

Problems of the Fans Economy and Countermeasures for Its Governance

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Abstract: With the development of media and the economy, “idol chasing” has become a common social phenomenon. Different age groups, regions, and circles have their own ways of chasing idols. These ways range from real-time interactions on short-video platforms and Weibo updates to participation in offline concerts and fan meetings; from teenagers’ consumption of idol merchandise and albums to adults’ participation in social public welfare services in the name of being stars’ fans. Idol chasing has become an important carrier that penetrates the daily life of the public and is related to cultural communication and economic consumption. Undoubtedly, it has driven the economic market, activated the vitality of the consumer market, and also brought positive effects to cultural communication. However, at the same time, there are also some negative impacts in society, such as irrational support activities, public order chaos, and ticket scalping.

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1.The Positive Driving Role of Star-chasing Behavior on Social Development

1.1 The “Boom” of Concerts Drives Local GDP

In contemporary society, concerts and fan meetings, as indispensable components of idol-chasing culture, have effectively driven economic growth across diverse industries and injected sustained vitality into the consumer market. “Traveling to a city for a single performance” has become the norm for attending large-scale concerts today.

According to a report by the China Association of Performing Arts, the average inter-city attendance rate for large-scale performances remained above 60% in 2024. The “Crowning Ceremony” concert of the Chinese idol group Times Youth League - Shanghai stop of the “Champion” tour, which concluded on August 24, attracted nearly 300,000 attendees. The Xujiahui business district adjacent to the concert stadium recorded a total foot traffic of nearly 2 million person-times and a total revenue exceeding 145 million yuan. All hotels around the stadium were fully booked, with their total revenue increasing by 75% month-on-month^[1].

Jay Chou’s Carnival Concert after the pandemic also made a significant contribution to China’s national GDP. Data from the Hainan Provincial Information Office shows that Jay Chou’s Haikou concert in 2023 boosted Haikou’s economy by 976 million yuan in just 4 days, drawing 95,100 out-of-province tourists to Hainan.

After arriving in the host city, fans need to take subways, buses, taxis, or ride-hailing services to hotels, venues, and other locations. Shared bikes around performance venues are in short supply before and after concerts, all of which have brought

significant revenue growth to the transportation industry. Most fans also take the opportunity to travel in the host city while attending the concert, which in turn drives substantial revenue increases in the catering, retail, and accommodation industries.

1.2 Brand Popularity and the Celebrity Effect

Many consumers develop interest in and pay attention to products because their favorite celebrities endorse them, and eventually make purchases. Buying “celebrity same-style” products has also become a prevalent phenomenon in recent years. Not long ago, Lisa, a member of the famous South Korean group BLACKPINK, posted an unboxing video on social media and shared photos of herself with Labubu dolls. This move immediately attracted widespread public attention. Many European and American celebrities also began to purchase Labubu products and carry Labubu pendants when going out. The “celebrity effect” and the pursuit of “same-style items” have greatly stimulated the public’s curiosity and desire to pursue trends, leading people to follow suit and make purchases^[2].

Similarly, many customers are willing to pay for products endorsed by their favorite celebrities, such as clothing items or cosmetics. It is evident that celebrities exert a significant influence on consumers during the marketing process, and also play a crucial role for a brand.

1.3 Celebrities Promote Public Welfare

As a group with extensive social influence, celebrities can generate greater impact when they participate in public welfare communication. Due to their high popularity and wide media exposure, when celebrities engage in public welfare projects, the media will report on these related public welfare activities driven by the pursuit of attention to celebrities. They can effectively promote the development of public welfare undertakings by attracting public attention, evoking emotional resonance, and encouraging fan participation.

Jay Chou, a renowned Taiwanese singer, once participated in the “Fubon Charity Foundation” public welfare activity in Taiwan. He hoped that this initiative would serve as a catalyst to call on more people to join the ranks of education sponsors, enabling more disadvantaged students in remote rural areas to attend school with peace of mind.

The implementation of optimized strategies such as the accurate matching of celebrity images with public welfare projects can better leverage celebrities’ influence, improve the quality and effectiveness of public welfare communication, and promote public welfare undertakings to gain broader social support and participation. This contributes more to solving social problems and advancing social progress.

2.Social Problems and Negative Impacts Caused by Idol-Chasing Behavior

2.1 Traffic Congestion Caused by Concerts

In the era of the vigorous development of the entertainment industry, concerts, as a popular form of cultural activity, attract a large number of fans to attend. However, a series of social problems caused during the holding of concerts have gradually become prominent, among which traffic congestion is particularly noticeable. It imposes enormous pressure on the urban transportation system and exerts negative impacts on various aspects such as citizens’ lives and urban operation.

The TFBOYS concert in Xi’an in the summer of 2023 is a typical case. To show support for their idols, fans paraded with large flags, which had a significant impact on traffic. Many car owners had to take detours, and even pedestrians were affected. Some fans even went so far as to rush through security gates, demonstrating extremely bad behavior.

2.2 Ticket Scalping, Commodity Hoarding and Price Gouging by “Scalpers”

The sky-high price speculation by “scalpers” through technological monopoly and resource hoarding has become a prominent problem disrupting market order.

In the ticketing sector, they use technological means such as web crawlers and ticket-snatching bots to purchase tickets in bulk. After official channels are sold out, they resell the tickets at high prices, with markups ranging from several hundred yuan to tens of thousands of yuan^[3]. For instance, for the final stop of Jay Chou’s Carnival Concert in Shanghai in 2025, the grandstand tickets originally priced at 1,000 yuan were scalped to over 10,000 yuan, and the premium for some scarce tickets even exceeded 10 times the original price.

Such chaos has also spread to the commodity field. “Scalpers” create local monopolies by buying out “limited-edition commodities” and then resell them at several times the original price. Take the limited-edition Disney Halloween pendants as

an example: the official price is around 200 yuan, but the resale price after speculation can reach more than 500 yuan.

This model of “technological snatching - hoarding - sky-high reselling” not only deprives ordinary consumers of the right to fair access, but also gives rise to a gray industrial chain, exacerbating the imbalance between market supply and demand and price distortion.

2.3 Celebrities’ Behaviors Influence Fans’ Values

Younger fans, in particular, tend to fall into “filtered cognition” in their idol-chasing behavior. They overlook the fact that idols are ordinary people too and instead over-idealize them to a godlike extent.

For example, to defend their idols’ images, these fans turn a blind eye to their idols’ negative news—such as illegal and unethical acts or academic fraud. Some even engage in “whitewashing” (covering up scandals) and “fan wars,” using irrational remarks to attack critics. Gradually, they lose their ability to make objective judgments and their basic sense of right and wrong.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of “competitive idol-chasing” emerges among some fan groups. For instance, they compete over who buys more idol merchandise or who spends more on idol support activities. This practice distorts their own values.

3. Governance Paths and Countermeasures for Regulating Idol-Chasing Behavior

3.1 Strengthen the Social Responsibility of Celebrities and Talent Agencies, and Set a Benchmark for Positive Guidance

Talent agencies should adopt more constructive and practical measures to dissuade fans from engaging in extreme idol-chasing behaviors—such as those disrupting public order or traffic operations. Instead of relying solely on verbal warnings, agencies need to take concrete actions. Verbal warnings without substantive penalties will likely be ignored by fans.

For example, entertainment companies can seek assistance from the police or use other incentives to discourage fans from irrational and excessive behaviors. They may offer fans better idol-chasing benefits or fulfill reasonable fan requests in exchange for fans canceling extreme activities.

Meanwhile, the government and the public need to strengthen supervision over concert organizers to prevent the proliferation of “scalped tickets”. One effective measure to combat ticket scalping is the implementation of mandatory real-name ticketing. Individuals found reselling tickets or using counterfeit tickets should be brought to the police station for disciplinary education and review. Organizers must not prioritize profits by secretly supplying tickets to scalpers while publicly opposing scalping.

3.2 Strengthen Platform Supervision and Industry Self-Discipline to Rectify Chaos in Fan Circles

The group of idol-chasers online is diverse, and for users who make extreme remarks, measures such as account suspension or speech restriction should be imposed. If necessary, online administrators can carry out offline rectification based on real-name ID card information.

Celebrities should take the lead in promoting “rational idol-chasing”. They need to persuade fans and inform them of the consequences and penalties for making extreme remarks or participating in irrational activities—for example, the ID card involved may be banned from purchasing tickets for any performances or offline events in the future.

In addition, given the current chaos in fan circles, major platforms can create a new job position: entertainment reviewer. These reviewers will be responsible for examining reports on entertainment-related comments and videos, which can better help maintain healthy norms in fan circles.

3.3 Emphasize Collaborative Education Among Families, Schools, and Society to Cultivate Rational Idol-Chasing Awareness

Regarding the excessive behaviors of younger idol-chasers nowadays, parents should take control of their children’s pocket money. They must ensure children do not overspend on idol-chasing and help them establish a correct consumption concept.

Meanwhile, parents can use idol-chasing as a “reward” or “goal”. For example, when a child completes a task excellently—such as making progress in mid-term exams or reaching a mutually agreed target score—parents can reward the child with purchasing an album of their favorite singer or endorsed merchandise.

At the school level, efforts should be made to help children build correct values from an early age. For instance, when

students are in the third grade, schools can properly educate them on the hardships of earning money and the importance of rational spending. This helps children develop a proper understanding of earning and spending, preventing them from spending blindly on idol-chasing and support activities.

Conclusion

In contemporary society, although idol-chasing remains a controversial topic, it has undoubtedly become a common phenomenon in our society. Celebrities exert considerable influence on the country's economy, culture, and public welfare undertakings.

Many people regard celebrities as their "role models" and strive to become better versions of themselves through idol-chasing. However, some others abandon their aspirations and neglect their duties due to excessive idol-chasing.

In the process of idol-chasing, we must remain rational and avoid blind conformity. When engaging in offline idol-chasing activities, we should act within our financial capacity, refrain from blind consumption, and ensure no disruption to social order or public life. When pursuing idols online, we must always be mindful of our words and deeds, establish correct values, and contribute to creating a positive and comfortable environment for idol-chasing.

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