

## Chapter 16

# Initial Exploration of Cross-Generational Attitudes Towards Piracy of Chinese Online Literature

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter seeks to provide initial evidence and provide a baseline for further exploration of Chinese cross-generational audiences' attitude differences towards online literature and digital piracy. Globalization has complicated the many disparate cultural, generational, and national perspectives on intellectual property (IP) protection. IP and IP protection continue to grow in importance in global commerce and international relations. How attitudes towards IP and online content, in particular, evolve generationally is an area of relative under exploration. Data was gathered through an online survey and indicates a trend towards increased awareness and acceptance of IP value and protection. This study provides insight into cross-generational audiences in the important market of China. It may be helpful to those interested in commerce in the areas of online publishing or related industries to help make business decisions in targeting and marketing, to those interested in global commerce and international relations, or those who are researchers in the areas of IP and IP protection.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this study is rooted in the more macro view of Intellectual Property (IP) in general and the legal concepts that attempt to protect the ownership of that often intangible property that is a creation of the mind, Intellectual Property Protection (IPP).

In the case of this study, intellectual property is focused on literature, a creation of the mind. However, the implications go far beyond writing poetry, stories, songs, and movie scripts (Hughes, 1988; Reichman & Samuelson, 1997). Intellectual property is the very essence of innovation (Granstrand, 2006; Maskus, 2000). In today's world, innovation is primarily, but not wholly, based on technological developments (Fagerberg, 2018; Maskus, 2000). Most technological development is built on the foundation of previous technology (Millar et al., 2018). The country with the most advanced technology is, therefore, best positioned to develop the next generation of technology (Galvão et al., 2017). Assuming that their technology is not copied, "stolen," or used by other countries without compensation, which would reduce or eliminate the competitive advantage of the owner, or creator, of the latest technology (Akhmetshin et al., 2018; Granstrand, 1999; Maskus, 2000). And therein, lies the core conceptual value of IP and IPP.

This study is focused on a small part of the global macro view of IP and IPP, but, even as a small brick on the wall, the attitudes towards IP and IPP of the citizenry of the largest, or second-largest national economy in the world, China, Yuki et al. (2018) is relevant. And will play a part in the development of the new world order in the not too distant future (Lake, 2018; Tarasova & Ashurkova, 2020; Yueh, 2020).

Therefore, the focus of this study is both relevant and timely. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to future work in the area of IP and IPP as well as the related fields of IPP in the creative arts, which, as we have come to learn, play a societal role far more significant than simple entertainment (Delaney, 1997; Nouri, 2018).

Intellectual property includes a fairly broad spectrum of materials including; books of fiction, songs and music, art both two and three dimensional which includes architecture and even holographic light, videos and movies, performing arts and dance including recordings of same, literature including poems, stories and even legends both modern and old (Hughes, 1988; May & Sell, 2006). And finally the most obvious of all, technology. Technological innovation is often the result of considerable investment of resources, financial, intellectual and of the intangibles, time, effort and talent (Peng et al., 2020; Tao, 2018).

With these considerations in mind, it is possible for one to see how the micro view of how Chinese perceive one small piece of the overall IP picture as having relevance to the larger picture of IP and IPP protection in China and how it could play a role in the new world order that is emerging. Therefore, this chapter aims to contribute to this the much larger body of research on the perception, role, relevance, and ultimately, the importance of how Chinese view IP and IPP with specific consideration of one small part of IP, the popular and seemingly of little commercial importance, Chinese online literature.

Chinese online literature (COL) is also called Chinese internet literature (CIL). COL contains a variety of types of e-books and other materials (Lugg, 2011a). The most popular type is fiction Tse et al. (2012a), but there are others, including magazines, newspapers, and journal articles (Lovell, 2012a). With the rise of COL commercialization, both individual and commercial "pirate" behavior has occurred. "Pirate" in the case of Intellectual Property (IP) refers to the unauthorized use of IP and has substantial financial implications worldwide (Kwong et al., 2003a; Tunca & Wu, 2013a; Wan et al., 2009). The commonly pirated IP includes software, music CDs, films, movies, television content, and games. In China, pirated COL has increased in recent years and is very common (Brander et al., 2017; Mertha, 2018). There is a considerable research literature on the development of COL, the business opportunities

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