

The Rise of Participatory Culture and User Content in the Digital Era: A Case Study of Wanyan Huide Fans

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Abstract: In the digital era, with the development of a new generation of information technology, the live broadcast industry is developing rapidly. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and China's national policy, the number of users of live broadcast platforms has grown rapidly during COVID-19, such as Tiktok, Kuaishou, Baidu and other platforms, and a large number of users have poured in, and live broadcasts have become an emerging industry in China. In the process of the rapid development of live broadcasting, some types of live broadcast have also been differentiated, the most popular of which is live broadcasting. In addition, there is also a very popular chat live broadcast. This paper chooses Henry Jenkins's participatory culture and UGC (User-Generated Content) as the theoretical framework and takes the recently popular "perceptual psychology Wanyan Huide" as the research object. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, this paper explores the reasons for Wanyan Huide's popularity, analyzes the characteristics of his fans, and finally reveals the motivation of his fans for secondary creation.

Keywords: Participatory Culture, Fan Culture, Secondary Creation.

1. Background

Live broadcasts appeared in the nineties of the last century, and live broadcasts have developed rapidly in China in recent years. According to a report released by Guanzhihai's domestic information network, China's Internet broadcasting scale in 2022 will reach 617 million people. According to a report released by the China Internet Network Information Center, as of December 2022, the number of online live streaming users in China reached 751 million. In 2022, the user growth rate will be as high as 22.42% compared to the previous year. The live broadcast industry has driven the development of the digital economy, with a scale of 50.2 trillion yuan. At present, most of the research on live broadcast in the Chinese mainland focuses on e-commerce live broadcasting, taking Li Jiaqi and Wei Ya as examples to study their marketing strategies and consumer psychology. Li Jiaqi and Wei Ya are the two most well-known and highest-selling e-commerce anchors in Chinese mainland, and they have gained many fans by relying on live broadcasts. As an emerging type of live broadcast, chat live streaming has been less studied. Compared with the previous research, this paper takes the emerging chat blogger "Wanyan Huide" as an example, takes Wanyan Huide's fan perspective as the starting point, takes Henry Jenkins's fan culture as the theoretical framework, takes participatory

culture as the research perspective, and uses semi-structured in-depth interviews to analyze the types, characteristics and motivations of Wanyan Huide's fans.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Participatory Culture and Fan Culture

The term participatory culture first appeared in a 1998 article by Henry Jenkins titled "*Replay, Reread, and Rewrite < Star Trek >: Fan Writing as a Textual Poacher*." Unlike the Frankfurt School before him, Jenkins believed that the audience was not only a recipient of culture, but also a participant in it. He emphasises the agency of fans and believes that they are actively engaged in the culture [1]. In Jenkins' view, fan behavior can both convey identity and reshape social connections. He pointed out that fan communities have the potential to transform fan communities into constructive spaces through individual or collective actions [2]. Participatory culture, on the other hand, began as a fan culture, a culture that provides stronger support for individual creation and sharing in terms of artistic expression and public participation, and in some form is able to transfer knowledge from the most experienced group to the informal mentoring relationship of novices [3]. But with the development of the times, participatory culture is now not only used among fans, but also in other cultures in society, as long as its audience has participatory behavior, it can be called participatory culture [4]. In live chats, fans most often edit the best parts of the live video into clips for secondary creation. Some of them will be made into auto-tune remix-themed content videos, while others will be made into funny videos and edited with other bloggers' live streams.

2.2. User-Generated Content

User-generated content, also known as UGC, refers to the spontaneous creation of some videos, pictures, texts and other content on social media platforms by users through the use of the Internet, and disseminated and disseminated on the Internet. With the development of the Internet, we are now in the era of Web 2.0, but due to the late start of China's Internet, the research on UGC is still in its infancy compared with foreign countries. In 2007, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a document titled "*Participative Web and User-Created Content: Web 2.0, Wikis and Social Networking*", defines UGC and describes its three characteristics: innovation, openness, and professionalism [5]. However, with the continuous progress of science and technology, many non-professionals have also started UGC creation, and gradually become professionals in continuous practice. So now, the three characteristics of UGC have changed. Fans who initially created UGC were just recreating because of their own interests, but after many and detailed recreations. Fans who do UGC creation become professionals and earn from it.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. General Description

Semi-structured interviewing is a form of interview that is halfway between unstructured and fully structured and refers to preparing a rough interview outline for the interview before the interview. In this type of interview, the interviewer can flexibly adjust according to the interviewee's answers, duration, interview location, etc. This research wanted to use interviews to understand the personal situation of Wanyan Huide's fans, so we chose to use semi-structured interviews. Through the interviews, we focused on the fans' hobbies, personalities, and perceptions of Wanyan Huide and the same type of steamers. Let's explore the reasons for Wanyan Huide's popularity, the characteristics of fans and the motivation of fans' secondary creation.

3.2. Introduction of Research Subjects

This paper uses semi-structured interviews in a qualitative analysis. Fans of the live chat anchor "Wanyan Huide" were selected as the research object, and each respondent was an analysis unit. This research interviewed a total of 5 followers, and conducted in-depth interviews with these five people. They are one university student studying quantitative analysis, two university students studying communication, one university student studying German, and one university student studying foreign Chinese language and literature. Four of the five of them are huge fans. There is one person who has just started to understand Wanyan Huide, but is willing to continue to understand. Among them are literature lovers, game lovers, anime lovers and travel lovers, but they all get together because of "Wanyan Huide". They have very different personalities and hobbies, but they all like to watch Wanyan Huide's live broadcast and fans' secondary creations.

4. Results

4.1. Portrait of Wanyan Huide

Wanyan Huide is from China's Gansu Province, and her hometown is a place where patriarchy is more serious. The surname Wanyan is because their village was originally guarded for the emperor's mausoleum, which is the surname given by the emperor. Because Wanyan Huide is a girl, she is not valued by her family and is only admitted to vocational school. After her work, she studied and was admitted to the Department of Psychology of Peking University (one of the best universities in China) for the adult college entrance examination. After her retirement, she contacted the Internet live broadcast and began to pay for chatting in the live broadcast room to provide psychological counseling to counselors. Because of her unique accent and strange actions, she has created a lot of memes that are unique to her and have exploded on the Internet.

4.2. Fan Portraits

Wanyan Huide's fans do not have special fan nicknames, and their main fans are mostly composed of college students, but they cover various types of college students, from two-dimensional lovers, literature lovers, game lovers to fans in the fan circle. From paid live broadcast consultation, purchasing goods, watching short videos, etc., Wanyan Huide's fans not only have the same characteristics as other types of blogger fans, but also have characteristics such as "scattered, personalized, and creative".

4.3. The Strange Road to Fame of Wanyan Huide

Wanyan Huide, as a blogger who has no capital and operation, became popular completely out of accident, and became popular at the beginning because of the funny accent in the live broadcast room. Many of Wanyan Huide's memes are not actually made by herself. Mostly because of her fan shenanigans. Interviewee Kitten believes that Wanyan Huide is hot because of her own serious attributes, and after being teased by fans, there will be a lot of funny reactions. "I think a big part of her popularity is because his fans are very shenanigans, because a lot of people in her fandom are gay. They're going to do something outrageous and hilarious. They will post some pornographic jokes in Wanyan Huide's live broadcast room, or some jokes related to the gay subculture circle to tease her. But Wanyan Huide is a 56-year-old woman, and then she doesn't understand these and is still very serious and looks like a decent person. And because of some strange words or behaviors of herself, the flirting is particularly funny. Fans talked to her in the live broadcast room, just like people teasing

children. In addition, his reaction is often very calm and nervous, and there is a sense of success in the trick.”

The interviewee Piggy believes that Wanyan Huidehuo is because she is not a serious psychologist, and the homophonic stalk is a common joke in the world. “On the one hand, it may be that her content is too outrageous, so everyone thinks that she is not a serious academic celebrity and let him fall into the first step of being molested. Then I found out later that this person has a lot of the kind of parental traits that young people hate the most, such as she likes to preach, doesn't understand new things, and insists on using her ancient thoughts to explain seriously, and then her accent will lead to a lot of homophonic stalks.”

The interviewee, Kuku, believes that Wanyan Huide exploded because he felt very healing. “I usually feel tired from studying and working until the evening, and I really want to lie down and watch some relaxing videos at this time. Although she spoke without logic, she felt very happy after reading it, and she had a sense of relaxation. Because fans always make up some false stories in her live broadcast room as a topic for inquiry, although those stories sound outrageous, they just feel very funny and brainless.

The interviewee, Poop Superman, believes that Wanyan Huide's explosion is just a carnival of the Internet, and her explosion is just a product of this carnival. “As I said earlier, in the age of the Internet, many people just watch it for fun, or use it as an emotional outlet. Personally, when I watch it, I feel like I'm happy. But I know that some people are following the trend or playing memes or something, and it's normal for these situations to exist.”

After Wanyan Huide became famous, Tiktok 's official filmed a documentary for her to detail the life experience of Wanyan Huide behind the live broadcast. But after the documentary was released, the wind on the Internet reversed, from playing memes with Wanyan Huide to encouraging her and praising her. Because of Wanyan Huide's tragic life experience when she was a child, many netizens felt pity for her.

Interviewee Sprite believes that many of the current fans are a rabble, and at first, they just regarded Wanyan Huide as an object of toy. “I always thought they were called foolishness. In the beginning, I regarded her as an Internet celebrity, and there is still a distance between Internet celebrities and the daily lives of ordinary people. They will see her as a symbol and symbol that can be flirted, and people will not think of her as a real person. So, I felt unscrupulous, but when her documentary came out. This person was branded with some specific life, and everyone knows that she has also had a tragic experience, and the comments naturally change.”

5. Limitations

The sample size in this study was insufficient, with only 5 samples. The gender distribution was under-distributed, with only one male respondent in the five samples. However, the advantage is that the selected samples are distributed over a wide range of areas, including Macau, China, the Netherlands, Zhejiang Province, Qingdao, China, etc. The personalities of the selected respondents were also different, but most of them studied communication-related disciplines, which made the sample not universal.

6. Conclusion

According to the research, there are four reasons for Wanyan Huide's explosion: First, I have a great sense of contrast. Her tag is perceptual psychology, but in fact, she is not a serious scholar and often says things that sound nonsensical. Second, her live broadcast room can be used as an outlet for emotions. Today's young people are very impetuous and often feel tired, and chatting with Wanyan Huide is a catharsis of their emotions. Three, her accent is hilarious. Homophonic memes are simple

and funny jokes that everyone loves, and it is easy to imitate so it is even more funny. Fourth, people can feel a sense of healing in the live broadcast room. Fans make up absurd stories in the live broadcast room to make people laugh, and sometimes this simple low-level happiness can make people forget a lot of troubles. The sample size in this study was insufficient, with only 5 samples. Future research can expand the scope of interviews to obtain more comprehensive conclusions.

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