

Distant Love and Empty Hate: Identity and Cultural Conflict of Intercultural Fan Groups

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Abstract: This article examines the connections between intercultural communication, intercultural fan groups, and cultural conflicts. The culture and identity of fan groups from different cultural backgrounds have an important influence on intercultural communication, and fan groups from different cultural backgrounds also have differences in intercultural communication. Based on the interviews and findings, this paper analyzes the identity and cultural conflict of intercultural fan groups, as well as the existing problems and challenges.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, intercultural fandom, identity, cultural conflict.

1. Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Fandom

Intercultural communication is the process of transmitting information between different cultural environments using various communication methods and means. With advancing globalization, communication between different cultures is becoming more and more common, and intercultural communication is becoming particularly important. It is not only an important means of cultural exchange and interaction but also an important means of resolving cultural conflicts and promoting cultural integration. In today's world, intercultural communication has become an indispensable part of international communication and cooperation. One of the most important branches is intercultural fandom and pop culture. Intercultural fans are those who consistently show enthusiasm, interest, and commitment to media content, people, or brands from different cultural backgrounds. They put a lot of emotion and energy into the established content of a foreign culture, participate in it, and express it in different ways, thus creating a unique intercultural fan culture.

2. The Identity of Intercultural Fans

2.1. National Identity

When multicultural fans are exposed to and accept foreign cultures, their original national identity can be violated and undermined. They can reconsider and adapt their cultural values, beliefs, customs, and norms of social behavior. In intercultural communication, the ethnic identity of fan groups can also become a resource or means for interpreting, interpreting, and reproducing foreign cultures, thus enriching their cultural and cognitive connotations. Gao Yun, a doctoral student at the School of Arts of Communication at the University of China, wrote in an article that "intercultural fans differ from regular audiences in that they invest more in some aspects than others. Intercultural communication is basically a form of cultural export, the aim of which is to promote national culture and strengthen the influence of national culture. The empirical nature of the communication content and the effectiveness of the communication impact are important criteria for measuring intercultural communication activities." [1]

2.2. Fandom Identity

Intercultural fans have a dual identity. They are not only heirs of their own culture, but also recipients of foreign culture. In intercultural communication, they develop their unique aesthetic tastes and cultural values by comparing and learning the differences between different cultures.[2, 3] Intercultural fans' understanding of identity and emotional projection also vary. They differ in their acceptance of foreign cultures, their sense of identity, and their sense of belonging to their communities. This diversity reflects the complexity and diversity of cultural exchange and integration in the globalization process. In addition, fans' intercultural identity is also influenced by a number of factors, such as personal experiences, education, social environment, etc. These factors influence their interpretation and acceptance of another culture and shape their unique cultural and social identity.

2.2.1. Unidirectional and multidirectional

In the process of intercultural communication, the identity of fan groups has unidirectional and multidirectional characteristics.[4] In the observation of the work of the fans' club, from the perspective of spreading cultures, more one-sided work is carried out, and the culture only spreads between groups. However, from the perspective of the fans themselves, there is a two-way relationship between the fandom and the stars. In interviews, many fans have said that although it is mostly a one-way interaction between fans and idols, if there are no fans, there will be no idols. Online interaction includes live streaming interaction, interaction on social media platforms, etc. Offline interaction includes concerts, meetings, and contract signings. The interaction between the idol and the fans is part of this work, the fans derive a certain emotional value from the idol, and the idol receives financial support from them.

2.2.2. Power relations in the fandom

The power relationship within a fan group includes many aspects, such as organizational structure, personal influence, economic power, etc. Within a fan group, there are usually several roles, such as leader, organizer, spokesperson, etc. These roles are usually filled by people with appropriate skills influence and a certain amount of power within the fan group. In addition, members of the fan group also have a certain influence on the team due to their personal influence,

economic power, and other factors. Some members may achieve higher status and prestige and therefore have more power within the team due to factors such as their contribution, commitment, and professionalism to the team.[5]

3. Problems and Challenges Faced by Intercultural Fans

3.1. Cultural conflict

Cultural conflicts in intercultural fans are mainly caused by different cultural backgrounds, and a series of conflicts and contradictions arise from conceptual differences and misunderstandings caused by fans' identification and emotions regarding idols, stars, works, brands, and other objects. The answers received in the interview show that many factors influence the occurrence of cultural conflicts. Fans from different cultural backgrounds, due to the differences in growth environment, education experience, social environment, and other aspects, there are differences in the recognition and values of idols, stars, works, brands, and other objects. Such differences may lead to conceptual collisions and disputes, such as different understandings and interpretations of idols' behaviors and remarks, and different evaluations and cognition of works. Social media and cyberspace provide a platform for cultural conflicts in the intercultural fan community. When fans share their views and opinions on social media, there may be misunderstandings and conflicts due to differences in language, culture, etc. At the same time, social media and cyberspace also easily lead to the amplification and polarization of emotions, making conflicts more intense and acute.[5] Cultural conflicts in the intercultural fan community may also be influenced by economic interests and market factors. Idol stars, works, brands, etc. from different countries compete in the market, which may lead to antagonism and conflict between fans from different cultural backgrounds. For example, business competition may lead to the belittling and attacking of the other country's idol stars, as well as excessive support and exaltation of their own country's idol stars. Political and historical factors are also important reasons leading to cultural conflicts in the trans-cultural food circle. There may be political contradictions and historical problems between different countries, which may lead to antagonism and conflict between fans of different cultural backgrounds. For example, historical territorial disputes, wars, and other events can lead to feelings of hostility and rejection towards fans of the other country.

3.2. Spread range

The scope of intercultural communication is very wide, including communication between different countries, regions, nationalities, and languages. These forms of communication can promote communication and understanding between different cultures and help promote the development of globalization and pluralism. In the interview, the fans of overseas stars all said that they have learned a lot about foreign cultures in the process of chasing stars. At the same time, the fans may break the barrier between cultures and narrow the relationship between countries and cultures by following the same idols. However, some fans say there are many reasons for the intercultural spread of fan community culture.

3.2.1. Relations between countries

Political relations between countries can directly affect the

reach of intercultural fan groups. If there is political conflict or tension between the two countries, then the spread of intercultural fan groups may be restricted or banned.[5] For example, some countries may prohibit or limit cultural exchanges and interactions with certain countries for political reasons. If there is economic cooperation or trade relationship between the two countries, then the spread of intercultural fan groups may be given more opportunities and resources. Some cultural exchange activities between countries may be supported by the government or enterprises, thus expanding the scope of dissemination. If there are differences in social systems, values, and other aspects between the two countries, the spread of intercultural fan groups may be more challenging and restricted. Cultural exchange activities between some countries may be restricted or prohibited due to differences in social systems.

3.2.2. Legitimacy

National legal systems also influence intercultural communication at various levels, for example through age limits for fan groups or communication methods. Fans who took part in the interview said that in some regions or countries, it is necessary to use climbing software to obtain qualifications or information about activities abroad. From an economic perspective, fan culture is an integral part of the modern capitalist culture industry.[6] Whatever form it takes, its essence is inextricably linked to the pursuit of profit. The activities of fan groups and the promotion of idols and culture are inseparable from financial support, and the main source of income for promotion is fundraising in fan culture. However, these behaviors and software are illegal in some countries, which also affects cultural transmission.

3.2.3. Cultural discount

Cultural discount usually refers to the phenomenon of understanding difficulties and cognitive obstacles in the communication of cultural products due to differences in cultural background, values, and cognitive modes.[7] This phenomenon becomes particularly clear in the intercultural communication of fans. Due to the different cultural backgrounds and cognitive habits of fan groups, there are often large differences in the understanding and acceptance of the same cultural products. In fans' intercultural communication, the culture discount will influence fans' choice of communication content, thereby reducing the scope of communication and the possibility of multiple communication.

4. Conclusion

When intercultural fan groups come into contact with a foreign culture, their national identities can be disrupted and questioned, and fans' identities are also diverse and complex. In addition, intercultural communication is also influenced by cultural conflicts, the level of communication, and other factors. Therefore, people should respect the differences and characteristics of different cultures and promote communication and understanding between cultures. At the same time, the legitimacy and effectiveness of intercultural communication should be improved and the scope and impact of communication should be expanded. This is the only way we can better advance the development of globalization and diversification. In the study, all respondents were foreign idol fans, some were high school students, and some were college students. When asked about their identities, all of them responded that they were marginalized in their fandom. About

the main figures of this group, like a fan group, they said in an interview that a fan group cannot be formed by one person and the group is apparently led by many people under the surface. Because they cannot only focus on their opinions and hold a prominent position in the fan base, they are unable to express strong personal opinions, which could mislead other fans. Therefore, the content of this interview is only from mainstream consumers and people who want to meet their idols, which has some limitations. In future research, people should focus their vision and reference objects on people with different identities in the group to draw conclusions from multiple perspectives. In addition, people should also compare the differences between intercultural fan groups and non-intercultural fan groups and compare the advantages and disadvantages of cultural communication between them. Intercultural research is important nationally and globally, but few people engage in it. Because it covers multiple areas, future research should be based on different areas of expertise.

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