

The Materialization of the Entertainment : Research on the Consumption of the “Internet Festivals” of the Colleges Students

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ABSTRACT. *The formation of the internet festivals comes from the youth's entertainment needs. With the conceptual consumption of the emotion and topics, the “ceremony” and the “folk custom” of the internet festivals have gradually formed within the group of college students. With the spillover of the conceptual consumption, the consumption of the internet festivals gradually began to be symbolized and materialized. The material consumption became the main point, while the group of college students retreated from the leading position to the marginal position and became the follower of the materialized consumption. Thus the internet festivals completed the commercial reconstruction and realized the materialization of the entertainment.*

KEYWORDS: *Internet festivals, Group of college students, Materialization, Consumption*

1. Introduction

The “Internet Festival”, is the recreation festival made by people in the internet era. The internet festivals are different from the traditional festivals or the political festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Qingming Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival and the National Day, the Labour Day, etc; and are also different from the imported western festivals such as the Valentine's Day, the April Fool's Day, the Mother's Day, the Christmas, etc. And also, they are different from the world public

festivals and the professional festivals such as the World Reading Day, the World Environment Day, the Nurse Day and the Teachers' Day. The internet festivals are actually created by the youth group for recreation through the Internet.

Since the new century, the "internet festival" and other non-mainstream festivals have rapidly become a fashion with the development and spread of the Internet. The youth groups not only participate in the creation of these online festivals, but also are the main "consumer" groups of them. College Students' consumption of "internet festivals" is mainly reflected in two aspects. The first aspect focuses on the creation and consumption of concepts. College students are the pioneers and practitioners of the "internet festivals". They express their inner feelings through the internet festivals to alleviate the anxiety, and to create topics to enhance communication. The second aspect is embodied in the gradual materialization of the concept of entertainment, from the conceptual consumption to material consumption. At this stage, college students are no longer the guide of the internet festivals, but are guided by the materialized consumption of internet festivals. At present, the research on College Students' consumption of "internet festivals" is still in the preliminary stage, there is no special article or work to discuss in depth, so this study has certain developing space and practical significance.

2. The rise of the internet festivals and their audiences

2.1 the origin of the internet festivals

In China, there are mainly three kinds of festivals: the traditional festivals, the political festivals and the public festivals. The traditional festivals mainly include: the Spring Festival, the Qingming Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival, etc; the political festivals mainly include: the Women's day, the Labor Day, the China's Youth Day, the National Day and the New Year's day, etc; the public festivals such as: the International Day for Consumers' Rights and Interests, the Human Rights Day, the Constitution Day, etc. Most of the traditional

and political festivals are included in the national legal holiday system, which constitutes the main part of the Chinese holiday system. In addition, due to opening up to the world, the western festival system is gradually become an important part of our festival culture.

Among the aforesaid festivals, the political festivals are the embodiment of the will of the country. Youth groups generally do not spontaneously commemorate these festivals, but rather enjoy the holidays brought by these festivals. The traditional festivals are "mainly the concomitant of the agricultural civilization" [1], which is mainly about the family reunion, the worship and memory of the ancients, and can not highlight the personality of young people. As a result, the entry of western festivals has played a certain role in filling up the entertainment and personality of young people.

The major part of the modern youth groups is the young generation who grew up with the Internet. They are rebellious, individualistic and willing to show the uniqueness of themselves. In addition, the fast-paced modern life and the material pressure make the youth groups overburdened, so they need to use their own actions to fight against the depression of real life. They are not satisfied with the above-mentioned festivals. They want to deconstruct the traditions and to create their own, so they develop the new "internet festivals" with the help of the Internet. With the spread and diffusion of the Internet, these festivals gradually becomes large carnivals. In addition of the boost of the businessmen who see the commercial opportunities, the consumption trend of the internet festivals within the youth groups has finally formed.

2.2 The categories of internet festivals

At present, there are many kinds of internet festivals with different names and audiences, but we can divide them into three categories according to their causes of formation. The first category is "homophonic" internet festivals, mainly named

according to the number of the month and the date. For example, the “5.20 Lovers Day” is very popular in China. The pronunciation of May the 20th is “520”, and in Chinese it is almost the same with the pronunciation of “I love you”.

The second category of internet festivals is mainly based on the digital deconstruction of the month and date, which forms the new meaning. For example, the 7th March (3.7) Girls' Day. It is because that day is one day before the women's day, meaning that before becoming women, it is the Girls' time. And the same to the “11.11(November the 11th) Singles' Day”. It is because the four “1” vividly represent the meaning of loneliness.

The third category is founded by the transferred meaning of the traditional festivals. People give the original festivals extended cultural connotation, so as to form a new festival. The most typical representative of this category is the “Qixi Lovers' Day” which is also known as the "Chinese Valentine's Day" [2]. In August 2002, Federation of Literature of Hebei Province and Association of Folk Artists jointly launched a series of Cultural Heritage Activities of "the Qixi Lovers' Day". During the activities, there were calligraphy and painting exhibitions, large-scale ceremony, and celebration activities for golden wedding couples, etc. And also, there was a seminar on the culture of Qixi Festival. The participating articles were compiled into a collection of Qixi cultural collected papers---- the Anthology of Qixi culture[3]. This kind of huge activities enlightens the news media and the internet users. In just a few years, people have turned the original “Qixi Festival” which is originally represented for the constellation worship to a festival for lovers. It is now became the “Chinese Valentine's Day” which is almost as important as the western “Valentine's Day” and has been recognized by the majority of the young people.

Among the varied internet festivals, the 7th March Girls' Day, the 5.20 Lovers' Day, the Qixi Lovers' Day and the 11.11 Singles' Day are the most representative and widespread ones of the above-mentioned three categories.

2.3 The audiences of the internet festivals

As a concept of consumption, the audiences of internet festivals are mainly young people between 15-35 years old. The 80's and 90's are the solid supporters of these festivals. Most of the internet festivals involve the topic of romantic emotion and feelings. Since most of the young people have not entered the marriage siege, the internet festivals have become a outlet of their emotion. Couples in love will show their love and care for each other on these festivals, while the singles will take this opportunity to express their inner anxiety, win attention or arouse resonance.

Due to the difference of group concept, different occupations and classes have different attitudes towards the above-mentioned internet festivals. The office workers represented by urban young white-collar workers are fond of the 5.20 Lovers' Day, the Qixi Lovers' day and the 11.11 Singles' Day; the students class especially the college students have more enthusiasm for all kinds of internet festivals than other groups. They are also the promoters and main consumers of these festivals; the young workers in factories are more interested in consuming for The Qixi Lovers' Day and the 11.11 Singles' Day to express their inner feelings and anxiety. However, the enthusiasm of the rural youth groups for the lovers' festivals above-mentioned is not as high as that of the urban youth groups. They are more interested in the festivals such as the 11.11 Singles' Day because of the anxiety of seeking partners.

Although the internet festivals are mainly popular among the young people, the consumption for it is no longer limited to specific occupations and classes. That's mainly because of the gradual materialization of "the internet festivals" in recent years. "Internet festivals" themselves have a strong openness and migration, and the e-commerce online uses the gimmick of them to stimulate consumption, which leads to the expansion of people's carnival and entertainment of the festivals, and thus further and expand the audience and class of the internet festivals.

3. The conceptual consumption of the “network festivals” and its motivation

Conceptual consumption refers to that after people meet their basic physiological needs, "they show their uniqueness and their hunger for information and ideas, that is, human beings will use spiritual means to meet their hunger for spiritual consumption." [4] College students are the main force of the conceptual consumption of "internet festivals". They have participated in the creation of many internet festivals, and they are also loyal fans of them. They are young, energetic and have more spare time. Like other youth groups, they try to use spiritual means to satisfy their spiritual consumption needs, and they show their particularity at the same time. This article will analyze and discuss the viewpoints above mainly from the following three aspects.

3.1 To eliminate political seriousness and traditional restraint

There is a big difference between the contemporary college students and the college students in the 1980s or 1990s----they are deeply influenced by postmodernism and regard postmodernism as a way of life [5]. They are no longer as keen as their predecessors on politics, on social topics and on the concern of their country, but more concerned about their personal development. The self spirit of contemporary college students is relatively strong. They generally take an indifferent attitude towards serious political topics. Although the college students are willing to participate in the traditional festivals, they usually feel repressed by the collectivism reflected in the traditional ones.

College Students' enthusiasm for internet festivals and western festivals is generally higher than that for the political or the traditional ones. That's mainly due to their yearning for personality, for relaxed lifestyle and for simple interpersonal relationships. While not excluding tradition and politics, they combine the Chinese and the Western culture together. Their entertaining attitude towards the “internet festivals” is actually a selective absorption of traditional culture. During such

process, the youth group unconsciously eliminate the political seriousness and the traditional suppression.

3.2 To recreate and to relieve the anxiety

Through the analysis of the numerous internet festivals, we can see that the most popular festivals are all about the romantic emotions. This is mainly because college students generally have some anxiety on the topic of romantic relationships, and they are eager for the attention of their peers.

Most of the college students are about 18-22 years old. They are generally mature, both physically and mentally. And many of them have or desire to have romantic relationships. However, not all college students can find their partners, and the young people who have already in a relationship also have to maintain it. They show their love to their partner on the internet festivals, while others who are single make self-mockery at the same time. The popular network words such as the "single dog" (self-mockery of the singles people), the "dog food" (meaning the romance of others who are in a relationship) and so on are the reflection of the mentality above-mentioned. The reason why college students enjoy consuming emotional topics in internet festivals is that the emotional anxiety can be relieved in the entertaining atmosphere.

3.3 To create topics and to enhance communication

Another purpose of the "internet festivals" is to create a variety of topics in order to enhance the communication between the college students. As for the "Girls' Day", it will promote communication between the girls and the boys. And also, the "5.20 lovers' day" is to improve the emotional communication between the students. Many college students will create opportunities to show their love on this day, even if they fail, they will not be embarrassed too much, because this "festival" is originally to show one's love.

The Qixi Lovers' Day and the 11.11 Singles' Day will create more topics. Whether the lovers' romance or the singles' self pity will both cause the college students' attention. These topics have a good effect on improving the friendship and enhancing communication between the students.

4.The gradual materialization of the spirit of entertainment

According to the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, people always meet the material needs first before pursuing a higher level--- the spiritual needs. However, the emergence of the internet festivals is based on spiritual consumption, which is the result of post-modernism deconstruction. Different from the tradition, the original reason of creating such festivals is to meet the young people's needs of entertainment. But with the spillover effect of internet festivals and the promotion of commercial activities, internet festivals have gradually realized the materialization.

4.1 The spillover and breakout of the conceptual consumption

Although the internet festivals originated from the campus culture, it has a strong influence for public entertainment. It actively caters to the needs of modern people's repressed emotion in their fast-paced life. And also, with the promotion of the internet media, the spillover effect of it has formed. First of all, the young people outside the school who belong to the same age group are affected. Similar age and similar psychological characteristics make them the first receivers. Secondly, due to the mobility of young students, campus culture will follow them into the society. Thirdly, due to the development of the internet culture, young people's conceptual consumption of "internet festivals" will form a social topic which will expand further.

Such as giving gifts to each other on the lovers' day or dinner together on the festivals and so on, the "festivals" will always cause consumption in a variety of

ways. It has been shown that the consumption for the internet festivals is no longer just on the spirit but also turns material.

4.2 The gradual materialization of the commercial promotion

With the rise of Internet e-commerce, the businessmen began to try to use the gimmicks of these festivals to boost consumption, thus focus on the material consumption rather than the spiritual consumption---the 11/11 Singles' Day is the most successful case. The Sales Promotion for the 11/11 Singles' Day first started in 2009 by the service provider TaoBao. It has obtained great benefits on that year, so TaoBao made it a fixed date to hold the huge sales promotion. For about a decade, the “11/11 Sales Promotion” has developed much more successful, it has sold more than 162.8 billion yuan per day [6], while the original meaning of the “Singles' Day” has been weakened.

Ever since the e-commerce has achieved great success in the internet festivals, various businessmen have actively participated in the festival sales promotion. At present, the Qixi Lovers' Day and the 5/20 Lovers' Day have been paid more and more attention by businessmen. The businessmen have invested much power to explore the commercial opportunities in these festivals. And at the same time, the sales promotions promote back on the development and spread of the internet festivals. Nowadays many internet festivals have formed the Spillover Effect, they have already effected other groups besides the youth group. And in turn, this kind of nationwide entertainment carnival helps to increase the material consumption of college students, thus leading to a series of problems such as excessive consumption and irrational consumption.

4.3 The change of the consuming subject

After the spillover and materialization of the conceptual consumption, the internet festivals no longer belong to the college students only. The original festival culture

is simply symbolized and labeled. For example, the 5/20 Lovers' Day is equal to “showing one's love”, the Qixi Lovers' Day is equal to “romance” and receiving gifts, the 11.11 Singles' Day is equal to shopping, and even the 3/7 Girls' Day is quietly changing to be equal to shopping for women.

After the materialization of the consumption for internet festivals, the original conceptual consumption still exists as an important part of campus culture. The shopping culture in turn effects on the campus culture, thus gradually amalgamate the original cultural connotation. At present, the college students have also participated in the materialized consumption, but the current main consumer groups for the internet festivals have already changed. The e-commerce has been the guide of the nationwide consumption, while the college students have turned into the followers of the consumption due to the limit of their economic situation.

The change of the college students from the creators and leaders of conceptual consumption to the followers of the materialized consumption reflects the innovation and revolution of the consumer economy in the Internet era. Conceptual consumption still exists, but it is not enough to produce huge economic benefits itself, so the change of the core consumption is inevitable. The internet festivals has produced the new festival ceremony and culture, and all these revolved round the material consumption. So the young people's entertainment spirit finally turn to the materialization.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the initial purpose of the internet festivals created by the youth group is to entertain themselves and to relax. When added the emotional topics, these festivals spread much further and much more widely. The conceptual consumption reflected the emotional anxiety of the young people, and it developed fast within the spread of the internet festivals. And with the promotion of the e-commerce, this conceptual consumption has finally turned to materialization.

Due to the strong influence of the internet e-commerce, the internet festivals has become the shopping carnivals, and realized the materialization of the conceptual consumption of the original internet festivals. The original meaning of these festivals has become marginalized and the material consumption has become the main point. The college students have also changed from creators of internet festivals to active practitioners of online shopping carnival. Due to the limit of their economic situation, they are not the leading consumers of the internet festivals, but become the followers who are not very significant. In the transition from the conceptual consumption to the material consumption, and the transition of the college students' position from the main part to the marginal part, the internet e-commerce era has shown its powerful function of reconstitution and has lead to realize the materialization of the entertainment.

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