgency of national cultural image construction from a macro perspective.Feng Yanli (2019) conducted a systematic discussion on the characteristics and components of national cultural image, and demonstrated the importance of national cultural image in improving the country's comprehensive national strength and the urgency of constructing a good national cultural image of China.Shen Zhuanghai and Wang Yunting (2021) analyzed the current situation of China's cultural image, discussed the opportunities and specific dilemmas and problems faced in constructing China's cultural image today, and then pointed out the specific goals and promotion strategies for constructing China's cultural image.

2.3.2 Research on the micro-construction of a specific country's cultural image

The research on national cultural image under this category mainly explores the construction of national cultural image through specific analysis of different elements of national cultural image in different carriers or channels.Chen Shihong and Hu Xiao'e (2024) analyzed the content of Beijing's cultural image construction by Douyin users, revealing the current status and construction characteristics of Beijing's cultural image on Douyin, and finally proposed specific countermeasures for using Douyin to construct the city's cultural image.Lu Lu and Li Shengjiang (2024) systematically discussed the specific cultural connotation of the Grand Canal and its contemporary value for national cultural construction, pointed out that the Grand Canal plays a positive role in the construction and dissemination of national cultural images, and put forward specific suggestions for using the Grand Canal to construct a positive national cultural image.

2.3.3 Research on the role of short videos in building national cultural image

In terms of research on the value and significance of short videos in constructing China's cultural image, *Short Video Communication and National Image Construction in the Social Media Era* published by Dong

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Yuanyuan and Tian Chen, from the perspective of visual persuasion, analyzes the visual symbols of short videos currently on social media in my country, explores their communication methods, examines their persuasive skills and their role in constructing the national image, and makes suggestions for the future development of short videos for national image.

In terms of research on the performance and effect of short videos in constructing Chinese cultural images, Shu Xiaomei and Dong Chuanli, in *Reception of Short Videos by Foreign Students in China and Cognition of China's National Image*, from the perspective of audience acceptance, used a questionnaire survey to focus on the recognition, understanding, acceptance and construction of the Chinese national image in short videos by foreign students in China as cross-cultural practitioners, providing new ideas for the research on cross-cultural adaptation and cross-cultural education of foreign students in China.

In terms of research on the ways and strategies of short videos in constructing China's cultural image, Xie Qin conducted research from a semiotic perspective. Taking the series of short videos *China One Minute* launched by *People's Daily* as an example, he pointed out that only by adhering to the civilian perspective and adapting the production of symbols of "national image" to the current communication context of short videos can the communication effect be improved.Scholar Du Shiyao 's *Research on Video Communication Strategies of Mainstream Media "Telling Chinese Stories Well"* takes the video communication of *People's Daily* on the YouTube platform as the research object, and analyzes the communication strategies of my country's mainstream media in "telling Chinese stories well" to the outside world based on data performance and text presentation: self-shape and present a rich and three-dimensional national image from multiple angles; use short video communication form to cater to the fragmented media contact habits of global audiences; use emotional communication strategies to attract emotional resonance from the audience; and use micro narratives to tell people's stories.

In the process of searching for literature, we found that since AI short videos have only begun to develop gradually in recent years, there are very few studies on the impact of AI short videos on the construction of national cultural images, and most of them are on ordinary short videos. With the development of smart media, AIGC has gradually become popular, and technologies such as Vincent pictures and Vincent videos have continued to improve. Our research should also keep pace with the times and explore its contribution to the construction of Chinese cultural image in the context of new technologies. Therefore, this article starts from the perspective of image community and explores the following issues:

RQ1: Does the technological material basis of AI short videos reconstruct the national cultural image?

RQ2: Does the national cultural image supported by AI short video technology have a greater improvement in image construction effect compared with the traditional cultural image?

RQ3: From a psychological perspective, how does the traditional Chinese cultural image in this AI short video affect the audience's perception and attitude towards national culture?

3 Research Methods

Starting from the perspective of national cultural image construction, this article comprehensively uses

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content analysis, questionnaire survey and in-depth interview methods to conduct a comparative study based on the researcher's own viewing experience, other participating questionnaires and interviewers' viewing feelings and evaluations.

3.1 Content analysis method

This study adopts the content analysis method and takes the film and television drama version, animation version and AI short video version of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality* as the main research objects. Taking the important plot scenes in the three versions as the research objects, such as Han Li's first entry into Yellow Maple Valley, Han Li's farewell to Mo Caihuan, Han Li's battle with the Yue Emperor, etc., 30 plot clips from the film and television drama version, 31 plot clips from the animation version, and 31 plot clips from the AI version were finally selected for content coding. This study conducts an in-depth analysis of the presentation of cultural symbols and narrative styles of the three based on differences in technical paths, thereby revealing how the technological material basis of AI short videos builds a national cultural image.

3.2 Experimental method

This study conducted a questionnaire survey on the audience who watched different versions of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality* to answer the question "RQ2: Is the image construction effect of the national cultural image supported by AI short video technology more improved than the traditional cultural image?" The research divided the audiences who participated in the survey into three groups. The members of the three groups were those who had watched the animation version, the film and television drama version, and the AI version of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality*. After collecting the questionnaires, the content of the questionnaires was sorted out to obtain an analysis of the audience's understanding of different versions of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality*, traditional cultural perceptions and interests, and emotional communication.

3.3 In-depth interview method

This study strictly followed scientific standards and conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with a total duration of 15 minutes each for 7 interviewees aged between 20 and 30 who had watched three versions of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality* respectively. The interview activity officially started on October 5, 2025, and ended successfully on November 5, 2025. Through interviews, we can understand the audience's understanding and attitude towards the traditional culture conveyed by different versions of *A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality*, as well as their thoughts on how to construct China's national cultural image.

The interview process was conducted via online telephone communication and offline face-to-face communication. Real-time records were always maintained during the interview process to ensure smooth communication and accurate information. Subsequently, all interviews were compiled into verbatim transcripts, which laid a solid foundation for subsequent in-depth analysis.

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4 Research Findings

4.1 Presentation and narrative style of cultural symbols under different technical paths

4.1.1 The stability of narrative structure and character configuration

AI video generation relies on large cross-modal models, which can convert instructions in the form of text, images, videos, etc. at the input end into video form at the output end. First, image-based video is based on existing images, expanding and extending the details in the image to form a dynamic video. Second, Vincent Video. Vincent Video generates video content by inputting a text command. Through the Transformer model, text can be converted into video tokens after input, and the video can be output after feature fusion. Third, video generates video, that is, using the content of existing videos to derive another or multiple related videos. Compared with image-generated videos, video-generated videos are more technically difficult and their current application scope is smaller.

In terms of narrative structure and character configuration, the AI short video version can be based on a given series of text or picture instructions, based on the type of scenes or specific plots of "martial arts, literary drama, environmental drama", through the path of Wensheng video, Pictures video, and Video videos to present AI short videos. Based on deep learning algorithms, combined with technologies such as image recognition and natural language processing, and through the analysis and training of massive data, AI technology is continuously improved to achieve automatic synthesis of characters and scenes and the re-creation of emotional effects. The current AI-generated videos can already show the audience a relatively complete storyline and logical character relationships. For example, in the plot of Han Li's battle with the Golden-Armed Mantis, the AI short video version completely showed Han Li's "circulation-escape-counterattack-victory" process.

At the narrative level, the film and television drama version, animation version and AI version all follow the basic framework of advanced cultivation of immortality. Han Li's path to immortality needs to go through different stages such as the Qi refining stage, the foundation building stage, the elixir formation stage, and the Nascent Soul stage. In terms of character configuration, the three editions have weakened Han Li's "self-interested" characteristics in the original work and added emotional motivations with more universal value. The appearance of supporting characters is no longer solely for the protagonist's path to immortality. The three editions retain iconic characters such as Nangong Wan and Li Feiyu, strengthening the emotional connection between Han Li and his family, Mo Caihuan and other characters.

Table 1 shows that there is no significant difference in the type and duration of scenes between the three versions, indicating that martial arts dramas dominate and short clips within 5 minutes have become the common rhythm of cross-media narratives. Table 2 further shows that the average number of characters in the three versions is stable, with $\chi^2 < 0.2$, indicating that the character size and relationship network remain highly stable in cross-media adaptations, laying the foundation for the narrative framework of AI short videos.

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Table 1 Comparison of narrative structure dimensions

Version	Number of samples	Scene type Mean±SD	Scene duration Mean±SD	F-value	p-value
Film and television drama	30	1.73±0.83	1.73±0.74	0.12	0.887
Animation	31	1.71±0.82	1.68±0.71	0.21	0.812
AI short video	31	1.68±0.84	1.65±0.66	-	-

Table 2 Number of characters and relationship occurrence rate (%)

Version	Number of characters Mean±SD	≥5 people scene%	Master and disciple%	Beauty%	Enemy%	χ^2	p
Film and television drama	2.73±0.83	26.7	23.3	20.0	36.7	<0.2	>0.05
Animation	2.77±0.85	29.0	25.8	22.6	35.5	<0.2	>0.05
AI short video	2.77±0.85	29.0	25.8	22.6	35.5	<0.2	>0.05

4.1.2 Homogenization of technical quality and differentiation of fidelity

In terms of technical quality, AI videos are becoming increasingly mature. The application of intelligent restoration, image synthesis, color adjustment and other technologies has improved the quality of video images, and the resolution and frame rate have continued to increase. Secondly, although the connection between plots in AI short videos is weak, independent plots can be presented without lag. Most AI video characters move smoothly, the rhythm is well controlled, and the background sound adapts to the picture.

Table 3 shows that from the perspective of fluency, the average value of the film and television drama version, AI version, and animation version is ≥2.93, and the stutter rate is 0. In terms of clarity, the average value of the three versions is ≥2.83. It can be seen that the smoothness and clarity of AI videos are relatively high these days, and the underlying technical indicators in this dimension of movies, TV dramas, and animations tend to be homogeneous.

From the perspective of sound effects, the presentation method of the AI version of the picture reflects the dual value of "visual and auditory", and its multi-modal form enhances the overall expressiveness of the short video. AI generation technology matches differentiated soundtracks based on character settings and plots, such as exciting, sad music or various environmental sounds, eliminating the need for post-production dubbing, enhancing the audience's immersion while improving production efficiency. If the original sound quality is insufficient, AI can be optimized through digital processing to make the sound more three-dimensional and textured, helping creators create more attractive works.

In terms of sound effect design in Table 4, the usage rate of "background music, action sound effects, and environmental sound effects" in the three versions is between 80% and 97%, and special sound effects are only about 13%, indicating that there are no differences in sound effect design between versions, and they

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have tended to be templated. AI short videos can already achieve three-level packaging of "video + vocals + BGM/sound effects".

Table 3 Comparison of technical quality dimensions

Version	Presentation Mean±SD	Fluency Mean±SD	Clarity Mean±SD	F value	F value	p value
Film and television drama	2.97±0.18	2.93±0.25	2.83±0.38	86.7	2.28	0.108
Animation	2.97±0.18	2.97±0.18	2.97±0.18	96.8	-	-
AI short video	2.97±0.18	2.97±0.18	2.97±0.18	96.8	-	-

Table 4 Sound effect usage frequency (%)

Version	BGM%	Action sound effects%	Environmental sound effects%	Special sound effects%	χ^2	p-value
Film and television drama	96.7	83.3	80.0	13.3	≈0	>0.05
Animation	96.8	80.6	80.6	12.9	≈0	>0.05
AI short video	96.8	80.6	80.6	12.9	≈0	>0.05

However, the information presented in the real world is a complex system composed of text audio, vision, sensors and human tactile senses. The film and television drama version uses real people to shoot to restore the different moods of the characters in the novel to the greatest extent, thereby showing the complex personalities of the characters. In the plot of Han Li's counterattack against Doctor Mo: in the early days, Han Li was full of gratitude and trust in Doctor Mo's teachings; later, Han Li gradually discovered Doctor Mo's conspiracy, and he chose to tolerate it temporarily; in the end, he succeeded in counterattack, and his ruthless and decisive side was also revealed. The actors' interpretation further enhances the audience's sense of immersion, allowing the audience to feel that the characters are not black and white. The film and television drama version shows human nature more profoundly than the animation version and AI version. Secondly, the film and television drama version uses real-life shooting, abandoning background cutouts, and travels to many places in Zhejiang, Guizhou, and Xinjiang. Whether it is the landscape wooden houses in the Shenshou Valley, the falling leaves in the Yellow Maple Valley, or the desolation and weirdness of the Bloody Forbidden Land, wherever the camera sweeps, it not only allows us to appreciate the mysterious and hazy world of cultivating immortals, but also avoids the audience's aesthetic fatigue, and feels the charm of Eastern aesthetics in the great rivers and mountains of the motherland.

The principle of the AI version is to use algorithm generation, multi-modal synthesis and other technologies to reassemble visual symbols. At the level of digital humans or action imitation, AI does not have the ability

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to understand characters, experience emotions, and perform creative interpretations. At the level of simulating reality, AI's understanding of physical laws is very rudimentary, which can easily cause deviations from the real world, leading to a reduction in the credibility of AI videos, and ultimately resulting in significant differences in the degree of realism between the AI version, the animation version, and the film and television drama version.

Table 5 shows that the AI version is lower than the film and television drama version in three dimensions: character simulation, special effects simulation, and environment simulation. In particular, the character simulation dimension is significantly lower than the film and television drama version. This shows that "real-person shooting" is a key factor in building visual reality. AI relies on digital generation technology to form a gradient difference in realism from the film and television drama version.

Table 5 Comparison of fidelity (%)

Version	Character Simulation%	Special Effects Simulation%	Environment Simulation%	F value	p value	Post hoc LSD
Film and television drama	73.3	73.3	80.0	68.3	<0.001***	Film and television drama>AI>Animation
Animation	9.7	77.4	80.6	0.42	0.658	-
AI short video	38.7	67.7	74.2	0.74	0.482	-

4.1.3 Inheritance and activation of traditional cultural symbols

The intelligent audio-visual production model creates new possibilities for the inheritance and revitalization of China's excellent traditional culture. The excellent traditional Chinese culture carries the unique spiritual identity of the Chinese nation and is an indispensable part of contemporary social and cultural life. In AI short videos, human creators are responsible for creative planning and aesthetic guidance. They need to build a complete and personalized prompt system to guide AI tools to accurately realize creative intentions. As an efficient content executor, artificial intelligence can quickly transform ideas into audio-visual language and promote the rapid production of audio and video cultural products. However, at present, when AI presents traditional cultural elements, it still needs to rely on a large amount of manual prompts for content correction. Creators need to continuously input text instructions to help AI tools optimize learning, and the generated content can be continuously optimized through multi-angle and multi-frequency input.

Table 6 shows that in terms of three types of visual symbols: character clothing, background images, and special effects skills, the usage rate of the animation version is significantly higher than that of AI short videos and film and television dramas, and the post-hoc comparison shows the gradient of "animation>AI>film and television" ($p<0.001$). Although the concentration of symbols in AI short videos is lower than that of animations, it is still significantly higher than that of film and television dramas. Through the restoration of ancient architecture, the depiction of a series of props such as "Shenfeng Boat", and the grasp of Taoism and Confucianism, it shows the inheritance and reconstruction of the traditional world of immortality, and can effectively construct cultural narratives and spread Chinese traditional symbols.

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Table 6 Frequency of use of traditional cultural symbols (%)

Symbol Category	Film and Television Drama%	Animation%	AI Short Video%	F-value	p-value	Post-event LSD
Character clothing	23.3	80.6	51.6	42.9	<0.001***	Animation>AI>Film and television drama
background screen	30.0	80.6	54.8	25.7	<0.001***	Animation>AI>Film and television drama
Special effects skills	3.3	71.0	32.3	59.2	<0.001***	Animation>AI>Film and television drama
Props	36.7	48.4	35.5	1.38	0.257	-

4.1.4 Summary

AI short video technology is becoming increasingly mature, and its narrative structure and character configuration can remain stable without departing from basic character relationships and main plots; technical indicators such as sound effect packaging, clarity, and fluency are gradually converging, demonstrating the audio-visual value of AI short videos. The difference is mainly concentrated in the degree of realism. Film and television dramas rely on "real-person shooting" to build a sense of reality and build a bridge of trust with the audience. However, AI short videos can still effectively construct Chinese traditional cultural narratives and the dissemination of Chinese traditional symbols. This process requires a large amount of manual content correction and multi-angle and multi-frequency input to continuously optimize the generated content.

4.2 Research on the image construction effect of AI videos and national identity

4.2.1 Cross-analysis of viewing frequency and version

The dissemination of the AI version mostly relies on short video platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou. However, due to the fragmentation and algorithmization of the short video platform itself, the production of the AI version is more inclined to dense narrative, showing the plot by stacking cool points. And due to the limitations of AI technology itself, AI-generated videos have stiff facial expressions and occasionally distorted background environments. The platform recommends the AI version to users based on algorithms. Users tend to criticize AI for its curiosity and choose to quickly skip such videos. According to the "use and gratification" theory, when users find that the AI version of the video cannot satisfy their basic conception of "*A Mortal's Cultivation of Immortality*", they will revise their original media expectations and devote more attention to other versions of the work.

The anime version has been broadcast exclusively on Station B. Since the series was launched in 2020, 100 episodes have been updated steadily every week, cultivating users' habit of following updates, and some users will choose to watch it in depth. Fans have witnessed the complete process of the protagonist Han Li's step-by-step transformation from a village boy to a strong man, forming a strong emotional bond with the series.

The film and television drama version has attracted a large number of female users with its star cast and more popular narratives, and has also brought significant traffic drainage effects to the animation version. But Zhuyu comes first. Although the Douban score of the film and television drama version has been stable at

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around 7.5 since it was aired, it has been facing criticisms such as “unsuitable actors” and “magic changes to the plot”. Its user stickiness is weaker than the anime version.

The data shows that the animation version has the highest proportion of “frequently watched” audiences, which is significantly higher than the AI version, indicating that its core users have the strongest stickiness; the AI version has the highest “occasional viewing” proportion of audiences, and the lowest “frequent viewing” proportion, reflecting that its audience is mainly shallow viewing.

Table 7 Cross-analysis of viewing frequency and version preference (unit: %)

Viewing frequency	Animation version (n=22)	Film and TV drama version (n=18)	AI version (n=17)	Overall (N=57)	Viewing frequency
watch often	31.8	22.2	17.6	24.6	31.8
watch occasionally	59.1	66.7	70.6	61.4	59.1
Read it completely	9.1	11.1	11.8	12.3	9.1
In-depth research	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0

4.2.2 Comparison between versions of core evaluation dimensions

At the level of traditional cultural perception, the animation version and the film and television drama version are through the ingenious combination of traditional culture and character design (such as the use of Yin-Yang and Five Elements theory to shape the character's spiritual root attributes, fighting special effects, and character clothing), and the innovative integration of ancient architecture and modern aesthetics (such as the integration of “Tianxing City” It combines the elegance of Jiangnan water towns, the elegance of Huizhou architecture and the romance of European architecture), as well as the use of traditional cultural symbols (such as Chinese painting, calligraphy, martial arts, lacquerware, tea, Chinese medicine, etc.), carefully carving out every detail of the picture, and integrating traditional cultural elements into the art of cultivating immortality.

As a creative tool, the core principle of AI technology is to use AI models to learn “static content patterns” and “dynamic timing relationships” in massive video data, and then generate continuous and logical video frame sequences based on inputs such as text and images. This does not stem from the deep core of traditional culture and people's understanding of traditional culture. At the level of traditional cultural perception, although the AI version can generally display cultural elements such as shields and flying swords, the connotations such as “Tao follows nature”, “Hidden skill in clumsiness”, and “Using obscurity to make things clear” are difficult for the audience to perceive.

In terms of emotional communication, the animation version uses high-definition rendering, three-dimensional modeling, dynamic capture, artificial intelligence-assisted creation and other technologies to greatly improve the efficiency of animation production and the artistic expression of the work. The animation production team carefully polished the script and performed dubbing that fit the character's characteristics to portray Han Li's cautious and low-key traits in detail, which also deepened the audience's recognition of his trait

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of planning and taking action. The film and television drama version is based on real-person interpretation and real-life shooting. It can not only show the vast mountains and rivers of the motherland and the beautiful scenery, but also show the different emotions of the characters with more realistic body language and facial expressions, arousing emotional resonance from the audience.

Generative AI can imitate the expression of human emotions through algorithm analysis. With the help of programmed and structured visual grammar, it has basic emotional communication functions and sets the overall emotional tone for the video. However, compared with the animation version and the film and television drama version, the AI version still lacks in emotional communication. “Humanity” is the most essential characteristic of emotion. The lack of emotional depth and complexity makes AI-generated content often superficial and lacks deep connections with human emotions.

Based on the above, users are significantly less interested in the AI version than the animation version and the film and television drama version.

According to the three core evaluation directions of “traditional cultural perception”, “emotional communication” and “interest”, 5 specific dimensions (1-5 points scale, higher scores mean better evaluation) are set to compare the differences in evaluations of different versions of the audience. The results show that the audience's evaluation of the AI version is lower than that of the animation version and the film and television drama version, and the audience's recognition of the AI version is weaker.

Table 8 Comparison of means of core evaluation dimensions of audiences in different versions (M±SD)

Evaluation dimension	Animation version (n=22)	Film and television drama version (n=18)	AI version (n=17)
Traditional cultural perception (clothing)	4.18±0.37	4.00±0.34	3.94±0.38
Traditional cultural perception (special effects props)	4.27±0.39	4.11±0.36	3.94±0.43
Traditional cultural perception (background)	4.50±0.42	4.22±0.38	4.06±0.45
Conveying character emotions	4.36±0.35	4.28±0.32	3.88±0.41
traditional cultural interests	3.95±0.44	3.78±0.40	3.47±0.46

One-way analysis of variance was performed on the five evaluation dimensions to test the statistical significance of the differences between versions. The results are shown in the table ($p<0.05$ indicates a significant difference, $p<0.01$ indicates an extremely significant difference). The data shows that the difference between the versions in the dimension of “Character Emotional Communication” is the most significant, indicating that the AI version is far weaker than the film and television drama version and the animation version in conveying character emotions, and the characters and plots are difficult to resonate with the audience. The differences between the versions in “background traditional cultural perception, special effects props traditional cultural perception, and traditional cultural interest” have all reached a statistically significant level, indicating that the AI version has deficiencies in the use of traditional cultural symbols, and it is difficult for viewers to become interested after watching it.

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Table 9 One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results of core evaluation dimensions

Evaluation dimension	Mean square (MS)	F value	p value
Traditional cultural perception (background)	Between = 0.87; Within = 0.17	5.12	0.009
Traditional cultural perception (special effects props)	Between = 0.53; Within = 0.16	3.31	0.044
Traditional cultural perception (clothing)	Between = 0.28; Within = 0.13	2.15	0.126
Conveying character emotions	Between = 0.92; Within = 0.13	7.08	0.002
traditional cultural interests	Between = 1.05; Within = 0.19	5.53	0.006

4.2.3 Summary

The AI version can display basic traditional cultural elements, allowing the audience to form a certain perception of traditional culture through ancient architecture, utensils, clothing, etc. However, compared with the film and television drama version and animation version, the AI version is still at a disadvantage. When making AI short videos, through certain technical design and governance intervention, the AI output content is consistent with the original intention of the producer, thereby achieving the "value alignment" between AI and humans. In terms of emotional communication, although AI has achieved basic emotional communication functions with the help of algorithm programs, it obviously has shortcomings in the personification of emotions. In the future, it still needs to be carefully debugged to promote the empathic communication of AI-generated content.

4.3 The perception path of Chinese traditional cultural images in AI short videos at the psychological level

4.3.1 Technical details

From the perspective of picture quality, two interviewees believed that AI short videos visually reconstructed traditional Chinese cultural elements through technical means. Interviewee S2 mentioned: "AI extracts traditional cultural elements from their original cultural context and logic, and reorganizes and recreates them as pure visual symbols." With its powerful inspiration material library, AI uses ink and wash style in the theme of cultivating immortals, presenting a good picture composition, and the use of light and shadow is also just right. The AI version brings new vitality to traditional culture in a new form of expression.

In terms of picture clarity, the AI version of the picture can clearly see a series of details such as character clothing, props and special effects. Interviewee S7 mentioned: "The AI version of the video is still very clear and has a good look and feel." The AI version is dedicated to simulating the real physical world and rendering the picture with high resolution to generate more vivid and realistic visual content. Starting from the new perspective of "intelligent technology empowers the presentation of traditional culture", the audience learned about the various possibilities of visual presentation of traditional culture, which provided certain ideas for the subsequent production of related immortality content.

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In terms of narrative rhythm, four interviewees believe that there are problems such as jumps and large spans in the narrative and rhythm of AI short videos. The AI version performs well in the presentation of a single plot, with smooth and silky character movements and clean and natural background images. But it prefers to simply list the plots, and there is a serious sense of separation between the plots. As interviewee SI said: "In the AI short video clips, the plots are as scattered and inconsistent as PPT projections." The AI version allows the audience to understand the general direction of the plot, but it cannot express the characters in depth, and it is naturally difficult for the audience to form an understanding of specific characters, let alone build a framework for Chinese traditional culture.

4.3.2 Visual image

From the perspective of character modeling, all seven interviewees believe that AI technology lacks the ability to capture true emotions in character creation. Characters' expressions and movements are mechanical and stiff, lacking the natural expression of real actors' performances, and lacking the artistic amplification of emotional details in animation. Interviewee S1 mentioned: "The behavior of the characters is generally smooth. But the movements such as running are very mechanical, like characters in the game. And the voices of the characters are very mechanical, and you can clearly hear that they are dubbed by an AI program." Take the plot of Han Li versus the Golden-Armed Mantis as an example: when Han Li first met the Golden-Armed Mantis, the audience was unable to perceive the caution of the character itself, the intensity of the fight, and the tense atmosphere of the environment. Later, when Han Li used the inverted Five Elements Formation to subdue the monsters, it was also difficult to capture the relaxed and joyful mood of the characters. This kind of emotional emptiness makes the character lack the core of the character and reduces it to a simple "visual symbol"; it is also difficult for the audience to have a sense of substitution during the viewing process.

In terms of presenting traditional cultural symbol elements, AI extracts traditional cultural elements from the original cultural context and logic and recreates them as pure visual symbols. However, its processing of traditional cultural elements has obvious templates, monotony, and even principled distortions. Interviewee S6 mentioned: "Both the Mother Blade and the Inverted Five Elements Formation have shadows of traditional culture, but after AI processing, they are completely different from the original ones. Even the Inverted Five Elements Formation has six elements." This presentation method that deviates from the traditional cultural prototype will not only affect the audience's correct understanding of traditional culture, but also lead to the public's distrust of cultural expressions in AI works. AI still has a lot of room for improvement in spreading and promoting culture.

4.3.3 Emotional substitution

Some interviewees have a positive attitude towards the performance of the AI version. AI technology is on the road of continuous development and progress. We can see exquisite costumes, strange monsters and beautiful scenery from AI videos. In the past, traditional culture seemed to be at a certain distance from us. However, the emergence of the AI version has enabled traditional culture to keep pace with the times and bring it closer to modern life in a new way of presentation. The rapid changes in technology have brought new ideas for spreading traditional culture, which in turn has inspired the audience to actively explore traditional culture. Three interviewees mentioned: "My biggest feeling from the AI version is the diverse presentation of

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traditional Chinese culture. This new presentation aroused my curiosity. I will also look up relevant information after watching it, and try to debug the AI version myself."

But we have to admit that the AI version still has many shortcomings. Four interviewees were negative about the quality of cultural expression in AI. All seven respondents ranked the AI version as their least favorite. Respondent S5 said: "I just feel like I have watched an ordinary short video, and I will not pay special attention to the cultural elements in it, nor will it arouse interest in traditional culture." First, the images presented by the AI version are monotonous and severely templated; the characters are stiff and hollow, lacking soul; the plot narrative is poorly controlled, with jumps and incoherence problems. Second, AI technology dissolves the core of traditional culture. If not carefully checked, it will convey wrong traditional cultural elements and destroy the integrity of the culture itself. Thirdly, the AI version focuses on the display of spectacle and ignores the emotional core. The audience is in the role of bystanders, making it difficult to empathize with the characters, and the overall communication effect is greatly reduced. All of the above will affect the audience's willingness to accept the spread of traditional culture through AI videos, and may even resist the spread of the AI version, believing that it cannot carry the country's cultural image.

4.3.4 Summary

The AI version performs well in terms of picture quality. Advanced intelligent technology provides new ideas for the modern dissemination of traditional culture. It is more modern than the film and television drama version and the animation version. However, there are deficiencies in character expression and cultural presentation. It is difficult for the audience to understand the character's personality traits and the core of the character, and sometimes the wrong presentation of traditional cultural prototypes can mislead the audience. In this regard, we must maintain speculative thinking and repeatedly debug generative AI videos to better satisfy the audience's oriental fantasies.

5 Summary and Reflection

Stiegler once put forward the point of representation, pointing out that technology is a representation that people use to make up for their own shortcomings. As a compensatory medium, AI has reduced the labor costs, capital costs, and technology costs of traditional film, television, dramas and animations. The general public can also participate in the production of related dramas through AI video software such as Jimeng AI, Keling AI, Sora, etc. This greatly enhances the public's sense of participation and transforms traditional audiences into producers and consumers.

AI technology continues to improve. The clarity, fluency, expression, and character configuration stability of AI short videos are similar to those of film and television dramas and animations. The good picture quality enables the audience to fully immerse themselves in the plot narrative. At the level of traditional cultural communication, the technical materiality of AI short videos has reconstructed the symbolic presentation density and style of Chinese cultural images. The expression form of the AI version caters to the aesthetic trend of contemporary audiences, and the use of intelligent technology constructs a modern expression of Chinese traditional culture. And the short duration is in line with the communication logic of the short video platform, and the push range is wider, attracting audiences from different circles to stop and watch.

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But at present, AI videos mainly influence audience perception through visual spectacle and symbol stacking. The film and television drama version relies on real-life shooting to enhance the overall expressiveness and appeal. The animated version uses professional motion capture technology, combined with the real-time rendering of Unreal Engine (UE), to create a smooth and realistic animation plot. Compared with the above, there are significant differences in the degree of realism of the AI version. Its simulation of the physical world is not mature enough, and the character performance is stiff and hollow, making it difficult for the audience to be emotionally involved. Secondly, the presentation of traditional cultural symbols also lurks the risk of alienation. If not carefully adjusted, it will mislead the audience's perception and be detrimental to the shaping of China's national cultural image. In short, AI videos still have a lot of room for improvement in promoting deep emotional identification and forming a solid image community.

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