The Combination of Law, Technology and Autonomy: The Ways to Control The Chaos of Fan Groups in China

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Abstract: With the rapid development of the Internet and new media platforms, online communities have become an important place for fans to gather, and the fan economy has developed through this trend. The fan groups have gradually become a cultural phenomenon and business model, constructing a new network entertainment economy and vigorously promoting virtual economy development. In May 2021, China's Internet Information Office announced a nationwide campaign to rectify the chaos in the fan groups. Therefore, from the perspective of combining the law, technology and autonomy, this paper proposes relevant optimization suggestions for the problems in the governance of the fan groups.

Keywords: Law, technology, autonomy, governance of the fan groups, clear action.

1. Introduction

In this paper, by reading the literature on fan culture, the study finds that there is relatively little research on the government policy of the fan groups, and the traditional cyberspace governance methods are unable to cope with the new phenomenon of the fans groups. At the same time, by sorting out the current situation of the fan groups, this study concludes that there are still problems of imperfect governance mechanisms, lack of responsibility of media and platforms, disorderly expansion of capital, and poor quality of fan groups.

Based on the above problems, this paper proposes the optimization of the governance methods from the perspective of combining law, technology, and autonomy, under the governance framework of integrating law as the fundamental guarantee, technology as the essential support, and autonomy as the key part: to improve the rule of law path in cyberspace, to build an information-based governance system, and to accelerate the construction of the integration of law, technology and autonomy by actively taking social responsibility and cooperating with various parties.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Fan Culture

Foreign scholars mostly analyzed fan culture, including fan psychology and fan behavior, from the perspective of cultural studies[7] regarded fan behavior as a special kind of reception theory, which is the process of active content creation by fans.

Chinese scholars have conducted rich analysis and research on fan culture from various dimensions, including the definition, nature, characteristics, formation mechanism, evolution pattern of the fan groups, social influence and normative guidance discussions. According to [11], fan groups were formed due to developing the "nurturing system" star-making model. [8] observes fan organizations' social behavior and organizational function from the structural level. [21] analyzed the causes of fan groups from social psychology and suggested that teenagers' "group loneliness" is one of the important factors. [18] believes that the problems of online violence, flesh search, disinformation and slander, and abuse of public power caused by the chaos of the fan groups have horrible effects on teenagers. Li Nami believes that the governance of the fan groups requires the efforts of idols, platforms, fans and the government.

Based on these researches, this paper takes the combination of law, technology and autonomy as the research perspective and takes the governance of the fan groups as the research object. On the one hand, it increases the research on the policy of cyberspace governance. On the other hand, it proposes optimization paths for the fan groups' chaos governance.

2.2. Literature Research Method

The research read extensively the literature related to fan culture and gained a preliminary understanding of the previous research on fan culture. Based on the current research results in the academic field, we selected Clear Action as the object of the case study. The actual situation and shortcomings of the action are sorted out. Based on this, we propose an optimal path for managing the fan groups' chaos based on combining the law, technology and autonomy.

3. Methodology

Based on the research results on cyberspace governance and fan culture at home and abroad, this paper focuses on the Clear Action, analyzes the problems, and proposes an optimal path for the governance of fan groups from the perspectives of the law, technology and autonomy.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. The Management Situation of the Fan Groups Chaos on the Internet in China

On May 8, 2021, the Chinese government adopted a series of measures to improve the online environment, with the fan groups becoming the focus of this action. The government is actively guiding the behavior and words of agencies, online platforms, stars and fan groups on the Internet [23].

For cyberspace governance, China has started to implement a bad information identification system based on information technology and supplemented by human intervention. The platform presets the measurement standards for bad information, audits its content during the process of uploading information to the online platform, and can stop its dissemination if it encounters bad information. Zhou Yi et al., 2021. At the same time, several media platforms use big data and cloud computing to determine their user profiles to become an essential method of cyberspace governance. The platform
can predict the source of undesirable information and future trends based on the user portrait in order to carry out targeted governance [15].

Celebrities and agencies actively responded to the Clear Action, with agencies such as Yuehua Entertainment, Time Fengjun Entertainment and Jia Xing Media Entertainment releasing initiatives on social media. The major social media platforms took several measures to support the government’s work, such as canceling many data lists, dealing with some illegal accounts, deactivating and rectifying several online community spaces, and strengthening the management of the disseminated content by the accounts Li Xiazhi. Many fan groups have also expressed their support for the Clear Action online and have cooperated in the rectification process.

According to the government report, more than 400,000 negative messages, more than 20,000 illegal accounts, 6,500 group owners, and 3,000 topics have been deleted since the Clear Action launched [14]. The public opinion atmosphere to resist the chaos of the fan groups has become stronger. The major platforms are more conscious of their responsibilities, the standard working mechanism is gradually built, and the action is effective.

Although, the initial results of the clearing action have been achieved. However, a search on Weibo and Douban shows that some users report that marketing numbers are still active on social media platforms, fan scolding battles still occur, and false information is incessant. In short, the chaos has not been eradicated, the governance measures are not yet perfect, and it is difficult to achieve accurate combat, which inevitably affects the Internet experience of some common users.

4.2. Difficult Issues in the Governance of the Fan Groups

4.2.1. Governance Methods Need to Be Improved

Although China has conducted many practices and explorations on the governance of fan groups, the lack of professional technical knowledge and practical experience of government departments and staff makes it difficult to analyze and reflect on the chaos in time, which undermines the effectiveness of governance.

First of all, the rapid development of new media platforms has provided a broader platform for producing and developing the fan groups. The stars use the major social media platforms to expand their influence, and the fans use these to communicate and interact with each other, get the stars' news, and support the stars' work in their way. Many illegal acts have emerged, such as cyber violence, the proliferation of false information, false fundraising, and internet fraud. At present, the platform is only rectified by blocking the number. Nevertheless, some chaos can be reborn through the sale of accounts and is difficult to be eradicated Lai Yang. The traditional governance model of cyberspace needs to be changed urgently.

Secondly, there is no training mechanism for the staff. Some government personnel do not know much about the fan groups and the chaos, so they can hardly react in time and cannot effectively stop the fermentation of the incident. At the same time, some uniform policies did not solve the problem and provoked the negative emotions of netizens, so the governance effect is not ideal.

The most important thing is that the legal basis for the governance of the fan groups is imperfect. The law is the sword to rectify the chaos of the fan groups. However, the existing laws and regulations related to the governance of cyberspace do not make targeted and comprehensive provisions for the chaos of the fan groups, lacking supervision and management of capital, stars, platforms and fans. The government's policies have been relatively lax. The governance of the fan groups lacks authoritative institutional safeguards, resulting in the practice of governance of the fan groups often treating the symptoms but not the root cause [34]. The establishment of a perfect legal system around the governance of the fan groups is the fundamental way to rectify the chaos of the fan groups.
4.2.2. The Sense of Responsibility of Media and Platforms Needs to Be Cultivated

Digital media platforms have brought stars and fans closer together, and stars interact with fans through online platforms to absorb and fix powder. A star with millions, tens of millions or even hundreds of millions of fans can also bring a corresponding number of users to the platform. The huge dividend attracts the platform to pursue the flow of stars, set up community platforms and various data lists, and blindly promote the expansion of the fan groups. The platform provides a platform for the fan groups' activities. It should take the responsibility of maintaining the platform environment and managing the harmful chaos by making profits from the activities of the fan groups. The lack of responsibility of major platforms has hindered the development of governance of the fan groups' chaos [34].

Moreover, the current effectiveness of each network platform for the monitoring of platform content is insufficient. There is no professional identification mechanism to detect the problem in the first place, predict the direction of public opinion and avoid the fermentation of the problem; there is also no classification of harmful content and the development of targeted and matter-specific disposal methods. Under the operation of technology and capital, the marketing number can set off massive waves of public opinion [22]. The various network platforms have not set strict entry thresholds for such accounts, nor have they formulated severe punitive measures, resulting in the evil of unscrupulous marketing numbers running rampant today.

4.2.3. The Operation of the Capital Needs To Be Regulated

Capital companies attract fans by creating stars and turning fan traffic into profits, gradually forming a closely linked industrial chain [30]. Brokerage companies bundle their stars with commercial resources to promote traffic realization, which results in illegal behavior in pursuit of profit, such as the milk fight cast incident of a talent show variety show, which is a typical example.

Currently, the relationship between stars and fans is no longer a simple emotional community but a closely linked community of interests [21]. Capital provides commercial activities for stars and opportunities for fans to follow stars, becoming the glue between stars and fans. Capital takes advantage of the fans' star-catching psychology, entices and traps fans to raise funds for support and high spending on a large scale, making profits from them and seriously damaging the environment of the fan groups. At the same time, capital does not set clear restrictions on the participants, and many minors are involved in the capital game, which seriously affects youth's physical and mental health.

4.2.4. The Literacy of Fans Needs To Be Improved

Adolescents have formed the psychological state of "group loneliness" [34] under the influence of family structure, emotional relationships, and self-perception. The interaction with celebrities satisfies their needs for participation and companionship. In addition, they have grown up with the Internet, which has penetrated their lives. They can master the functions of various platforms and participate in various support activities for celebrities, which makes them gradually become the main force of the fan group and place their emotions in the community relationship of the fan groups.

However, in their teenage years, fans are not yet mature in mind, not yet sound in thinking and limited in understanding, often emotional, reckless, easily hostage, and influenced by marketing numbers and capital. It is difficult to self-discipline and regulate their own words and actions, and they are easily incited to follow the trend blindly [22]. This poses a new challenge to the fan groups governance.

At the same time, the fan base is enormous, with many people and uneven quality. Some fans lack knowledge and rational thinking, and have a biased and negative attitude toward the government, often resisting the implementation of policies and even spreading false information to defame state
agencies, leading to further deterioration of the fan groups. Some netizens also attack celebrities and fan groups at will, spread rumors, insult and slander, provoke "scolding war," intensify the contradiction the "fan groups" and the "passers-by," and increase the risk of scolding war. This has intensified the conflict between the "fan groups” and the "passers-by" and increased the difficulty of managing the fan groups chaos.

4.3. The Improvement of the Governance Path of the Fan Groups Chaos

4.3.1. The Improvement of Cyberspace Governance Mechanism

The law is the primary way to govern the country and the fundamental guarantee of cyberspace governance (Zhu Peipei, 2021). To build a socialist state under the law, we must bring the management of the Internet into the law; to improve Internet governance, we must integrate the law into the governance of cyberspace action. For the chaos of fan groups, we should speed up the relevant legislation, improve the legal procedures, promote the completion of a comprehensive and complete legal system, and promote the governance of fan groups.

Strengthening the regulation of capital, scientific legislation, and strict law enforcement to prevent the disorderly expansion of capital is effective [30]. Regulating the operation of media platforms, setting industry standards, ensuring the scientific and legal content of communication, and playing a positive guiding role in the media is important to create a healthy and uplifting online environment [22]. Guiding fan groups to follow stars sensibly is conducive to building a correct worldview, outlook on life and values. Based on adhering to the freedom of expression, delineating the boundaries of illegal and disorderly behavior and increasing the punishment for illegal and criminal acts on the Internet reflect that the Internet is not an illegal place [24]. The government should formulate scientific and strict laws to protect the various aspects of information data collection and use for personal privacy and security.

In addition to complex governance at the institutional and legal level, soft governance such as guidance and encouragement should be adopted. Stars should be encouraged to speak with their works and strength rather than rely on data and flow support and resolutely block bad artists [24]. Education and guidance should be given to fan groups to promote the healthy development of fan culture. It is also necessary to deal with the relationship between the fan groups and the public, eliminate the stigmatization of the fan groups, reach a social consensus, and realize the long-term development of the fan groups. The fan groups can be effectively managed in the long term.

4.3.2. The Construction of Technology-Enabled Governance System

An efficient regulatory mechanism can substantially prevent and quickly solve the breeding of online chaos and improve the efficiency of governance:

1. We should further promote the management of the Internet real-name mechanism to force media and fans to consciously restrain their words and actions. In this process, we should pay special attention to protecting personal privacy and accelerate the establishment of a database with more vital secrecy and authority. Real-name authentication is for the sake of the clarity of cyberspace and should not become a tool for the crime of invading privacy.
2. Big data, cloud computing, and blockchain technologies analyze the intrinsic connection between individual disorders and dynamically monitor the platform's content. Artificial intelligence will be used as an essential means of monitoring. Automated supervision of cyberspace and automatic accountability penalties for low-end information will be realized soon (Zhou yi et al., 2022). Particular attention should be paid to improving processing accuracy, not "one size fits all," and human intervention is required to judge ambiguous information content.
3. Using network simulation technology and available data, we can simulate the whole process of governance actions in the fan groups and predict the effects, impacts and problems. That may be encountered in the implementation process, improve the shortcomings, enhance the feasibility of governance policies, and reduce their negative impacts.

4. We incorporate sentiment analysis into the governance system to capture and visualize fans' emotions, explore fans' psychology and behavioral motives, and provide technical and data support for the governance [22].

5. It is necessary to accelerate the improvement of the information system to assist in the evaluation and analysis and use of big data and blockchain technology to trace the governance process and its effects, to improve the scientific degree of evaluation and summary [33].

6. In the governance process, the supervisors' service level and the analysis team's research ability affect the effectiveness of governance work. The current situation of fan groups' governance shows that the shortage of talents has seriously hindered governance promotion. Therefore, it is necessary to strongly support and develop the education of professionals and carry out training for existing staff to improve overall governance capacity.

4.3.3. The Social Responsibility of Every Subject

As the main profiteers of the fan economy, stars, capital companies, media and network platforms should balance economic interests and social benefits and consciously assume the primary responsibility. Stars, capital companies, media and major platforms should consciously comply with relevant laws and regulations, regulate their behavior, and assist in implementing the fan groups management policy. Make reasonable use of their advantages, pay attention to the current situation of the fan groups, and provide information and suggestions for governance.

Stars can use their influence and emotional connection with their fans to encourage them to follow stars rationally, abide by the relevant rules and regulations, and cooperate with implementing the fan groups management action [21].

Capital companies should follow the principles of fair competition, honesty and trustworthiness, develop in an orderly manner, accept the scrutiny and supervision of relevant departments, and consciously fulfill their legal obligations Lai Yang.

The media should shoulder public responsibilities and social obligations, ensure the authenticity of reports and approving content, and promote the power of justice. Network platforms should accelerate the improvement of their management system, formulate strict rules and regulations and content review mechanisms, and focus on preventing the central topics that are likely to cause conflicts and prevent.

Fan organizations should formulate internal regulations, jointly set up supervision and management mechanisms, and improve the internal oversight management system. We should give full play to the leading role of fan organizations and leaders, advocate civilized and sensible star-following and punish those who disturb the network environment by blacking out, reporting and kicking them out of the organization. While playing the positive role of fans' leaders, it is also necessary to avoid fans' leaders having too much power of speech, which may lead to internal conflicts in the fan groups [22].

In addition, the healthy development of fan groups also depends on the assistance of society. The public can learn about the behavior and development of the fan culture through official or other formal channels, reject the stigmatization and the questioning of the rationality of the fan groups, and care about the shortcomings [24]. The fan groups should understand the public's doubts and rationally communicate with the public, popularize the fan culture to society, eliminate the hostility between both sides, and jointly create transparent cyberspace.
4.3.4. The Construction of the Three Governance Integration Governance Model

In the fan groups' governance process, the law, technology, and autonomy work together and complement each other, constituting an overall organic system.

1. The laws and regulations related to the governance of the fan groups should be improved. Government departments should monitor the platform's operation and fan organizations in real-time and make suggestions. The platform should consciously modify and improve the platform regulations based on laws and regulations and the latest policies. At the same time, mainstream media should be encouraged to enhance the publicity and promotion of the latest legislation to broaden the social aspect of knowing and understanding the law. Fan groups should consciously comply with laws and platform regulations and develop self-managed codes of conduct.

2. The government's direct management should be combined with the platform's self-monitoring, the capital company's authorization and regulation, the fans' self-management, the stars' direct influence, the media's active guidance and the society's positive edification. The government can only guide the general direction, and the network platform should handle the specific issues according to its situation. In addition to insisting on the supervision of government departments and platforms, the creation of fan organizations should be authorized and reviewed by capital companies, and their activities should be carried out under the management of capital companies for self-management. The direct control of fans by stars is one of the most effective ways to control the fan group's chaos, and stars should play a role model power to promote the peaceful development of the fan groups. At the same time, mainstream media should actively promote positive content and stop spreading vulgar information and bottomless hype news. Meanwhile, the public should give tolerance and respect to the fan groups.

3. In managing the fan groups' chaos, we should use modern information technology. Network platforms have unique technical advantages and are often used to lure fans and make profits. While banning this function, platforms are encouraged to build a law-based public opinion prevention and control mechanism and set up automatic monitoring mechanisms. For content that is difficult to distinguish, manual auditing should be delivered to improve the efficiency and relevance of governance. At the same time, the government should build an official monitoring and communication platform so that the government can monitor the management of major platforms in real-time and prevent the abuse of technology. That also relies on abundant human resources. The government should train professional talents who can handle daily work affairs, be familiar with online platforms, and be skilled in related technologies.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of combining the rule of law, technology and autonomy, this study thoroughly explores and analyzes the current situation of the fan groups' chaos governance, reveals its problems, provides value for the improvement of China's cyberspace governance level, and provides new material for research in the field of cyberspace governance.

In May 2021, China's Internet Information Office announced a campaign to rectify the fan groups, which has been effective. However, in the Clear Action, there are still problems such as imperfect governance mechanism, poor responsibility of media and platforms, irregular capital operation, and low fan literacy that affect the effectiveness of governance.

1. With the law as the fundamental guarantee, the government should improve the laws and regulations of cyberspace management and improve the mechanism of cyberspace governance.

2. With technology as necessary support, the government and each platform should improve supervision and analysis, strengthen the construction of talents, and build a technology-based governance system.
3. With autonomy as a key link, stars, capital companies, media and network platforms should take the initiative to assume social responsibility, and fans need to strengthen their construction.

4. In the governance process, continuously improve the governance model that integrates the law, technology and autonomy.

Limitation: The data are not abundant and mostly secondary, and the situation of the fan groups' chaos is complex and rapidly changing. Therefore, there are many shortcomings in this study. The study mainly focuses on the Clear Action but ignores the previous regulatory measures for fan groups, which is somewhat one-sided. At the same time, the research method is mainly textual analysis and lacks data support, which is subjective to a certain extent.

In the future, the study can comprehensively analyze the governance measures of the fan groups, using data analysis and conducting in-depth research to grasp the governance practice of the fan groups in China.

References


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