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Article

# Imbalance and Reconstruction: Problem Representation and Multidimensional Optimization of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Children's Picture Books

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## Abstract

Integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books not only enhances cultural identity but also promotes the comprehensive development of children's cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic abilities. This study analyzes the content of 120 children's picture books and conducts in-depth interviews with 15 preschool teachers to identify issues in the integration of traditional Chinese culture into these books, including themes, type adaptation, implementation pathways, and media forms. The study further explores the core contradictions in this integration: the misalignment between cultural perception and cognitive schemas, the imbalance between creative logic and educational efficacy, the systemic rupture between thematic fields and interconnected networks, and the overreach of media representation and meaning transformation. Based on these findings, four optimization pathways are proposed: (1) innovative mechanisms for repairing cultural symbols and replanting values, (2) dynamic adaptation between creative supply and cognitive demand, (3) restructuring of mechanisms for educational empowerment and collaborative consensus, and (4) system reengineering of media repair and modal coordination. These measures aim to achieve the deep inheritance of traditional Chinese culture in children's picture books and improve educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** children's picture books; excellent traditional Chinese culture; content adaptation; cultural transmission; educational optimization

## 1. Introduction

The implementation of Chinese excellent traditional culture education in the kindergarten system is a fundamental practice in line with the policy guidelines of the "Opinions on Implementing the Inheritance and Development Project of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture", which emphasizes its integration into early childhood education and the creation of series of picture books, nursery rhymes, children's songs, and animations (Zhou, 2021; Yang & Xu, 2024; Xu, 2025). This initiative not only pertains to young children's initial understanding of cultural symbols but also points to the deep construction of their cultural identity (Yang, 2021; Zhang & Wang, 2022). Research indicates that cultural education in early childhood plays a significant role not only in the transmission of knowledge but also in the development of children's emotions, values, and aesthetic abilities (Zhang & Wang, 2022; Xu, 2025).

Picture books, as a key medium for cultural enlightenment, occupy an important place in children's education [0] (Shao, 2018). With their unique emotional resonance, visual storytelling, rich emotional connotations (Wang & Li, 2025), audiovisual effects, and interactive features (Deng & Wang, 2024), picture books have become the preferred medium for preschool teachers to deliver

cultural education. The emotional resonance, textual atmosphere, and visual interactivity of picture books enable them to foster emotional empathy in children while promoting the perception and understanding of the deeper meanings of traditional culture (Yang & Hu, 2025; Ulfa & Saputra, 2025; Zhang & Chuenchaichon, 2025). Particularly during the critical stages of early childhood development, using picture books to mediate the introduction of excellent traditional Chinese culture can not only achieve the goal of knowledge acquisition but also foster the emergence of children's values, social-emotional development, and cultural cognition (Yang & Xu, 2024; Xu, 2025).

Integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into early childhood education during this critical developmental period is essential for shaping the child's identity (Huo & Hu, 2017; Huo et al., 2022). Cultural education through picture books can simultaneously promote knowledge acquisition, emotional resonance, and the budding of values, enhancing children's life experiences and strengthening their embodied perception of traditional culture. This process achieves an organic integration of the knowledge, value, and ideology of Chinese culture with the developmental needs and goals of young children (Chen, 2021). From an educational theory perspective, cultural education in early childhood belongs to an integrative developmental model that combines cognitive, emotional, and cultural experiences (Zhao, 2024).

International studies have also shown that, in multicultural contexts, cultural education through picture books can not only effectively promote the development of children's cross-cultural abilities but also increase their understanding and tolerance of global cultural differences (Huang & Zhao, 2024; Xu, 2025). For example, incorporating elements of traditional Chinese culture into picture books, such as traditional holiday customs, classic character stories, and intangible cultural heritage artistic details, can subtly help children establish a sense of cultural belonging and enhance their awareness of cultural identity, including "who we are" (Ulfa & Saputra, 2025; Zhang & Chuenchaichon, 2025; Huang & Zhao, 2024). This approach has garnered widespread attention in empirical research internationally. Cross-national studies on cultural education in countries such as Australia and Norway have shown that early childhood cultural participation significantly improves children's cross-cultural adaptation and socio-emotional skills (Huang & Zhao, 2024; Zhang & Chuenchaichon, 2025).

Thus, systematically integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture book education is not only a significant exploration of innovative preschool education with Chinese characteristics but also a fundamental project for promoting cultural inheritance and national spirit. This process requires collaboration across various aspects, such as curriculum design, teacher training, and family-community cooperation, to ensure the systematic and scientific nature of cultural education. By enhancing the role of picture book education in carrying forward traditional Chinese culture, it is possible to deepen children's cultural confidence and provide necessary support for building a preschool education model with Chinese characteristics (Shao, 2018; Zhang & Wang, 2022; Huang & Zhao, 2024). Therefore, researching the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books contributes to advancing early childhood enlightenment education, telling the Chinese story effectively, and pursuing a distinctive path in Chinese preschool education.

Although the quantity and quality of children's picture books integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture have increased, several issues persist, including inconsistent picture book quality, limited traditional cultural features [0] (Yuan, 2016), a lack of integration with local original culture and weak cognitive adaptation (Wang, 2018; Wang, 2020), weakening of traditional cultural symbols and values (You & Luo, 2018; Liu, 2022), and distortion of cultural symbols (Wu, 2022). These issues highlight the urgent need to create picture books that balance cultural fidelity with developmental appropriateness to resolve the structural tension between cultural inheritance demands and children's cognitive development.

In response, this study examines picture books from the reading area of a kindergarten, analyzing the content of 120 children's picture books through coding. These books include 46 classic cultural books, 28 storybooks, 25 emotion education books, and 21 knowledge-based books. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 preschool teachers from three

kindergartens, all with considerable experience in early childhood education. The sample included 6 senior-level teachers, 9 intermediate-level teachers, 3 teachers aged 27-30, 5 teachers aged 31-34, and 7 teachers aged 35 and above. The study explores the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture in children's picture books, analyzes the contradictions and challenges encountered in current picture book education, and proposes targeted optimization pathways to achieve the active inheritance of traditional Chinese cultural genes.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Content Analysis Method

Following the principles of purposive sampling and convenience sampling, picture books were selected based on the following criteria: First, the picture books must effectively convey the core values and elements of Chinese traditional culture, such as traditional festivals, historical stories, moral concepts, customs, and other related content. Second, to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the cultural content, the selected picture books must focus on Chinese traditional culture in their themes and be appropriate for young children's cognitive levels. Third, the publication date of the picture books should be relatively recent to ensure their educational relevance and timeliness. Additionally, the publishing institutions should have a certain degree of credibility to guarantee the quality and authority of the published content. Ultimately, 120 picture books for children were selected for the study, including 46 classic cultural books, 28 story books, 25 emotional education books, and 21 knowledge-based books.

Content analysis was employed to thoroughly examine the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture. The aim was to identify the specific content, presentation forms, and distribution patterns of traditional culture within the picture books, uncover the strategies and methods of its presentation, and address the issues related to the integration of Chinese traditional culture in picture books found in children's reading areas.

To thoroughly analyze the integration of Chinese traditional culture in children's picture books, the following analysis category system was constructed, as detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Picture Book Analysis Category System.

Primary Category	Secondary Category	Category Description	Example
Cultural Theme Classification	Traditional Festival Culture	Picture books containing content related to various traditional festivals, including their origins, customs, and legends.	<i>The Story of the Spring Festival</i> introduces customs such as putting up Spring Festival couplets and having New Year's Eve dinner, along with the legend of the Year Beast.
	Classic Literary Masterpieces	Picture books adapted from classic literary works, covering poetry, novels, essays, etc.	<i>The Monkey King's Uproar in Heaven</i> adapts the classic story from the four great novels of Chinese literature, <i>Journey to the West</i> , into a picture book.
	Folk Art and Craftsmanship	Picture books showcasing the production processes, techniques, and characteristics of folk arts.	<i>A Journey into Paper-Cutting Art</i> presents the steps and various styles of paper-cutting art.
	Traditional Etiquette and Morality	Picture books conveying traditional norms of etiquette and moral concepts.	<i>Confucius and the Pear</i> teaches the virtues of respecting the elderly, loving the young, and mutual modesty.
	Historical Allusions and Legends	Picture books telling historical stories and mythological tales.	<i>The Story of Goujian, the King of Yue</i> tells the historical tale of King Goujian of Yue, while <i>Pangu Creates the World</i> presents a mythological legend.

To ensure the consistency of the research process and the reliability of the analysis results, detailed coding rules were established for the above-mentioned analysis categories and units. The specific content is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Coding Rules.

Primary Category	Secondary Category	Code	Coding Guidelines	Example
Cultural Theme Classification	Traditional Festival Culture	A	If the picture book primarily focuses on traditional festivals, such as the Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, assign the code "A" to the book.	<i>The Story of the Spring Festival</i> focuses on the Spring Festival, thus it is coded as "A."
	Classic Literary Masterpieces	B	If the picture book is adapted from a classic literary work, including poetry, novels, or essays, assign the code "B."	<i>Journey to the West Picture Book</i> adaptation of "Three Strikes on the White Bone Spirit" is coded as "B."
	Folk Art and Craftsmanship	C	If the picture book showcases the process, techniques, and characteristics of folk art, assign the code "C."	<i>A Journey into Paper-Cutting Art</i> focuses on embroidery craftsmanship and is coded as "C."
	Traditional Etiquette and Morality	D	If the picture book conveys traditional norms of etiquette or moral concepts, assign the code "D."	<i>Confucius and the Pear</i> reflects the moral concepts of respecting the elderly and loving the young, and is coded as "D."
	Historical Allusions and Legends	E	If the picture book tells historical stories or mythological legends, assign the code "E."	<i>The Story of Goujian, the King of Yue</i> tells a historical story and is coded as "E."

## 2.2. Interview Method

A total of 15 teachers were selected for interviews from small, medium, and large classes at a kindergarten in Changji City, with 4 teachers from each class level. Their basic information is shown in Table 3. The interview outline was designed based on the research objectives and focused on three main dimensions: "categories and characteristics of picture books in the reading area," "forms of integration of traditional culture in the reading area," and "children's reception level." The outline consisted of six core questions. The researcher used open-ended questions to explore in depth the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture in picture books in the children's reading area, aiming to gather detailed information and obtain practical insights and genuine feedback from kindergarten teachers regarding the current integration of Chinese traditional culture in the reading area. The interview period for this study was from August 28th to September 30th, 2025. All 15 participating preschool teachers have signed written informed consent forms.

**Table 3.** Basic Information of Interviewed Teachers.

Teacher Number	Gender	Age	Role	Teacher Title
TeacherT1	Female	37	Vice Principal	Associate Senior
TeacherT2	Female	33	Director of Education and Care	Intermediate
TeacherT3	Female	27	Full-time Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT4	Male	38	Full-time Teacher	Senior
TeacherT5	Female	32	Full-time Teacher	Associate Senior
TeacherT6	Female	28	Lead Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT7	Female	42	Vice Principal	Senior
TeacherT8	Female	30	Lead Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT9	Female	31	Full-time Teacher	Intermediate

TeacherT10	Female	45	Principal	Senior
TeacherT11	Female	39	Vice Principal	Associate Senior
TeacherT12	Male	32	Full-time Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT13	Female	35	Lead Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT14	Female	35	Full-time Teacher	Intermediate
TeacherT15	Male	31	Lead Teacher	Intermediate

### 2.3. Data Processing

The coded data were processed using the SPSS statistical software. For the cultural theme classification, the frequency and proportion of each category in the 120 picture books were calculated. For example, in the cultural theme classification, the frequency of occurrences of categories such as traditional festival culture and classic literary masterpieces were recorded. These data provide a clear representation of the distribution of different cultural themes in the picture books, offering an objective basis for the study.

## 3. Results

The core contradictions in integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books mainly include the following points:

### 3.1. Cultural Theme Distribution: Structural Imbalance and Loss of Value Transmission

The integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books exhibits a structurally imbalanced distribution of cultural themes. Specifically, themes related to traditional festivals account for 30.10%, with a relatively high frequency, while themes related to classic literary masterpieces make up 20.07%, with a lower frequency. These two cultural themes together constitute more than 50% of the overall representation of traditional Chinese culture in children's picture books. Themes on folk arts and crafts, as well as historical anecdotes and legends, account for 17.28% and 15.71%, respectively, both appearing less frequently and displaying a fragmented characteristic. The theme of traditional etiquette and morals makes up 14.05%, which, although notable, is still relatively low in the overall distribution. It is noteworthy that themes related to traditional philosophical thought make up only 2.79%, reflecting a significant absence of such cultural themes in children's picture books. The infrequent appearance of this theme indicates a substantial deficiency in conveying its core spirit. Currently, children's picture books with traditional Chinese culture tend to emphasize superficial cultural symbols, while neglecting the systematic penetration and representation of deeper cultural values, core principles, and philosophical ideas.

Structural Defects in the Transmission of Traditional Chinese Cultural Values Through Picture Books.

The core content of traditional etiquette and morality often falls into formulaic narrative patterns. For instance, in the picture book *Kong Rong Giving Up the Pear*, the concept of "propriety" is simplified to a mere imitation of ceremonial behavior, lacking a framework that helps children understand the cognitive structure of traditional etiquette and morals. This oversimplifies the cultural logic of "propriety," which functions as a mechanism in interpersonal and social relationships. Additionally, the content related to traditional philosophical thought tends to be symbolically hollow. As Teacher T8 pointed out, in the picture book *The Twenty-Four Solar Terms Song*, the concept of "harmony between heaven and man" is merely labeled as a natural phenomenon, stripping it of its philosophical meaning and even transforming it into an environmental slogan. Similarly, Teacher T5 noted that in *The Analects Stories*, the profound idea of "harmony without sameness" is avoided and reduced to a simplistic lesson on interpersonal harmony, thereby diluting the speculative value of traditional Chinese culture's underlying logic.

Moreover, there are instances in children's picture books where the cultural symbol "signifier" and its "signified" are disconnected. Teacher T10 highlighted that commonly seen festive symbols

such as lanterns and mooncakes have become mere decorative elements due to the absence of ritual context and improper guidance. This structural flaw in the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural values has created a paradox of “flourishing form but impoverished content,” reflecting the ineffectiveness of conveying the essence of traditional Chinese culture in children’s picture books.

### 3.2. *Picture Book Type Adaptation: Age-Appropriateness Gap and Disconnection in Teaching Implementation*

There is a noticeable gap in the age-appropriateness of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into children’s picture books. Specifically, narrative storybooks, with their vivid plots, concise text, and engaging characteristics, are more suitable for the cognitive needs of younger children. In the picture books examined in this study, such storybooks accounted for 65.83%. For example, Teacher T1 pointed out that *Little Rabbit Celebrates the New Year* and *The Dancing Little Dragon* use bright colors and simple storylines, which are highly aligned with the cognitive characteristics of younger preschool children, stimulating their interest in reading and encouraging active participation. However, compared to narrative storybooks, the availability of educational science and interactive picture books is relatively insufficient. These types of picture books do not meet the cognitive needs and age characteristics of older preschool children. Teacher T11 also mentioned that, during independent reading time, older preschool children tend to select fewer educational science picture books, while younger children spend more time with storybooks. This gap in the availability of picture books that match children’s age and cognitive development leads to a misalignment between children’s reading needs and their developmental characteristics, further demonstrating that current picture book resources fail to effectively cater to the needs of children at different age stages.

Moreover, the existing teaching practices have not effectively adapted to address this issue. Some kindergartens have recognized the problem and started proposing strategies for tiered distribution of picture books, but due to the lack of a systematic dynamic assessment of children’s cognitive needs, some picture book resources are not fully utilized. For example, Teacher T3 mentioned that *The Analects Stories* is rarely used in the reading area for younger children, who prefer picture books with rich illustrations. Teacher T7 noted that, despite the kindergarten’s efforts to introduce cross-age reading activities, these attempts have been superficial due to the lack of effective organization and design. No clear “junior mentor” training standards or task lists were established, leading to poorly executed activities that failed to foster in-depth discussions on different cultural themes. This “age-appropriateness gap” and the phenomenon of “disordered shared reading” further reflect the disconnection between picture book teaching, children’s age-related needs, and cognitive development.

### 3.3. *Activity Implementation Pathways: Insufficient Teacher-Child Interaction and the Gap in Core Understanding*

While teacher-led activities can help young children recognize traditional Chinese cultural symbols, they often focus excessively on cultural interpretation while neglecting the interaction between educators and children, leading to insufficient teacher-child interaction. According to the interview data, some teachers indicated that approximately 80% of class time is teacher-led, with less than 5% of the time devoted to questions initiated by the children. For example, Teacher T4 noted that when explaining the Mid-Autumn Festival moon-worshipping ceremony, children’s attention was primarily on the shape and size of mooncakes, with little focus on the ethical significance of “family reunification.” This teacher-centered, one-way teaching model concentrates the authority of cultural interpretation solely with the teacher. Moreover, in autonomous activity sessions, children’s understanding of traditional culture often remains at the operational level, with limited guidance for deeper reflection on cultural values. Teacher T9 also observed that when 60% of children chose the *Monkey King* picture book, the discussion was mainly about the fight scenes and character skills, with only 11% of children referencing the cultural implication of “master-disciple collaboration.”

Thus, in teacher-led picture book education activities, teacher-child interaction often becomes an overlooked or difficult-to-change aspect. Teachers fail to effectively guide children in deeper cultural thinking, which prevents a profound understanding of traditional Chinese culture, leaving it at the surface level. Despite the positive impact of teacher-centered cultural education on children's recognition of traditional Chinese cultural symbols, these activities often overly focus on cultural knowledge explanation, weakening the interaction between the educational subjects. This leads to the practical dilemma of insufficient teacher-child interaction. According to the qualitative interview data, participating teachers reported a significant imbalance in classroom time distribution—teacher-led activities occupied approximately 80% of the time, while children's voluntary questioning accounted for less than 5%. In a typical case, Teacher T4 described a teaching scenario on the Mid-Autumn Festival moon-worshipping ceremony, where children's attention was more focused on the tangible characteristics of mooncakes rather than the ethical implications of "family reunification." This teacher-centered, one-way knowledge transfer model objectively centralizes cultural interpretation in a one-dimensional manner. Further observations of autonomous activities revealed that children's understanding of traditional culture often remained at the experiential level, with teachers showing limited effectiveness in guiding deeper cultural reflection. Teacher T9's observation highlighted that when 60% of the children chose the *Monkey King* theme book, the discussion mainly revolved around the fight scenes and character skills, with only 11% of the children making connections to the deeper cultural meaning of "master-disciple collaboration." In teacher-centered picture book education, teacher-child interaction quality often faces challenges that are either overlooked or difficult to improve, with teachers failing to guide children in deepening their cultural cognition. As a result, the understanding of traditional Chinese culture remains at a symbolic level, without internalizing deeper meaning.

Although cultural symbols in picture book education can survive, the understanding of their spiritual core is weakened. For instance, during paper-cutting activities where children made window flower decorations, some mistakenly used wedding and funeral symbols, while others cut magpies into ordinary birds, and a few even insisted that "all red paper-cuts are used for New Year's celebrations." These errors point to misconceptions in understanding the core spiritual elements of traditional Chinese culture. Teacher T13 mentioned that, during the carefully designed *Moon God Worship* picture book activity, the teacher offered some guidance, but in the family setting, it was reduced to a "snack-sharing" activity. Children were more interested in the color and taste of the mooncakes, and the ritual significance of the Mid-Autumn Festival was entirely deconstructed in the family context. A more pronounced contradiction arose from the disconnection between traditional ethics and modern life. Teacher T15 described a disappointing family reading experience, where a parent reported that their child, while reading *Reunion*, asked, "Is it still a reunion if Grandpa has passed away?" The parent was unable to connect the concepts of life and death with family ethics and ultimately responded dismissively, "Grandpa turned into a star." This example highlights how traditional value interpretations are stripped of their spiritual core in intergenerational transmission.

#### 3.4. Medium Configuration: Inadequate Image-Text Adaptation and Meaning Alienation

Children's picture books exhibit a misalignment in the configuration and distribution of image-text mediums. Picture books with a dominant image and subordinate text format account for 70.00%, a form that typically matches the cognitive characteristics of younger children, who predominantly use visual thinking. These picture books often feature highly saturated colors and a lower text-to-image ratio, aligning with the developmental needs of younger children. However, this format also risks detaching the deeper meanings of traditional Chinese culture from visual symbols, leading to superficial or alienated interpretations of cultural content. Teacher T2 noted in the interviews that approximately 70% of the children focus primarily on the external visible elements, such as the shape and color of fireworks, while only 30% are able to connect these elements to the cultural meanings of "celebration and joy," "expelling evil and welcoming the new year," or "hope and blessings." In picture books where both text and images are equally emphasized, they account for 24.17%. Teacher

T14 pointed out that the design of left-aligned text and right-aligned images in children's picture books may cause some children to overlook the cultural symbolism of the "letter" next to the "moon" in *Tang poetry*, leading them to mistakenly interpret "homesickness" as "searching for the moon." Purely pictorial picture books, which make up only 5.83%, present an even greater risk, as they lack text and increase the likelihood of misreading traditional Chinese cultural symbols. This misalignment between image and text further exacerbates the risk of children overlooking or misinterpreting traditional Chinese cultural elements in picture books.

Children often experience alienation in the transformation of cultural meaning while interpreting traditional Chinese culture in picture books. Although picture books with a dominant image and subordinate text format help improve the recognition of cultural symbols, most children remain focused on external characteristics such as color and shape, with only a few delving into the deeper cultural meanings. The insufficient availability of picture books that balance both image and text, combined with teachers' lack of cross-media literacy, limits children's understanding of the core values of traditional Chinese culture, resulting in ineffective cultural transmission. Purely pictorial picture books further intensify the risk of misinterpreting traditional cultural elements. This phenomenon of cultural meaning alienation and imbalance reflects the disregard for the core values of traditional Chinese culture in children's picture books, where the disconnection between symbols and ethical meanings in cultural transmission is evident. It highlights how current picture books, in their attempt to cater to the immediate demands of the visual market, overlook the mechanisms for translating cultural meaning and the intrinsic core of cultural content.

## 4. Discussion

Analysis of the reasons for the above results.

### 4.1. Misalignment Between Cultural Perception and Cognitive Schemas

Geertz's cultural theory posits that when perceptions and experiences are linked to a prior schema, they acquire cultural meaning as long as they align with certain elements within an individual's existing cognitive repertoire, such as sounds, visual images, language, faces, concepts, structures, etc. The process of cultural meaning involves matching these perceptions and experiences to existing cognitive (or emotional) schemas (Swidler & Jepperson, 2024; Yang, J., & Xu, 2024). However, in the current integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books, there is often a superficial transplantation of cultural symbols, which neglects the deep cultural background and spiritual content. This results in the phenomenon of "decontextualization" of cultural symbols, hindering children's ability to effectively connect their perceptions and experiences with existing cognitive schemas.

For example, in children's picture books, traditional Chinese cultural symbols are often simplified into visual elements, completely ignoring the ritualistic context and the cultural core, such as spiritual metaphors, behind these symbols (Yang, J., & Xu, 2024; Zheng & Guo, 2024; Zhang, 2025). In many children's picture books, the "Nian beast" is merely perceived as a cute cartoon character, while the cultural metaphor and historical background of the New Year's Eve ritual of staying up to welcome the new year are not conveyed, making it difficult for children's perceptions and experiences to align with a particular cognitive schema (Gao, 2023; Zhang & Wang, 2022). As a result, children cannot truly comprehend the spiritual connotations of these cultural symbols and are unable to interpret the meaning of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

The decontextualization of cultural meaning further disconnects the chain between individual perceptions and experiences and the existing cognitive schemas, leading to the structural collapse of traditional ethical systems in the face of modernity. Due to the decontextualization of cultural meaning in children's picture books, children fail to perceive the cosmological understanding of time transitions in actions like "setting off firecrackers and pasting Spring Festival couplets." Similarly, the filial piety ethics in *Kong Rong Giving Up the Pear* remain attached to a patriarchal family structure, without constructing an emotional connection mechanism for only-child families. When children ask,

“Why does Kong Rong give up the pear when he has no younger brother?” it reveals a logical disjunction between the classical hierarchical system and contemporary intimate relationships. The portrayal of the “ancestral presence” in the idea of family reunion is deconstructed by the biomedical discourse in family settings, forcing parents to avoid ethical dialogue with fairy-tale rhetoric, such as saying “Grandpa became a star,” thereby intensifying the disconnect between ancient and modern perspectives on life and death. This disconnection of cultural meaning makes cultural genes appear as lofty ideals suspended above modern life, with children constructing a barrier that prevents the alignment of their perceptual experiences with cognitive schemas. A more prominent issue is seen in folk art picture books, which focus more on the trajectory of the scissors rather than the family wishes behind the patterns. This makes it even more difficult to establish a cognitive schema for cultural meaning, leading cultural transmission to become a rootless imitation of technique.

#### 4.2. Imbalance in the Coordination of Creative Logic and Educational Effectiveness

Vygotsky’s sociocultural constructivist theory anchors the construction of meaning in social interaction and cultural contexts, emphasizing the mediating role of language, the collaborative nature of learning, and the support provided by cultural tools in cognitive development (Smolucha & Smolucha, 2021; Saracho & Evans, 2021). According to this theory, children’s cognitive development is not an isolated individual psychological process but a product of interaction with the social environment, where cognition is connected through language, a “symbolic tool of thought.” Language not only serves as a communication medium but also as a foundational symbol system for generating meaning (Hedges, 2021). Furthermore, the use of cultural tools (e.g., symbols, rituals, and other tangible cultural carriers) is an indispensable structural element in the meaning-making process (Zajda, 2021; Liang & Shin, 2021).

Children’s understanding of traditional culture is inherently a process of transforming abstract symbols into an internal network of meaning through interaction and reflection within concrete experiences. This process relies on the integration of individual perception, thought, and experience, as well as interaction with others (teachers, peers, and other social agents) and cultural symbols, to achieve open-ended meaning generation (Bakar, 2018). In this framework, cultural symbols and language serve as core carriers of knowledge transmission, functioning as the “mediators of meaning” for children to connect with the external world. As a crucial tool for cultural transmission in early childhood education, children’s picture books are primarily designed to promote the internalization of external cultural content into cognitive structures through social interaction and cultural media, completing a practical loop of meaning construction (Neumann, 2020).

Specifically, high-quality children’s picture books incorporating excellent traditional Chinese culture should guide children to understand the cultural context and spiritual core behind the symbols through contextualized symbolic presentations (e.g., recreating traditional rituals), and the interpretive dialogues between teachers and children, achieving a deep connection between traditional culture and individual cognition. However, contemporary picture book creation is often dominated by market logic, leading to the simplification, flattening, and even entertainment-oriented rewriting of many traditional Chinese cultural symbols. The original cultural context (e.g., the familial ethical meaning of the Mid-Autumn Festival), and deeper values (e.g., the collectivist spirit of “master-disciple collaboration” in *Journey to the West*) are stripped away, leaving cultural symbols as mere “decorative elements” with only visual impact (Leung et al., 2019). This creative approach directly leads to a rupture between the traditional Chinese cultural symbols and their original cultural context: when the symbols lose the support of their cultural roots, children find it difficult to internalize these symbols into meaningful cultural experiences through picture book interactions, thus suppressing the effective transmission of traditional cultural values. This “decontextualization” of creative logic fundamentally deviates from Vygotsky’s core argument that “cultural tools must convey meaning through interaction” and overlooks the contextual and social needs of children’s cognitive development. As Dewey pointed out, “Without transformative experiences, cultural symbols remain external to children as ‘the other’.”

More fundamentally, achieving educational objectives relies on the mediating role of cultural symbols in children's cognitive construction: as tangible carriers of sociocultural knowledge, cultural symbols are the key "scaffolding" for children to transform external experiences into internal cognitive structures. If the presentation of traditional Chinese cultural symbols in children's picture books is limited to superficial visual dimensions, while stripping away their original cultural context and spiritual core, children will be unable to connect these symbols with their personal cognitive frameworks through social interaction (such as teacher-child dialogues and peer discussions), making it difficult to complete the process of meaning construction (Magnusson & Pramling, 2016; Hedges, 2021). For example, in the picture book *The Nian Beast*, despite its exaggerated monster design and vibrant red color capturing children's attention, the lack of systematic explanations of the folk origins of "expelling evil and welcoming fortune" or the ethical meaning of "family reunion" in the New Year's ritual results in children forming only a superficial understanding of the "Nian Beast" as a "scary/fun visual image." They fail to connect the symbol with cultural meanings like "festive rituals" and "family bonding" in their own experiences, causing a rupture in the meaning construction process. This "overemphasis on visual symbols, underemphasis on cultural core" in the creative approach is essentially an imbalance in the coordination of picture book education functions and children's cognitive development needs. It narrows the depth and breadth of children's cultural meaning construction through interaction in sociocultural contexts, ultimately weakening the effectiveness of picture books as carriers of excellent traditional Chinese culture and hindering their ability to fulfill their educational mission of "cultivating virtue through culture."

#### 4.3. Systemic Disruption in the Thematic Field and Interconnected Network

Foucault's theory of disciplinary power challenges the traditional narrative of "centralized" power, asserting that power is not merely exercised through explicit institutional oppression or monopolies held by a few, but rather as a set of micro-level power techniques that permeate social structures and daily practices (Hedges, 2021; Saracho & Evans, 2021; Haugaard, 2022). It shapes individual cognition through the production of normative knowledge and the construction of discourse. In the context of children's picture book education, teachers, as gatekeepers of cultural content, exert implicit control over children's cultural discourse through purposeful selection, interpretation, and framing of traditional Chinese cultural symbols (Zhu & Zhang, 2008; Magnusson & Pramling, 2016). This exercise of power does not rely on direct coercion but instead uses pre-set meaning frameworks to discipline the boundaries of cultural interpretation: by offering "standardized readings" of symbols, teachers compress diverse cultural meanings into a single "official interpretation." For instance, in the teaching of the *Moon God Worship* picture book, the teacher pre-anchors the cultural symbol of "worshiping the moon" within the framework of "filial piety." When children attempt to evoke poetic imagination from the moon's round shape or the patterns on the ritual objects, the teacher often guides them back to the pre-set meaning, saying, "Remember, this symbolizes reunion," thus narrowing the children's open perception of the ritual to a singular symbol, "reunion" (Xia et al., 2024). This one-way transmission of discursive power effectively diminishes children's autonomy in cultural interpretation, turning them from active constructors of cultural meaning into passive bearers of symbols, obscuring their subjectivity in picture book learning.

Foucault's concept of power is empirically evident here: micro-power does not rely on violence or overt control but subtly limits children's diverse understandings of traditional cultural symbols through discourse regulation in everyday teaching. Children's picture book education should ideally be a field for "dialogue between the individual and culture," but in the teacher-led interpretation, it devolves into the "internalization of standardized meaning," ultimately undermining the depth of cultural learning and limiting the development of children's subjectivity (Kim, 2011).

Moreover, this logic of disciplinary power extends into the shared educational field between home and school. In the interaction between kindergartens and families, the cultural values conveyed by teachers often conflict with the utilitarian parenting views held by parents, making it difficult for

families to accept the traditional cultural meanings presented in picture book education. Foucault's theory of disciplinary power has long transcended the simplified view of "unidirectional oppression" and emphasizes that power is formed through the interaction of multiple subjects and the reproduction of normative behaviors, resulting in a capillary form of domination. In the context of home-school collaboration, this power network materializes as a struggle over the "cultural educational value" between the two parties: teachers, in their role as "cultural transmitters," use terms such as "cultural inheritance" and "ethical enlightenment" to construct the cultural meaning of picture book symbols, attempting to anchor symbols like "reunion" and "paper cutting" into children's cognitive structures (Zhu & Zhang, 2008); while parents, adhering to a "pragmatic parenting" perspective, deconstruct the value of cultural education with utilitarian phrases like "learning paper cutting is less important than learning Chinese" and reduce it to "skills training" or "formal rituals" (Liang & Shin, 2021). The lack of cultural consensus between home and school leads to an implicit power struggle: teachers' cultural interpretations are dismissed by parents as "useless rituals," while parents' utilitarian demands diminish the teachers' cultural efforts (Liu & Feng, 2015). This tension ultimately leads to a disconnect between cultural symbols and children's cognition. When the "moon worship" in *Reunion* becomes merely a "mooncake snack party" and the paper cutting activity is regarded as "less useful than memorizing Tang poetry," the core of traditional culture loses its connection to children's life experiences (Zhang et al., 2021). As Foucault said, "Power shapes the cognitive boundaries of the subject through discourse." The discourse struggle between home and school is fundamentally a contest for defining "what constitutes valuable culture." Teachers attempt to convey "the ethics behind the rituals," while parents focus only on "immediate skill benefits." This conflict ultimately leads to a rupture in cultural transmission, leaving traditional culture in children's picture books fragmented and superficial, unable to achieve the profound goal of "cultivating virtue through culture" (Kim, 2011). Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital further supplements this logic: parents' utilitarian views stem from their understanding of "useful cultural capital" (e.g., knowledge of language, mathematics), while teachers' perspectives rely on "cultural inheritance capital" (e.g., the educational value of traditional rituals and ethical symbols). The disparity in cultural capital between home and school leads to a "cognitive gap" in interpreting the cultural meaning of picture books, ultimately exacerbating the power struggle and failure of cultural transmission (Kim & Reichmuth, 2020).

#### 4.4. Media Representation and the Alienation of Meaning Transformation

Baudrillard's theory of simulacra, a core framework of postmodern cultural criticism, reveals the fundamental transformation of the function of symbols: symbols have evolved from "signifiers referring to the real world" to "self-replicating simulacra." This shift is characterized by the rupture of the referential relationship between symbols and reality. Symbols no longer anchor specific historical contexts or cultural roots; instead, they become "pure simulations," detached from their original meaning and transformed into "visual stimuli" (Baudrillard, 2019; Freund, 2024). This alienation of symbolic function is starkly evident in the creation of cultural symbols in children's picture books. For example, in the classic picture book *Quiet Night Thoughts*, the cultural imagery of "the moon is brightest in my hometown" in Li Bai's poem, which originally carries the emotional resonance of "homesickness" and the philosophical contemplation of "the unity of heaven and man," is simplified into a flat, glowing spherical image. The once tangible "moon" symbol is stripped of its cultural depth and reduced to a "graphic stimulus" that can only attract visual attention (Bianco & Kopic, 2023; Hsieh, 2023). Similarly, the traditional Mid-Autumn Festival symbol of "Tu'er Ye" (the Rabbit Spirit) reflects the crisis of symbolic simulation: as a deity symbolizing "warding off evil and protecting reunion" since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Tu'er Ye is reduced to a "cute doll" in picture books, with its ritual function (such as placing offerings for blessings during the Mid-Autumn Festival) and cultural memory completely removed, leaving only the "cute" visual exterior (Pandelaere, 2022; Tang et al., 2024). This "simplification-entertainment-distortion" of symbol production follows Baudrillard's "simulacra cycle," where symbols no longer point to real traditional

culture. Instead, through self-replication (such as the repeated appearances of glowing moons and cute Tu'er Ye in different picture books), a "hyperreal" cultural space is constructed. In this space, the spiritual core of traditional Chinese culture (such as the emotional resonance of homesickness or the ethical significance of rituals) is replaced by media representations, and the "truth" of the symbols gives way to the "pleasure of visual consumption." Baudrillard's concept of "implosion" aptly describes this process: the "meaning dimension" and "entertainment dimension" of cultural symbols collapse, and the symbols themselves become empty "shells." In the "hyperreal" symbol-laden environment, children lose their ability to perceive the "authenticity" of traditional culture, and what they encounter are fragmented "symbolic pieces" devoid of cultural roots, ultimately leading to the dissolution of cultural meaning and the hollowing-out of cultural transmission (Sliwa & Grandy, 2006; Grigoriadis & Karabiçak, 2021).

More fundamentally, the media representation of cultural symbols and the transformation of meaning fundamentally reconstruct the relationship between symbols and the essence of culture—it is not merely a change in visual forms but a deep deconstruction of cultural essence. According to Saussure's classical semiotic theory, the legitimacy of cultural symbols arises from the stable signification between the "signifier" (the visual/auditory physical form) and the "signified" (the abstract concept/meaning). However, as the symbols in children's picture books increasingly tend toward abstraction and flattening, this connection is severed, leading to the breakdown of the cultural transmission chain (Li, 2022; Wang et al., 2023). For example, the core idea of Confucius' "benevolent person loves others" is often simplified in picture books to a behavioral instruction like "share candy," losing its philosophical depth ("extend kindness to others") and its ethical connotations ("hierarchical family structure"), thus becoming an empty representation without cultural depth (Xia et al., 2024). This alienation of the signifier (i.e., the detachment of symbolic form from its original meaning) results in children receiving only sensory stimuli at the visual level when engaging with picture books, making it difficult for them to truly internalize the deep cultural values embedded within them (Hsieh, 2023). Thus, when the cultural symbols in children's picture books depart from their traditional cultural context, their transmission falls into Baudrillard's "self-replicating symbol system." This "hyperreal" state reduces the deep meaning of traditional Chinese culture to superficial, decontextualized symbols (Grigoriadis & Karabiçak, 2021). At this point, cultural transmission is no longer "the transfer of meaning" but "the cycle of symbolic reproduction": children encounter "symbolic fragments" that have been stripped of cultural roots (such as abstract "sharing" instructions or simplified "benevolence" images) rather than vibrant cultural traditions (Freund, 2024). Ultimately, the core values of traditional culture (such as ethical emotions and philosophical wisdom) are dissolved, leaving only the meaningless shell of symbols. This is the root cause of the "hollowness" in cultural transmission.

## 5. Conclusions

The integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into children's picture books has problems in aspects such as theme distribution, type adaptation, implementation path, and form medium. The core contradictions leading to this result mainly include: mismatch between cultural perception and cognitive schema, imbalance in the coordination of creative logic and educational efficacy, system breakage of theme field and linkage network, and transgression of the domain of media representation and meaning transformation.

## 6. Countermeasures

### 6.1. Mechanism Innovation for Cultural Symbol Repair and Value Replanting

To address the core contradiction of "decontextualization of cultural symbols leading to a disconnection between perceptual experience and cognitive schemas," a deep coupling mechanism of "contextual reversion – meaning recoding – experiential anchoring" needs to be established. Based on Geertz's theory of "culture as a network of meaning," the first step is to resolve the dual

disembedding of symbols and ethics: On one hand, it is necessary to further establish a “symbol-context-meaning” closed-loop translation model. This model involves the recontextualization of isolated symbols through historical and cultural context restoration and the anchoring of symbols within the everyday life field, allowing the symbols to return to their native cultural context. For example, in the “Nian Beast” image, it is important to complete the exorcism ritual and further strengthen the connection of time with “New Year’s Eve” and agricultural traditions. Additionally, activities like “hanging Spring Festival couplets” and “setting off fireworks” can be embedded in the family New Year ceremony, reconstructing the sharing scenes within a modern family atmosphere. On the other hand, a “dual-track repair” of traditional ethics and cultural symbols must be implemented. This involves interdisciplinary teams further stripping away the patriarchal forms within “filial piety” and distilling universal values from it, such as “caring for elders,” “gratitude awareness,” and “family responsibility.” Activities such as using a “tree of life metaphor” or “family story recording cards” can reconstruct modern scenes, bridging the gap between “ancestors’ presence” and biomedical discourses. Through this dual repair of cultural symbols, their foundational meanings are restored, providing children with “recognizable,” “perceptible,” and “connectable” cultural texts for linking perception with schemas.

Simultaneously, there is a need to strengthen the symbiotic meaning of craftsmanship inheritance and the experiential bridge to cognitive schemas. In addressing the issue of folk arts being “form-heavy with light content,” early childhood educators should construct a compound narrative integrating “craftsmanship-story-meaning.” This narrative can incorporate family and community stories, such as “Grandmother’s window flower blessings” or “neighborhood cooperation in the indigo dyeing workshop,” linking paper-cutting paths and tie-dye patterns with cultural symbols like wishes, identity, and blessings. Additionally, the design of activities such as “My Family’s Pattern” craft packs should guide children to interview, draw family symbols, and practice, elevating technical imitation to cultural gene inheritance. To further enhance this, activities like “Fu” character fabric appliqué, firecracker sound QR codes, “Cultural Detective” task cards, and role-playing should be designed to activate children’s sensory channels, integrating fragmented cultural experiences into existing schemas and replanting cultural values. Through the symbiosis of craftsmanship meaning and the experiential anchoring of cognition, traditional culture can be transformed from “floating cultural symbols” into “cultural meaning symbiosis,” ultimately embedding cultural roots into children’s spiritual growth.

## 6.2. *Dynamic Adaptation Between Creative Supply and Cognitive Demand*

To address the core contradiction of “market-driven decontextualization of cultural symbols” in the creative supply sector, a dual-drive mechanism of “cultural fidelity-market incentives” must be established to ensure that cultural symbols, as cognitive tools for children, retain their meaningful integrity. First, a hierarchical cultural fidelity evaluation system for traditional cultural symbols should be established in collaboration with experts in children’s education and folklore studies. This system should assess cultural symbols in children’s picture books based on three dimensions: “contextual relevance,” “clarity of meaning,” and “educational appropriateness.” Specifically, this involves determining whether the cultural symbol is embedded in its original cultural context, whether its core spirit is perceptible, and whether it aligns with children’s cognitive abilities. For instance, the “Nian Beast” symbol should be connected to the time concept in the exorcism ritual, while “harmony in diversity” should explain the ethics of pluralistic coexistence. Third-party certification should label these symbols with “non-simplifiable cultural genes.”

Next, the publishing incentive mechanism should be optimized by establishing a “Cultural Depth Picture Book Special Fund” to provide thematic bias and promotional support for high-fidelity picture books. Cultural fidelity should also be incorporated into publishers’ cultural responsibility evaluation metrics to curb the trend of symbol entertainment driven by capital. Through this mechanism that strengthens the cultural foundation from the supply side, we can ensure that cultural symbols maintain their meaning-transmitting function as cognitive tools.

In addressing the issue of “disconnection between symbol presentation and children’s constructive abilities” from the cognitive demand side, a dynamic adaptation system between “cognitive stage and picture book form” must be further established. In accordance with children’s cognitive development patterns, picture books for younger children should focus on sensory-symbol connections, transitioning from perceptual-motor stages to early operational stages. These picture books should emphasize sensory experiences, such as touchable pages or sound-triggering QR codes (e.g., “Fu” character fabric, firecracker sounds), to establish connections between cultural symbols and their preliminary meanings. For middle-aged children in the preoperational stage, “context-practice transformation” picture books should be introduced, incorporating story-plus-task cards to promote the conversion of symbols into behavioral schemas, such as pairing *Grandfather’s Vegetable Garden* with a practical task like “planting small tomatoes together with grandparents.” For older children in the concrete operational stage, “meaning-reflection decoding” picture books should be developed, incorporating activities like “Cultural Detective,” where children decode the cultural logic behind symbols, such as identifying time symbols in the “New Year’s Eve” ritual.

Additionally, kindergartens should implement “Cognitive Development Monitoring Records” for children. Every semester, based on observational records and interactive feedback, picture book configurations should be adjusted to ensure that the presentation of symbols aligns with children’s cognitive abilities. This approach of bridging cultural symbols and cognitive demands at the demand side facilitates the maximization of educational effectiveness.

### 6.3. Mechanism Reconstruction of Educational Empowerment and Collaborative Consensus

To address the issue of passive reception caused by the teacher’s discursive discipline, early childhood educators must reconstruct the cultural meaning production mechanism of the “child as subject” in order to dissolve the unidirectional penetration of micro-power. According to Foucault’s “power-knowledge symbiosis” theory, early childhood educators, as mediators of cultural knowledge, should shift from being controllers of standardized interpretations to negotiators of multiple meanings. In specific early childhood picture book education practices, picture book teaching design should primarily focus on culturally explorative, problem-based activities. For example, in the *Moon God Festival* lesson, the teacher could pose open-ended questions such as, “What do you think the Moon God would think of the children’s creative offerings?” “Where does ‘reunion’ reside in your heart?” “What else did you think of?” These questions encourage children to express their personalized understanding of “respect” and “heritage,” based on their family experiences, thus breaking the teacher’s pre-established framework of “filial piety.” Early childhood educators should also create cultural reconstruction workshops for children, providing materials like paper-cutting, shadow puppets, and other traditional cultural symbols. This would support children in reimagining symbols, such as adapting the “Nian Beast” into a “guardian of the village” or drawing “staying up with Grandpa to set off fireworks” for “Shou Sui” (the New Year’s Eve ritual). In this way, children are empowered to actively assign meaning to cultural symbols through creation. This empowerment transforms children from “passive receivers” to “cultural interpreters” and “active inheritors,” returning education to its essential nature of “dialogue generating meaning” and breaking free from the constraints of disciplinary power.

To address the issue of fractured cultural consensus between home and school, early childhood educators need to establish a multi-layered, collaborative cultural governance network to resolve power struggles. Foucault’s “governmentality” emphasizes that power is shaped through interaction among multiple parties, and the relationship between home and school should shift from “discourse conflict” to “co-constructed consensus.” This requires the establishment of a cultural term conversion bridging mechanism, such as creating a “Home-School Traditional Culture Discourse Handbook,” which translates professional terms like “ritual” and “ethics” into language that parents can understand, such as “the little secret of pasting Spring Festival couplets with family” or “the warmth of massaging Grandma’s back.” This reduces the threshold for parents’ understanding and resolves discourse conflicts. Additionally, value clarification dialogues should be organized through practices

like “Family Cultural Sharing Sessions,” inviting parents to share stories like “Grandma’s red envelope stories” or “Grandpa’s paper-cutting traditions.” In these sessions, early childhood educators should guide parents to understand that “reunion” represents the emotional connection within the family, helping to dismantle utilitarian views such as “learning paper-cutting is less important than learning Chinese.”

Furthermore, early childhood educators should promote co-creation practices between home and school by developing “Our Tradition” picture book kits. These kits could include blank picture books, traditional pattern stickers, and QR codes for recording audio. Parents and children can jointly create works such as “Our Mid-Autumn Night,” and teachers can incorporate excellent works into the school’s curriculum to form a cultural meaning cycle of “family experiences – school education.” Through the transition of home-school dynamics from “power struggle” to “cultural co-construction,” the effective transmission of cultural symbols within a consensus framework can be ensured, thus maximizing the educational efficacy.

#### 6.4. Media Restoration and Modal Synergy for Systematic Reconstruction

To address the core contradiction of cultural symbols in picture books becoming “hyperreal simulacra” and the disconnection between signifiers and the signified, early childhood educators need to establish a “symbol anchoring-embodied decoding” media restoration mechanism to counter the flattening and replication of cultural symbols. First, a normative framework for the realistic association of cultural symbols should be established, ensuring that symbols trace back to their original cultural contexts. For instance, in the case of *Quiet Night Thoughts*, the “moon” can be linked to an animated scene of “looking at the moon in the courtyard” via AR technology. Similarly, the image of “Rabbit God” could be accompanied by traditional ritual photos of “exorcising disease and eliminating disaster,” with core functions labeled. This approach would restore cultural symbols from “glowing spheres” and “cute dolls” to culturally rooted carriers.

Second, embodied cognition technology should be introduced to create a “meaning decoding layer.” By scanning simplified cultural symbols, children could trigger dynamic micro-videos or tactile feedback, such as a hand-drawn animation of “Li Bai’s homesickness” or materials that simulate the cool touch of moonlight. This would convert visual stimuli into embodied emotional and cultural experiences. Through this mechanism that pulls cultural symbols back from “self-replicating simulacra” to “culturally meaningful symbols,” the effective connection between the signifier and the signified is rebuilt.

To address the failure of multimodal resonance and the breakdown of cultural meaning transmission, a “multimodal coupling meaning generation system” should be created to break the cycle of hyperreal symbols. Baudrillard emphasized that the flattening of symbols erodes cultural essence; therefore, a “physical-symbol-behavior” three-dimensional collaborative model should be designed. In this model, the physical modality evokes memory through materiality, such as using rice paper to simulate the texture of Spring Festival couplets in *Chinese New Year*, or using velvet fabric to convey warmth with the “Fu” character in *Reunion*. The symbol modality reinforces meaning through graphic, textual, and audio interpretation, such as pairing the “Rabbit God” page with a children’s rhyme about the “medicine pestle,” restoring the deity’s function through both image and text. The behavioral modality deepens the experience through ritualized actions, such as setting the table for a “reunion dinner,” transforming the “family aggregation” ethic into a bodily practice.

This three-modal deep synergy, which allows cultural meaning to be “embodied” through multisensory interaction, breaks the phenomenon of “superficial reproduction” of cultural symbols and further resists the dilution of the cultural core by hyperreality, ensuring the effective transmission of cultural meaning.

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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviation is used in this manuscript:

SPSS        Statistical package for the social sciences

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