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The Alienation Phenomenon of Fan Culture in the Digital Age and Governance Suggestions

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Abstract. This study focuses on the alienation phenomena of fan culture in the digital age and governance suggestions. With the popularization of social media and the development of the entertainment industry, fan culture has rapidly emerged as a new cultural dissemination phenomenon. This study, through the literature analysis method, deeply analyzes the alienation phenomenon of fan circle culture, especially the phenomena of resource waste and consumption alienation, privacy invasion, and cyber violence. The research finds that the alienation process of fan culture evolves from the possession of objects to data production and then to cognitive control, reflecting the evolution of the relationship between fans and idols as well as the gradual loss of fan subjectivity. This phenomenon of alienation not only hurts the behavioral patterns and values of the fan group but also has an impact on the entire social and cultural environment. In response to these phenomena, this study puts forward comprehensive governance suggestions starting from three aspects: technological governance, institutional governance, and cultural governance, including the dynamic monitoring of fan circle chaos by using artificial intelligence technology, improving relevant laws and regulations, and strengthening cultural guidance and education, etc. The research conclusion indicates that by comprehensively applying various governance measures, the development of fan circle culture can be effectively regulated, the negative impacts brought by its alienation phenomenon can be reduced, and the positive development of social culture can be promoted.

Keywords: Fan circle culture, Group communication, Consumption alienation, Privacy infringement, Governance suggestions

1. Introduction

With the popularity of social media and the development of the entertainment industry, fan circle culture has risen rapidly as a new cultural dissemination phenomenon. Fan culture is a youth subculture formed in the Internet era. It refers to an organized group formed by fans around idols such as stars and athletes, who support their idols through methods such as cheering, ranking, and controlling comments. Fan culture influences the behavioral patterns and values of fan groups and also has a certain impact on the entire social and cultural environment. This research is of great significance for guiding teenagers to establish correct values, regulating the order of the cultural market and promoting social harmony and stability. This study mainly elaborates specifically on

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aspects such as the alienation phenomenon of fan circle culture and governance suggestions, and employs the literature analysis method to search for and read relevant materials and literature. The advantage of this method lies in its ability to well analyze the current situation of fan circle culture and the development status of youth subculture, which is conducive to the progress of research. The ultimate research objective of this study is to deeply analyze the fundamental reasons for the alienation of fan circle culture, hoping to construct a theoretical model that can comprehensively explain the alienation of fan circle culture, guide fan circle culture back to a healthy and rational track, and promote the positive development of social culture. In order to achieve the goal, research was conducted on phenomena such as resource waste and consumption alienation, privacy invasion and cyber violence in fan circle culture.

2. Literature review

In her article "The Negative Impacts of 'Fan Circle' Culture and Its Governance Paths", Zhu Xiaojuan studied the negative impacts of fan circle culture and its governance paths, focusing on the negative effects of fan circle culture on the construction of teenagers' subject consciousness, the online ecosystem, and the leading power of mainstream ideology. She also proposed the unique advantages and specific measures of ideological and political education in governing fan circle culture. This research has made contributions in the study of the negative impacts of fan circle culture and the governance paths, providing a theoretical basis and thinking direction for subsequent related research [1]. In the article "The Disenchantment and Regulation of 'Fan Circle Culture' : Reflections Based on Cultural Sociology", Ling Xiaoxiong studied the formation, characteristics, and influence of fan circle culture, especially its cultural representation and sociological significance driven by capital logic and digital technology. At the same time, he explored the regulation and governance paths of fan circle culture. It has contributed to this research in the critical analysis of fan circle culture and the revelation of the capital logic behind it [2]. However, there is not much coverage on aspects such as individual behavioral motives and emotional response mechanisms within the fan circle culture, and the research on the interactive influence between the "fan circle" culture and other social and cultural phenomena is also not comprehensive enough. This article will start from the individual behavioral mechanism within the fan circle culture and its interactive influence with social culture, deeply analyze the psychological and social factors behind it, conduct more detailed empirical research, and fill the gap in the existing research in the fields of micro and cross-cultural interaction.

In her article "The Manifestations and Corrections of Fan Circle Misconduct", Luan Yimei studied the main manifestations of fan circle misconduct, including endless blackouts, excessive spending, and endless reporting. She deeply analyzed the reasons for fan circle misconduct and pointed out that the essential logic of fan circles is the pursuit of charm by idol worship and the manipulation logic of capital. And the correction paths were explored from the dimensions of platforms, idols, fans and media guidance. This study has contributed to the analysis of the causes of fan circle misconduct and corrective measures [3]. In the article "Research on the Subject Consciousness of Fan Circle Youth and Its Reconstruction", Gao Zhongjian studied the subject consciousness issue of fan circle youth and its reconstruction path, deeply analyzed the behavioral characteristics of fan circle youth such as idol obsession, group polarization, and role immersion, and explored the subject consciousness problems behind these behaviors, such as weak autonomy, poor discrimination, and lack of rationality. Meanwhile, the causes of the problem were analyzed from external factors such as the induction of idol personas, the drive of capital interests, and the influence of social entertainment. The goal requirements and policy suggestions for reconstructing

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the subject consciousness from aspects such as the establishment of the subject status, the strengthening of the subject ability, and the realization of the subject value were proposed. This research has contributed to the analysis of the subject consciousness problem of young people in the fan circle and its causes [4]. However, this article does not cover much in the research on the differences among different groups of fan circle youth, and the research on the impact of emerging technologies on the subject consciousness of fan circle youth is also not comprehensive enough. Moreover, the research on the interaction relationships among different subjects within the fan circle is not comprehensive enough. This article will start from the internal differences among the youth group in the fan circle and the influence of emerging technologies, conduct in-depth comparative analysis and empirical research, and supplement the deficiencies of existing studies in these aspects.

3. The alienation phenomenon of fan circle culture

3.1. Resource waste and consumption alienation

The alienation process of fan culture, from the possession of objects to the production of data and then to cognitive control, reflects the evolution of the relationship between fans and their idols as well as the gradual loss of fans' subjectivity. In the early period (2000s-2010s), there emerged the phenomenon of resource waste during the nascent stage of fan culture, mainly characterized by excessive consumption of physical support items. In the middle term (2010s-2020s), the alienation of the social media era emerged, mainly characterized by data ranking and resource waste in the traffic economy. Recently (from the 2020s to the present), the phenomenon of information cocoons and group polarization has emerged, especially among minors, which has had a serious negative impact on their physical and mental health and the formation of their values.

The fan culture originated from early talent shows like "Super Girl". To express their support for their idols, fans often spend a lot of money on products related to their idols, such as peripheral products and endorsed items, thus forming a competitive consumption pattern. Fans obtain emotional satisfaction and recognition by consuming their idols' works, and at the same time provide certain economic support for the idols' career development. Baudrillar's theory of symbolic consumption points out that in modern society, consumption behavior is gradually shifting from satisfying material needs to pursuing symbolic values [5]. The purchase of these goods is often not based on their actual use value, but to obtain the symbolic meaning represented by the goods, that is, support and love for the idols. This alienation of symbolic consumption has led to the waste of resources and also trapped fans in a consumerist trap.

With the development of the Internet and social media, fans' support for their idols has gradually shifted from physical consumption to data production. Hawkschild proposed the concept of emotional labor, which is the process of completing work tasks by expressing specific emotions, managing individual emotions, and identifying and responding to the emotions of others [6]. The combination of social media and talent shows has given rise to the "traffic economy". Fans compete for exposure resources for their idols through methods such as ranking manipulation, controlling comments, and giving virtual gifts as rewards. But in this process, fans are actually engaged in a kind of unpaid digital labor. They have devoted a great deal of time and energy to creating traffic data for their idols. However, the fruits of their labor have been reaped by capital, and the fans themselves have not received the due returns from it. This alienation of data labor has led to the neglect of the labor value of fans, and at the same time, it has intensified the contradiction between fans and capital. At this stage, the consumption behavior of fans is no longer merely physical consumption but has transformed into a form of data labor.

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The behavior of fans is gradually guided and controlled by the platform and capital, and the cognition and values of fans are influenced by the platform rules and capital logic. The cognitive control of fans has led to irrational behaviors within the fan group, such as blind star-chasing, cyber violence, and consumerism. These behaviors not only have a negative impact on the mental health and development of the fans themselves, but also cause damage to the online public opinion environment and social cultural ecology. This makes it difficult for fans to recognize that their subjectivity has been alienated and to break free from the control of capital and platforms, thus falling into a vicious circle. At the same time, the phenomena of information cocoon and group polarization occur. The phenomenon of information cocoon refers to the fact that members of the fan circle, especially minors, have been immersed in a single information environment within the fan circle for a long time. The information sources they receive are highly homogeneous, and their viewpoints are single and one-sided, gradually forming a closed cognitive system. Recommendation algorithms, with their technical features such as "good guidance, strong association, and precise calculation", precisely push information about idol stars to young people in the fan circle, enhancing the stickiness of the fan circle. Meanwhile, some young people, in the pseudo-environment constructed by the algorithm, have long been trapped in a single value concept, unconditionally trusting the information "inside the cocoon" of the information cocoon, gradually losing the ability to distinguish multiple information [7]. This kind of environment makes it difficult for them to access information that is irrelevant to the fan circle or holds different viewpoints, restricting their cognitive development and thinking expansion. Fan platforms and social groups often only spread information that is beneficial to their idols, while blocking or downplaying negative information about them. Due to the lack of information discrimination ability and critical thinking, minors are prone to form one-sided cognition of idols in such a single-information environment, which in turn affects their correct cognition of the objective world. The phenomenon of group polarization is manifested as the continuous reinforcement and extremism of the original viewpoints and attitudes of fan circle members during the process of group interaction. The group polarization effect under the algorithm cocoon is particularly obvious. Fans' pursuit and support for sports stars show an irrational tendency and even trigger a series of bad behaviors. This irrational tendency is essentially the external manifestation of the group polarization effect [8]. In the fan circle, minors are often influenced by the group's emotions and opinion leaders. In order to gain group recognition and a sense of belonging, they gradually give up their independent thinking and agree with the mainstream views of the group. Due to their immature psychology and weak self-control ability, minors are prone to participate in internal conflicts and aggressive behaviors within their fan circles under the influence of group polarization, which can cause harm to the physical and mental health of others. For instance, in disputes among fan groups, minors may, under the influence of group sentiment, engage in behaviors such as abusing and spreading rumors against other fan group members, and even initiate extreme actions like "meat search" on the Internet, seriously affecting the online environment and social harmony.

3.2. Privacy invasion and cyber violence

The alienation of fan culture in terms of privacy invasion and cyber violence is serious, which is closely related to factors such as technological black boxes and younger age groups. The technology black box makes the acquisition of privacy covert and efficient. Criminals take advantage of it to illegally obtain and utilize others' private information, causing great distress to the parties involved. The incident of athlete Fan Zhendong's ID number being leaked is a case in point. Such behavior not only interferes with personal life but also threatens professional safety. The characteristic of younger

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age groups leads to a relatively high proportion of teenagers among the fan base. Teenage fans have active thinking but are not mature enough, and their ability to distinguish is limited. They are easily driven by emotions and form binary opposition thinking in the fan circle. They take aggressive behaviors towards different opinions or competitors, such as speaking ill of each other, giving malicious likes, and posting negative comments. Moreover, they have weak privacy awareness. It is easy to disclose privacy or participate in infringement activities. What is even more worrying is that minors are becoming the main force in exposing their privacy. The identity anxiety in the fan circle culture and the group polarization effect created by algorithmic recommendations have led some teenagers to view exposing their privacy as a social currency to show their abilities, without being aware of the legal consequences [9]. The technological features have magnified the effect of cyber violence. The real-time interaction platforms of the Internet and social media enable fans to quickly transform individual emotions into group violence. Moreover, the dissemination speed is fast, and the scope is wide. The anonymity allows some fans to post aggressive remarks without scrupulousness. Driven by a strong sense of group identity and common goals, fan circles are prone to form a kind of collective violent behavior [10]. To safeguard the image and interests of their idols, fans often attack and suppress those who criticize their idols or hold different opinions, and carry out cyber violence. This kind of cyber violence has brought huge psychological pressure and harm to the victims. Moreover, bad behaviors such as cyber violence, mutual tearing and trampling among fans occur frequently, seriously disrupting the online public opinion environment and affecting the harmony and stability of cyberspace.

4. Suggestions for governing fan circle culture

As a youth subculture, fan circle culture has the potential to be incorporated into mainstream culture and become a positive force. Therefore, a constructive and future-oriented critical attitude should be adopted to deeply study its psychological mechanism, emotional demands and social acceptance, so as to tolerate its rebelliousness and encourage its vitality and innovation [3]. The coordinated governance of "technological governance - institutional governance - cultural governance", AI monitoring and blockchain traceability may give rise to new circumventing technologies, cross-border data supervision faces dual constraints of sovereign boundaries and technical standards, and reconstructs the emotional connection methods of fan communities.

By leveraging artificial intelligence technology to dynamically monitor the chaos in the fan circle, real-time monitoring and interception of online violent information containing offensive language, rumors, defamation and other content can be carried out. Combine social network analysis to predict the risk of group violence and make predictions and warnings in advance. Apply blockchain technology to trace the source of data leakage and enhance the protection of the privacy information of fans and idols. For information involving privacy, the platform needs to limit access rights through encrypted storage and strict identity verification to prevent privacy leakage. The user's personal information, location information, etc. are encrypted and can only be accessed after the user authorizes and verifies their identity. User data is processed by anonymization and de-identification techniques to prevent user privacy from being leaked during data collection, storage and use. When conducting data analysis, the personal identity information of users is anonymized to make it impossible to be directly identified. By using immutable technologies such as blockchain to record users' authorization and data usage, it ensures that users have control over their own data and enhances the transparency and credibility of privacy protection. The platform should optimize the recommendation algorithm to avoid over-pushing information from the same fan circle and reduce the information cocoon effect. Users' diverse interests and different viewpoints can be

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comprehensively considered to recommend a broader and more balanced range of content for them. By leveraging algorithms, we push rational and positive cases of star-chasing, online civilization promotion content, etc. to users, guiding them to establish correct star-chasing concepts. When users browse the content in the fan circle, insert some articles or video recommendations about rational star-chasing in a timely manner.

The healthy development of the market is combined with government supervision. On the one hand, guide the healthy development of fan circle culture and give full play to the role of the platform to promote correct values; On the other hand, the government needs to strengthen the supervision of online media and fan circle organizations, improve laws and regulations, and crack down on illegal and non-compliant phenomena [2]. The government should formulate specific laws and regulations targeting fan circle culture, clearly define the legal boundaries of fan circle behaviors, and increase the penalties for behaviors such as privacy infringement and cyber violence. Specify in detail which behaviors are considered violations, as well as the corresponding penalties such as fines and detention. Improve the regulations on online content management, clarify the main responsibility of platforms, and require platforms to strictly review the content in fan circles, and deal seriously with accounts and platforms that spread bad information. The platform must establish a content review mechanism. For platforms that fail to fulfill their review responsibilities and cause the spread of harmful information, they shall be subject to heavy fines, etc. Establish a cross-border data supervision cooperation mechanism to jointly combat illegal and criminal acts such as cross-border privacy leakage and cyber violence. The platform needs to decouple the development of idols from traffic, use technological means to regulate fan interaction, and rebuild a diversified idol evaluation system. Fans need to break away from their obsession with data and reliance on idols, understand the essential logic of the fan circle, enhance their media literacy, and achieve rational star-chasing [3]. The cultural and performing arts industries should formulate self-discipline guidelines to regulate the behaviors of idols and agencies, requiring them to set good examples and guide fans to pursue their stars rationally. Clarify the requirements for the words and deeds of idols in public, as well as their guiding responsibilities towards fans. Establish a filing system for fan circle organizations and fan groups, requiring them to abide by laws, regulations and industry norms, and impose penalties on their violations. It is stipulated that fan clubs must file with the relevant departments and report their activities regularly. For fan clubs that organize online violence, privacy infringement and other violations, their filing qualifications will be revoked, and relevant responsibilities will be pursued. Government regulatory authorities should enhance the daily monitoring and management of fan circle culture, establish a dedicated regulatory body and team, be responsible for collecting and analyzing relevant data on fan circle culture, conduct real-time monitoring of fan circle activities, and promptly identify and handle violations. Strengthening the supervision of the platform, regularly inspect the content management and privacy protection measures of the platform to ensure that they comply with the requirements of laws and regulations. For platforms that violate regulations, they should be dealt with seriously in accordance with the law to create a deterrent effect. A comprehensive inspection of all major social platforms will be conducted once every quarter. Platforms with privacy protection loopholes or those that fail to effectively curb cyber violence will be subject to penalties such as suspension for rectification.

In the context of the digital age, taking positive guidance and education as the path to reconstruct the emotional connection model of fan communities is of profound significance for creating a healthy cultural ecosystem and promoting the growth of teenagers. Place the cultivation of the spiritual world of the main body in the fan circle at the core of governance, guide young fans to reshape their views on idols, make them clearly understand the key role of the construction of the

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spiritual world in personal growth, understand the essential connotation of human beings, strengthen identity recognition in the diverse social relationship network, and abandon blind worship and following the trend of idols. Highlight the significance of moral and legal education in the fan circle, and through systematic educational means, encourage the main body of the fan circle to internalize moral norms and legal standards, gradually develop a legal mindset, regulate their own behavior, and ensure that fan community activities are carried out in an orderly manner within the framework of morality and law. Use correct public opinion to guide the ideological trend in the fan circle, resolutely ban bad cultural and entertainment activities, and resist the erosion of abnormal values. At the same time, enhance the supply of high-quality literary and artistic works, collaborate with new media platforms and celebrity artists, precisely guide the direction of public opinion, and disseminate positive cultural concepts. We will spare no effort to promote the prosperous development of mainstream culture, guided by the mainstream value orientation, and gradually lead the fan circle culture closer to the mainstream culture, allowing fans to establish correct values under the influence of mainstream culture. Actively engage in the subculture field, advocate the value orientation of truth, goodness and beauty, improve the norms of the cultural and entertainment industry, show zero tolerance for bad cultural phenomena, and create a healthy and positive development space for fan circle culture. Schools and families join hands to incorporate online literacy education and the cultivation of rational star-chasing concepts into the daily education system. Schools can offer specialized courses to impart the knowledge and skills of viewing idols rationally and using the Internet correctly. Parents should set a good example, take the initiative to discuss the value of chasing stars with their children, guide them to focus on the inner qualities and struggle history of their idols, cultivate critical thinking and correct values in teenagers, and prevent the interference of bad fan circle behaviors. The media should fully play their role in guiding public opinion, carefully plan and produce positive cultural content, reduce excessive exposure and hype of negative events in the fan circle, and shape a healthy cultural environment with positive energy content. Idols and their agencies need to have a clear understanding of their influence on fans, take the initiative to assume social responsibilities, and actively spread positive energy. Idols can engage in public welfare activities, leveraging their influence to guide fans to pay attention to social issues and join hands to promote the development of public welfare undertakings. Integrate positive and uplifting themes into the creation of works to subtly shape the moral concepts and life ideals of fans. At the same time, establish a positive interaction mechanism between idols and fans, encourage both sides to carry out constructive communication, and enable idols to deeply understand the demands of fans and precisely guide fans to follow them rationally.

5. Conclusion

The research results of this study reveal the alienation phenomenon of fan circle culture, including issues such as resource waste and consumption alienation, privacy invasion and cyber violence. It points out that the alienation process of fan circle culture, from the possession of objects to data production and then to cognitive control, reflects the evolution of the relationship between fans and idols as well as the gradual loss of fans' subjectivity. It has had a negative impact on the behavioral patterns and values of the fan group, and also caused an shock to the entire social and cultural environment. Thus, it is further concluded that the fan circle culture, as a cultural dissemination phenomenon with significant influence, has a complex and diverse dissemination mechanism, and the alienation phenomenon cannot be ignored. By comprehensively applying various means such as technological governance, institutional governance, and cultural governance, and constructing a collaborative governance model, the development of fan circle culture can be effectively regulated,

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and the negative impacts brought by its alienation phenomenon can be reduced. Promote the positive development of social culture. This research provides a lot of valuable reference significance for future research in this direction, mainly influencing the in-depth understanding of the alienation phenomenon of fan circle culture and the expansion of governance ideas. Future research should focus more on the individual behavioral mechanisms within fan circle culture and its interaction with social culture, conduct more detailed empirical studies, and conduct in-depth exploration of the manifestations and influence directions of fan circle culture in different social backgrounds and cultural contexts. In the future, with the continuous advancement of technology and the deepening of society's understanding of fan culture, it is expected to build a healthier, more positive and orderly fan culture ecosystem, making it a positive force promoting the development of the cultural industry and social progress.

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