

# Research on New Media Communication of Fan Culture and Its Forms of Expression--Taking Bilibili as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the influence of fan culture on the Bilibili APP. We use Bilibili as an example because fan culture impacts most apps and has a big impact on Bilibili; and Bilibili is used by people of all ages because of its wide audience, but mostly by young people. So when the fan culture invades Bilibili, the change before and after is very big. Bilibili's existing content and audience will also be affected and will become more diverse, broader and inclusive. Of course, it will also cause some bad effects. For example, the circle of the quadratic element is not the original quadratic element but will be mixed with some negative elements brought by fans, which will cause dissatisfaction of some cosplayers and quadratic fans. This paper will cover some of the influences of fan culture and fan culture associated with this platform. The methods we use include: reading relevant fan culture materials and papers and checking Bilibili users' comments and their opinions on the phenomenon.

**Keywords:** *New media, fan culture, forms, Bilibili*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Our topic is research on new media communication of fan culture and its forms of expression, and our study focuses on how fan culture express on the website Bilibili. Since 2005, China has begun the cultivation and development of fan culture. Under the influence of multiple factors such as society, economy, culture and technology, China's fan community has generated its own unique culture. The influence of stars in society is growing, and many people have become "fan circle girl" and "fan circle boy". So it is not difficult to see fans support their idols on the Internet and control rating behavior. But a growing number of ordinary Internet users have become dissatisfied with the practice and have begun to boycott them. Also, with the development of the Internet in China, many companies of new social media started the business. For certain, fan culture would be entering the different platforms and express in unique forms.

This research will talk about the research on new media communication of fan culture and its forms of expression divided into Three sections: Definition of fan culture, Behaviors of fan culture in Bilibili, and identification and desires on psychological.

Chasing stars, or just watching entertainment news, belongs to a kind of entertainment in Bilibili. But the star chase accounts for a large proportion of some idolaters, who spend money, do data, control and comments for their idol here. What's more, as stalking fans, they violate the privacy of stars. Is it still a pastime or task for fans? What do the masses think of these 'crazy' actions from fans? How fan culture expresses on a specific platform? What's fans' desires and psychology?

## 2. DEFINITION OF FAN CULTURE IN BILIBILI

Mass culture has now become an important part of China's public daily life. If we don't understand the mass culture, we can't fully understand our current living conditions. Mass culture has its own characteristics. Fundamentally speaking, it has the nature of entertainment culture, which makes people obtain perceptual pleasure. It is different from elegant culture, leading culture and folk culture. Therefore, it needs to study mass culture as the mass culture itself and according to its own laws. The practice of rigid tailoring mass culture according to elegant or dominant culture standards is not enough. [1] At the same time, as far as mass culture itself

is concerned, its positive and negative aspects are often entangled and need to be analyzed calmly. Through the discussion of many problems of mass culture, we can better understand the reality, adapt to the needs of the transformation of social culture and daily life, and better adapt to the country's current situation. The popularization of higher education is the need for transformation. In essence, mass culture is a kind of citizen culture produced in modern industrial society and adapted to the development of the market economy. On the one hand, it is different from the mainstream and English elite cultures of simultaneous interpreting. On the other hand, it is also different from the traditional folk culture and popular culture in the natural agricultural economy. Commercial, popular, entertainment and popularity are the most basic characteristics. [2] Today, the concept of culture has been expanding and even distorted. The reason is not only that the total amount of contemporary cultural production has increased greatly, which has begun to knock on the door of culture and art that is usually not recognized, but also that the disturbing mobility has begun to affect the traditional boundary between high culture and popular culture, some popular cultures claim to have the characteristics of the elegant culture. People don't agree with this cultural explosion from initial disgust to acquiescence and then to non-exclusion. Ubiquitous power not only shows its great charm on the surface of people's lives, but also has penetrated people's values. We see that due to mass culture, people can relax their body and mind and make their lives rich and colorful. Still, at the same time, we also see that its existence has led to a new cultural imbalance and a net loss of humanistic spirit. Thinking is the beginning of solving problems.

Up to now, mass culture has completely separated from the original concept of pure literature. Nowadays, with the development of new media, mass culture has been composed of a variety of completely different contents, and fan culture is one of the most distinctive sections of mass culture. In addition to the operation of market capital, new media is undoubtedly the biggest help for fan culture to emerge in mass culture. Fans are groups of people from all walks of life, drawn together by a particular person or cultural icon, and their combination has formed a new kind of tribe on the Internet. In fan culture, a state of the common name has been formed, and a variety of new media undoubtedly supports this state of the common name. The development of new media has aggravated the co-name state of this culture. In the new media era, the speed of information transmission is fast, the replicability of information is enhanced, and the function of persuasion is enhanced. It is precise because of the common name of new media and fans. Capital has seen the huge business opportunities hidden behind the fan culture that it wantonly uses the traffic idols analyzed with all kinds of big data as the spokespersons of its products. Repeat information on new media platforms to attract public purchases. New media promotes the

development of fan culture, which in turn promotes the progress of new media. There will be a market only if there are requirements. Because of the booming fan culture, many official media have registered small programs or developed exclusive apps to attract traffic and seize the market. This is also a win-win situation.

[3] Fan culture is an important subject in the study of western media culture and also an important field in the study of Chinese culture in recent decades. Fans are a kind of stance, an attitude, a kind of devotion to the idol. Today's fans are mostly children born in the 80s and 90s who have jobs. They have a fashion mentality and become the main body of fans in today's society. After "Super Girl" in 2005, fans changed from groupies and spread all over the world. Let this English fans from the vocabulary had a deep and wide social meaning, became sociologists had to face up to the huge ethnic group. The fan is not only a phenomenon, and it has gradually formed unique, distinctive characteristics of the "fan culture". Fan culture can be applied not only to popular culture but also to science, politics, religion and other fields that require a high degree of rationality. The birth of fan culture, deviating from rationality, began to transform idols, society and history. Modern Chinese fan culture began to take shape in the middle and late 20th centuries. Stars from Hong Kong and Taiwan such as Teresa Teng, Little Tigers and Chow Yun-fat gained many fans, and rock stars such as Cui Jian also met the spiritual needs of young people at that time. However, fans' worship of idols was limited to the one-way transmission mechanism during this period, and fans' behavior was mainly to receive information. The term "groupies" also came into people's view. The worship and pursuit of idols are rooted in human nature. Still, the formation of fan culture is not only based on emotion but also influenced by social, economic and cultural aspects.

From the change of fan culture, it is not difficult to find that the balance of power between fans and idols is imperceptibly tilted. With the advent of the "star-making" fan era, "flow" has become the lifeblood to grasp the idol's career, and the power of fans is further promoted, even more than the idol itself. Idol industrialization has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of idols, an increase in the fluidity of fans, a change in the position of the buyer's market, and fans have more right to speak and decide. In the layout of cultural entertainment, the strong capital end, in the idol - fan system to join a new side, the game is more complex and fiercer. The "fanhuan" of social network platforms has expanded the application field of fan culture. More and more people have noticed the strong emotional connection and high user viscosity of fan culture. As a unique social structure, fan culture is highly involved in today's social structure and activities.

### **3. BEHAVIORS OF FAN CULTURE IN BILIBILI**

In terms of the situation that the fan culture is taking part of video website Bilibili due to the reason that idols and fans noticed the chance to publicize, there are some properly directed behaviors which affect idols in a good way, but also lots of misdirected or wrong behaviors which lead fan culture to be a bad phenomenon in Bilibili, so fan culture and fans needed to be lead in a right direction and the website, the platform also should manage and control the development of fan culture.

Bilibili, as a cultural community and video platform with a high concentration of young generations in China, has been attracting more and more young people and new culture in recent years because of its function, which is that it enables all users to spread some creative videos and new ideas. Bilibili is an inclusive platform, which means that all users can have their own interests and make videos of their interests. The website is famous for the barrage culture. Users can open the function while they watch to know other users' opinions in this part of the video. The website's official encourages users to create, spread, and find a group that gathers people who have the same interests. It is because of the concept, Bilibili could easily attract some minority cultures. That's why fan culture, a youth subculture, choose to develop on Bilibili. Fan culture is a new and later joined culture. The culture consists of some comparative young people who are interested in idols (dominated as actors, singers, dancers) and like to do something for them.

Fan circle refers to the interest groups spontaneously organized by fans in the process of star chasing, which is different from adoring a star individually. Therefore, the behaviors of fan culture should be distinguished from fans' behaviors.

First, the behaviors of fan culture operate like an organized company. [4] There is a strict hierarchy and division of labor within the fan circle. Under the leader's leadership, fans systematically improve their influence on their idols and control public opinion. How does the fans' system show up in Bilibili? According to some of the reflections of videos with a high click rate of idols (which means high affection), many users of Bilibili reflect that they usually saw most of the videos about celebrities cutting by fans. Some of them are funny, some of them are refined and beautiful. Also, some of them even have a whole storyline which made of many small segments of idols' official video materials. While users enjoy and appreciate them for fun, fans also reach their goal: publicize their idols. When users are attracted by these videos and the celebrities they want to publicize, they achieve their goal. Maybe some users would become parts of them and make more fun, interesting videos. So it's a kind of win-win phenomenon fan culture brought in. Moreover, another form of fan culture on Bilibili is

consumption. Fans are a special "consumer group" formed in consumer society. If Bilibili cooperates with idols' companies or themselves, the fan would like to pay. Some exclusive broadcast TV shows will be sold will be watched because of fan economic. The consumption of the fan culture is not only the television or music works produced by idols or the personal design of media marketing but also "derivative information" of these "conveyances" between fan communities. For example, some videos made by fans would be tipped by other fans who enjoyed, which means they pay for the "derivative information" made by other fans. Also, some famous fans even choose to cooperate with website officials to get money by "tonghumanities" or fan-made products. The economy would also be carried forward in Bilibili.

The third kind of fan culture phenomenon is about the internal activities of the fan circle like "kongping" (which means that fans post comments with almost the same fellows on the video to show that their idol is excellent and popular)," fanhei" (which means that fans complaint or delete some statement about something bad of their idol). The phenomenons usually happen in videos where some of the parts their idols show up, some official videos, and some videos compare some idols. These kinds of behaviors bring fan culture language, which is a unique branch of network language. With the development of social media, fans have a unique language for internal communication. Its terms are generally divided into three types: one is the derivation of original words, the other is English abbreviations, and the third is the foreign transmission. The kind of unique fan language is unusual in Bilibili now. It brings a new form of culture to Bilibili.

The fan culture in Bilibili also brings some dangers. Some users don't like the new phenomenon invading the culture. For example, some people just video for fun, and they are not interested in idols. However, they always see some advertisements for idols, and some fans recommend their idols everywhere. The over-publicizing behaviors draw in some users' antipathy and cause counteraction of their goals for the idol. [5] Moreover, fan culture is a kind of a youth subculture that is regarded as a culture with characteristics of adolescent resistance that cannot bring the same feeling with other normal users of other ages. Also, it's easy to cause controversy in the culture. When two groups have conflicts, fans would discuss and argue intensely. Bilibili, a famous website for its barrage function, is now less used due to the barrage. Some similar sentences just praise celebrities are very meaningless. There are even some arguments between two groups of fans in comments or barrage bother users to watch videos. The kind of catfight between many fans is usually with rude words. It's doubtless that it's bad for the construction of polite civilization of the Internet. Because of the conflicts, the issues of Internet violence appears definitely. The Internet violence is against many fans group and involves normal users who just comment casually without ill intention. By contrast to the other

kinds of consumption, while the fan culture carries forward the economy, they are also easy to lose themselves into aesthetic consumption and even lead some vicious competition which builds an unhealthy market with impulse buying and excessive consumption because fan culture is a kind of youth subculture which consist of young girls who aged 8-15. The participants are immaturity and indiscerning consumers ", that is, immature and indiscernible consumers.

Furthermore, in the field of circle culture, fans select idols and choose to create videos for them. At this level, they are fans and "uploaders" (the name of video creator in Bilibili). They can have their own fans and even fan culture. The correlation is bond and sticky, just like a ring caught in another one. As a result, fan culture brings some new circle culture here. The fans push the circle culture to flourish quickly due to the sense of belonging and the sense of identity that fan culture brought in.

[6] According to the behaviors here, including the new circle culture that fan culture brought in, we know that the pros and cons coexist, and people cannot avoid them. One thing that we can change is to weaken the affection the cons brought. The idols and some fan group leaders should lead fans to behave and publicize in a correct direction in Bilibili. Another important thing is that the website, Bilibili, should also manage the behaviors by regulation and examination. The website cannot attract much more users only if the website inhibition the over-development of the fan culture here. Finally, face the new circle culture, we could feel its benefits, but we cannot ignore the cons it will come with. It's necessary to face and involve in a good attach great importance attitude.

#### **4. IDENTIFICATION AND DESIRES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL**

The teenagers willing to integrate into the comfortable collective or whose the person one admires is attractive for the youth using different ways that make them feel a sense of identity, usually happen under the good reception and increase in attention about their contribution.

Bilibili, a cultural community and video platform where young Chinese generations are highly concentrated. The youth is in a period of personality independence and emotional dependence easily attracted by the fantastic image and emotional resonance. After that, infatuation and worship of idols will arise.

[7] Self-identification and fan group cognitive that from <Modernity and self-identity>:

Self-identification process develops gradually which it is grow from physiological, social and then psychological which, it is through by receiving the information from the world constantly to know and improve yourself. In the mass media application like the Bilibili, the people, for example, who are young, will change and improve their

appearance when they are recommended the beauty makeup or clothing videos. [8] Further, in the mental field, the up-loaders that they follow will hugely influence teenagers' behaviors for which they usually receive information from them and maybe develop similar characters. Also, it can explain why people are trend to join the interior group (like the fans group), which is considered better and had affiliation because that is a place where they grow the inner world and have the same belief. Teenagers, due to the stage that need to represent their emotion to others (except their families) and gain a sense of identity from others. So they will find the group they are interested in and have abundant activity as an emotional anchor.

From what has been discussed above, the group behavior could be explained like the massive cutting works, propaganda, or even raising money for star's events. [9] These are all caused by the group identification, infatuation, and worship of idols during their emotional deficit period. There is no denying it brings a positive effect on themselves. Their quality works like some video cuttings and secondary creations gained a lot of play and encouragements from the fans that will motivate them to create more wonderful videos. They may probably become the up-loader or even the public figures. Enter the fan groups, and with the help of the sub-culture or mass media, the youth's skills will be promoted and recognised.

In addition, the member will experience the difference of other groups from the positive social-identification and self-esteem and finally, prefer to the groups where they keen on.

[7] Culture is the basis of self-identification. This feature makes the group identification stronger than the others and will isolate the other group, which will raise the contradiction. However, in the Internet age currently, due to the advantage of virtual and the development of the mass media, people could display selective information about themselves. [10] The individual of identity has the characteristics of virtual and construction that promote the dynamic and infinity. What's more, the member could choose to attend various internet groups. People can easily find that Bilibili is constructed by different cultural layers nowadays, not only the animation at the beginning, there are various sectors in this application, such as technology, stars, game and also vlog, where users could build their own interesting groups that include omnifarious types of videos, and according to the specific algorithm that they have little percentage receive the content they disliked. In that way, the arguments will be reduced. After that, the personal homepage will be fixed. It is common to see that a person who both like the animations and the celebrities, which was a rare thing in the past because these different groups would have frequent quarrels. In contrast, after the intelligent media algorithm, the users will see more complimentary comments instead of extremely negative ones. In short, the media platforms like Bilibili play a vital

role in layers of division that advance the form of new groups and impel members to realize different cultures by distributing various videos.

However, it is no doubt that an over-lined sense of fan behaviour will lead to problems. Because of having same worship of idols, communications and interaction in the fan groups, the teenagers gain the sense of community. To get more attention and recognition, also avoid being isolated, the youngest will be willing to choose the behavior that conforms to the requirements or the characteristic language of this organization for the further confirmation of the sense of community, satisfy the demand of the sense of belonging. At the same time, they lack the judgement of value and rational analysis which may mislead the young adults and make them lose their thoughts and become simplify just like the marionette. However, this kind of highly social will hardly represent in the new media platform like BiliBili, in which the users develop their identification deeply, and they even can be the centre person who motivates others.

Simply put, from what has been discussed and compared above, it can be safely concluded that mass media, nowadays, is the main factor to develop the fan culture through virtual social applications and websites such as BiliBili, where most of the users are teenagers who in their confused life stages. But it is different with other platforms on the user quality specification for which the people must pass the comment norms tests before they remark that the youth would hardly touch the moral bottom line.

On the other hand, since 1980, consumerism has transitioned from traditional material consumption to traditional and media consumption. [11] BiliBili fits the current consumerism through fan culture, which is the appearance of both material and spiritual. At the psychological level, fans' investment in worshipping stars is reflected in spending. Based on this materialism and emotional dependence on idols, many followers will buy idol related products, fans of idol related products from the traditional sense of their photos, posters, photo collections to their album, concert tickets and other direct idol products and services, moderately change and extend to indirect idol daily supplies. This type of consumer behavior is classified under desire. The problem of desire is an important part of Lacon theory. This is actually an extension of Freud's theory of lust. In Lacon's theory, the human requirement can be divided into the phenomenon level and noumenon level. The phenomenon level includes need and demand as well as the noumenon level just contains a desire. So, these three administrative words are in a gradually ascending trend. Overall, the need is physiological needs with clear object nature and conditional, which can be satisfied. Demand is the demand for love, a more advanced emotion than need. This cannot be satisfied fully. The need is individual, and the demand is the mutual interaction between people. They found that

fan culture allowed them to meet both needs and demand. However, many fans still use unscrupulous divisive tactics to satisfy their desire 'impracticably'.

In the next place is corporeal radicalization. For example, when the celebrities start a live telecast in BiliBili, a part of their followers will recharge the virtual gift for the anchor. The more people who recharge are often remembered by anchors and people who are watching the live broadcast, which meets their need for presence. So chasing stars is the love for an idol to them and a symbol of making up for interpersonal communication.

Similarly, following stars is a kind of mutual interaction. With the celebrities enrolled in BiliBili, fans become young-aged-trends, usually teenagers or youngsters, full of imagination on their emotions and lives. These expectations, vent, and yearning are also their reasonable needs. They are easier to be attractive when seeing the beautiful image of stars or idols or their artistic creation, leading to stars becoming objects of fascination and worship. However, celebrities or idols themselves desire followers, which is an individual objective, but the objective is universal. The extreme followers often control and evaluate in multi-person videos about their idols to achieve the phenomenon and purpose of 'their idols are more popular than other stars in the video'. The appearance of controlling the evaluation reflects that the fans often lack independent emotional cognition. In addition, in the growth process, teenagers often get a sense of existence and belonging among their peers while getting more attention and avoiding being isolated by their peers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The fan culture affects all of the parts positively and negatively in BiliBili. The pro of the influence of the public includes that the positive idols and healthy fan culture environments help fans to establish a great mode and lead fans to follow. The con is that the crazy, over-popularizing and excessive fan culture may cause some behaviors of bad consumption.

This kind of culture change reflects the environment of entertainment but also makes aesthetic standards become simple.

Moreover, identification and desires on psychological, fan culture development lead to some fan culture people's psychological desires. To find the method of catharsis and the places or items to emotional attachment, they are willing to participate in the group filled with understand or worship a person together, where they could gain the identity from the members. There are three stages in the process of self-formation and self-develop: 1. mainly mimic others unconsciously 2. Imitation stage 3. Social role-playing stage. Also, in the identification process, people will automatically divide items into interior and

exterior groups, which the front is considered better and tend to affiliation. In addition, the member will experience the difference of other groups from the positive social-identification and self-esteem and finally, prefer to the groups where they keen on.

The turning point of the development of fan culture also lets some unhealthy ways to love celebrities, which hurt celebrities. It's also affect some ways of people to know about celebrities and entertain. So combine these, there are benefits and disadvantages fan culture, so the Bilibili website should manage and control the overdeveloping appearance, as well as the idols and leaders of a fan culture group need to lead behaviors of fan culture a right way.

Besides, Extreme ways lead to corruption in youths' hearts, being distracted from learning to get money or other interests and ignoring the consequences. At the same time, juveniles are the most vulnerable to get negative information from outside. Their psychological changes, such as comparison and jealousy, let their real-life family, partners and classmates gradually away from them, and an estrangement grow between each other.

To sum up, there are many ways to vent their emotions, but based on the fan circle benefits, many fans' consumption and time expenditure are based on supporting the idol and meeting personal desires. In addition, fans of idol related products, from the traditional sense of their photos, posters, photo collections to their album, concert tickets and other direct idol products and services, moderately change and extend to indirect idol daily supplies. This type of consumer behavior is classified under desire. Besides, the need is physiological needs with clear object nature and conditional, which can be satisfied. Demand is the demand for love, a more advanced emotion than need. This cannot be satisfied fully. The need is individual, and the demand is the mutual interaction between people. They found that fan culture allowed them to meet both needs and demand. However,

many fans still use unscrupulous divisive tactics to satisfy their desire 'impracticably'.

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