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Comparing Facebook's Influence on Removing the Stereotype of LGBTQ with TikTok

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Abstract: LGBTQ is a minority branch in the process of human development. Due to the particularity of this group, coupled with the demonization and alarmism of some media, and the spreading of some untrue rumors, the public has always had some stereotypes about them. For example, many people think they are mysterious or have bad characters, some people even think they are mentally ill. This paper mainly analyzes and compares two new media mainstream tools, Facebook and TikTok, which can influence the public's stereotypes of LGBTQ. It describes the public's traditional stereotypes of LGBTQ groups and points out how strong an impact the emergence of new media has on this traditional stereotype, and finally analyzes and compares two new media, Facebook and TikTok, and draws the conclusion that TikTok is more influential in changing the public's stereotype of LGBTQ group. This paper can help people use the most effective ways to know about LGBTQ and remove the traditional stereotypes about them.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Facebook, TikTok, remove the stereotype

1. Introduction

In March 2022, the annual Gay Pride Parade was held in Sydney, bringing LGBTQ once again to the public's attention as many media and social platforms rushed to cover the event. The public was also using new media tools to spread the word. Facebook and TikTok, these two new media tools, were used by the largest number of people, making them be the two main contributors to the broadcast of the campaign. This paper uses the knowledge of social psychology and media psychology to analyze and compare the influence of removing the stereotypes of LGBTQ between two new media, Facebook and TikTok, and point out which is more influential in changing the public's stereotypes of LGBTQ. It will enable the public to better realize how to use Facebook and TikTok as social media tools to further enter the spiritual world of LGBTQ people and eliminate persistent prejudice against this community. Tajfel & Turner pointed out that a need for high self-esteem, to some extent, is built by being members of social groups, can encourage individuals get better [1]. The self-esteem of LGBTQ groups can only be protected as they are truly accepted into this society.

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2. Comparison Analysis of Facebook's Influence on Removing the Stereotype of LGBTQ with TikTok

2.1. The Public's Traditional Stereotype of LGBTQ Group

Due to Stringer-Stanback, the definition of LGBTQ is an acronym for lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, trans young adults, or questioning young adults. In his view, lesbians are females who have a crush on other females emotionally and erotically, while gay males are males who have a crush on other males emotionally and erotically, bisexuals mean someone who may have a crush on both males and females, and trans young adults means someone's physical, emotional, and psychological sex expression is contrary to their biological sex, and questioning young adults mean someone who are looking forward to finding out more information about gender, gender identity, and sexuality [2].

Hogg and Abrams insisted that people in groups make social comparisons for the sake of heighten their self-esteem, they have friendly attitudes toward their own group (in-group) while believe that other groups (outgroups) are inferior [3]. The LGBTQ group has been associated with traditional stereotypes due to misleading demonization in some sections of the media and the widespread of untrue rumors. The public generally believes that LGBTQ group are different in some mental illness, some people even think that this group is a factor that leads to the rising crime rate. Heider showed that in balance theory, individuals take effort to remain a sense of balance in their lives, they prefer to achieve "a state of harmony, which can mix the entities comprising the situation and the feelings about them together without any pressure" [4]. As LGBTQ is not accepted by the mainstream ideology of the society, this group is also afraid that the disclosure of their real orientation may bring a series of unknown bad consequences to them, such as discrimination and prejudice. Therefore, LGBTQ individuals usually live in a low profile, and most of them are not willing to disclose their real orientation, even their closest family and friends are completely unaware of their real orientation and inner thoughts. Because their true orientation is not accepted by the mainstream of society, they often cannot be in a state of balance and harmony. Therefore, they can only hide their true selves and cater to the mainstream preferences of the public. The public's understanding of LGBTQ group is very limited and one-sided, which makes most people feel that LGBTQ group is full of mystery.

Friedman and Davidson contend that "it is important to consider identity groups within a social power structure and that not all groups hold equal status within a particular societal context" [5]. LGBTQ obviously do not have an equal place in society. It is normal for human beings to fear and resist the unknown, but only by actively exploring the unknown and fully communicating with each other can we promote spiritual exchange and progress between people. Dixon and Rosenbaum suggested that enhancing connection between any racial and ethnic group members can make them gain new information about these groups, which is helpful to remove negative stereotypes and inspire them have positive viewpoints when facing various racial and ethnic groups. [6]. Understanding is the road to reconciliation, especially when it comes to a group or some components of society, the differences between different people should be rationally seen. Therefore, the media is an important tool for the public to be close to the outside world. Pettigrew and Tropp also suggested that friendships may enhance interracial connect situations and lead to less prejudice than interracial connect without friendship [7]. Only by respecting the differences of the LGBTQ group, not treating this group with colored eyes and making friends with them with an equal mentality and also fully understanding their hearts, can we reduce the prejudice against them.

2.2. The Emergence of New Media

Langner, Hennigs and Wiedmann said that "while individual capital and social capital describe the personal motivation and social competence to influence, social leadership constitutes the core ability

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to persuade others in a social group" [8]. With the popularization of mobile Internet, new media has a decisive impact on society, and formed a certain social leadership. Firstly, it fundamentally improves the influence of news. Compared with traditional media, the emergence of new media has expanded the audience area of news, and easy to obtain data which is difficult for traditional news media to obtain it, it also promotes the development of big data. Secondly, new media promote the audience group from the young to the whole age. Not only young people, the middle-aged and the elderly can also easily access information from the outside world through the mobile network. It is highly interactive and participatory making it popular among people of all ages. Francalanci, Hussain and Merlo pointed out that social media users generally participate in the dialogue with various mechanisms to show that they are interested in something, the most common is sharing the content which they prefer [9].

Under the new media environment, many new social media have emerged, among which the most mainstream are Facebook and TikTok, which greatly facilitate people's life. Meanwhile, new media can also make the public gradually eliminate traditional stereotypes of LGBTQ groups and have a new understanding of them. First of all, these new media can provide the latest comprehensive information about LGBTQ anytime and anywhere, which can help the public further understand the life of LGBTQ and eliminate the mysterious feeling of this group. Secondly, the comprehensive information provided by new media enables more people to look at this group without prejudice or discrimination, and realize that they are just people who live like ordinary people. They also have their own ideals and aspirations, and always work hard and make their own contributions to the society. In addition, new media can improve the public's tolerance of LGBTQ and also make the public start to care about the survival needs of this group, and take the initiative to provide some support to them, such as holding some LGBTQ support parades, donating to some of them in need of help, and carrying out some activities to care for LGBTQ, or taking the initiative to use social platforms to appeal for them, etc.

2.3. Which is More Influential, Facebook or TikTok?

TikTok and Facebook, as two social media platforms with huge user bases around the world, have significant influences in removing the stereotypes of LGBTQ. In the author's point of view, TikTok has a bigger impact than Facebook in this part.

First, Salman, Mustaffa and Ali insisted that creating and sharing the news are extremely easily because of the essence of the social media, combine with its virality, makes the sharing of political news and the spread of any related news very fast and widespread [10]. Facebook has been involved in some one-sided and polarizing issues, it even contributed to war crimes and the collapse of democracy. This makes some of the LGBTQ content posted by Facebook controversial, and even leads the public to further reinforce traditional stereotypes about this group. In contrast, TikTok, as a relatively new short video APP, encourages people to share their lives and build healthy community communication. TikTok's content is more positive and authoritative in spreading LGBTQ content. It is easier to guide people to view LGBTQ groups from a positive perspective and eliminate their negative stereotypes.

Second, Facebook's ads are mainly in video and picture formats, and the videos are not required to add sound. Meanwhile, TikTok is a short video platform whose advertising materials are mainly short videos and must include sound. When it comes to video production, TikTok is simpler and it is easy for every user to put clips together with various effects without having to be a video expert. TikTok's videos tend to be short and direct, starting at 15 seconds and lasting no longer than a minute. Therefore, TikTok's audio-visual videos make it easier for the public to get an immersive and involved experience to know LGBTQ. O'Keeffe pointed out that "Gerbner's cultivation theory relies on the premise that the images and ideas regularly disseminated through mass media products will

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become the mainstream view through sheer repetition" [11]. TikTok is akilled in brainwashing the public with short and repetitive videos that unknowingly change their minds. The combination of visual and auditory senses can make the content more enticing and convincing to remove the Stereotype of LGBTQ from the public's mind and close to LGBTQ's inner world.

Besides, Facebook's users are generally older than TikTok, and have more social experience and mature and stable ideas than younger people, and are less likely to change their LGBTQ stereotypes because of some ads. TikTok, which was founded 13 years later than Facebook, has a predominantly young audience, with an estimated 60% of its users under the age of 30. These young audiences are more likely to accept new things, and are more likely to be influenced by media advertisements on their views of LGBTQ. Therefore, TikTok is more effective in eliminating the public stereotype of LGBTQ than Facebook.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the public always has some traditional stereotypes about LGBTQ group. However, the emergence of new media is gradually eliminating this stereotype and giving the public a new positive objective understanding of this group, and even making them begin to care about this special group. Due to Guo, Eccles and Salmela-Aro, social values refer to valuing work that can make one help people directly and contribute to the large society, which is strongly correlated with working with people (i.e., a job that allows one to interact and help coworkers and work in teams)" [12]. Through new media, the public also realizes that the LGBTQ group just like ordinary people, they also have their own ideals and can also create social values for the society, and their ideals and social values are worthy of respect and equal treatment. Social media platforms like Facebook and TikTok are the two main forces driving the elimination of LGBTQ stereotypes. Among them, TikTok's content is more positive and healthier than Facebook's, therefore, it is more positive and authoritative in spreading LGBTQ content. TikTok videos are also easier to make, and the content is short and concise. The audio-visual combination of short videos is more attractive and persuasive which makes it easier to change the public's impression of LGBTQ. Besides, TikTok's primary audience is younger than Facebook's, and those younger users are more likely to be brainwashed by TikTok ads into changing traditional views of LGBTQ. As a result, TikTok has a greater impact than Facebook in removing LGBTQ stereotypes.

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