

# Analysis on the Characteristics and Causes of "Star-chasing Consumption" of Teenagers Represented by Middle School Students

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## Abstract

The star-chasing group have been growing rapidly with the mass media promotes the "star-making movement" under influence of Internet technology. It has become a universal social phenomenon that fans, especially teenagers represented by middle school students, engage in various consumption behavior for their idol. In this paper, the concept of fan economy and star-chasing consumption is introduced starting from characteristics and development status, and within questionnaires to discover the psychological and behavioral characteristics of middle-school students' star-chasing consumption. The ultimate purpose of this paper is to explore the motivation and influencing factors of middle-school students' star-chasing consumption, and tries to put forward the direction and strategy of dialectical treatment and joint efforts. The author expects to promote the whole society to treat the phenomenon of star-chasing consumption more specifically and rationally, so as to realize the win-win situation of healthy growth of teenagers and positive promotion of fan economy to the society.

## Keywords

Fan economy; Middle school student; Star-chasing consumer groups; Psychological and behavioral characteristics.

## 1. Introduction

With the development of mass entertainment industry, "sports star" growing, "idol effect" led by the huge fans of group purchasing power has become the current hot social unique economic phenomena and new capital, and represented by middle school students of the youth group, with its relatively abundant time and energy to become the mainstay of "fans" purchasing power [1].

Teenagers represented by middle school students are important consumers of "fan economy", and their consumption behaviors have produced huge economic benefits and social effects [2]. In this context, grasping the characteristics and motivations of star-following consumption of teenagers is conducive to guiding their more rational and positive star-following consumption psychology and behavior, promoting the development of diversified social culture including fan culture, and innovating the business development model and marketing rules driven by fan economy. It helps the commercial and economic order and social and public order develop in a more benign and positive direction under the background of internal circulation [3].

The author intends to investigate and explore the psychology and behavior of "fans chasing stars consumption" represented by middle school students, in order to try to find out the characteristics and reasons why teenagers have different psychological behavior from other fans in this special physical and mental stage.

## 2. Current Situation Analysis of Star-chasing Consumption

### 2.1. Fan Economy and Star-chasing Consumption

According to the definition provided by Baidu Encyclopedia, fan "is an online term, commonly known in China as fan group, that is, a group of people who worship a certain star, artist or thing" [4]. According to the concept, "fans" are not just an individual, but a group of people who tend to share their favorite stars. Fan economy, as a concept based on emotional capital, is defined as "an operational income behavior based on the relationship between fans and followers, and a business operation model that gains economic benefits and social benefits through improving user stickiness and word-of-mouth marketing" [5,6]. In the market operation of community economy, the factors of fans' consumption power, productivity and communication power are taken into consideration, and the horizontal expansion of resource connection mode creates a new cultural economic mode centered on connection and collaboration.

China's fan economy has developed with the promotion of various talent shows since 2000. The most representative event is the "Super Girl" event in 2005, in which fans' on-site support, SMS voting, super Girl information value-added service and star-making derivative products brought direct economic benefits of 766 million yuan. According to the economic law of double multiplying between upstream and downstream industrial chains, The total contribution of super girls to the economy is at least several billion yuan. According to the general method of brand valuation, the commercial value of its brand will exceed 2 billion yuan at present. Such achievement of a single cultural product is a miracle created by fans' consumption [7].

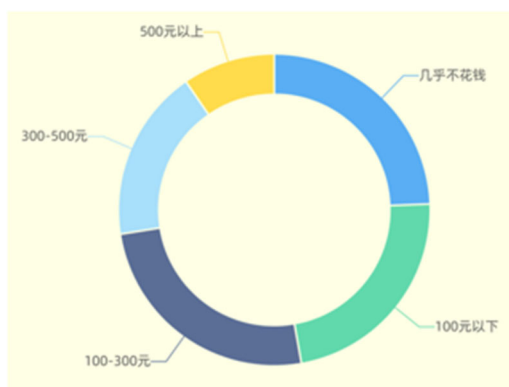
With the rapid development of new media and the Internet, the traditional fans economy so as to improve the user viscosity technology to break free of the constraints of time and space, with the web and web3.0 technology is causing since the media age, the transmission way of upgrading the Internet virtual space is easier to close the distance of the stars and fans, inspire fans consumer behavior; The popularity and development of third-party payment platforms have also created convenient conditions for fan economy. Therefore, the phenomenon of fan economy is increasingly widely reflected in many fields, such as culture and entertainment consumption, consumption of surrounding products of stars and star-chasing service provision [8].

It is an important research perspective of economics to pay attention to economic forms from the perspective of consumption. For star-chasing consumption, can be analyzed from different angles. For example, starting from fans' consumption products, the consumption areas involve film and television, music, books, games, animation, etc. Starting from the main body of fans themselves, we can also consider the different consumption ability brought by age level, obsession degree, geographical distribution and so on. The author of this paper hopes to explore and find the guidance way of star-chasing consumption behavior that is not only beneficial to the physical and mental health of middle school students, but also can promote the healthy economic development of Chinese fans by starting from the teenage fans represented by middle school students and through questionnaire design and analysis.

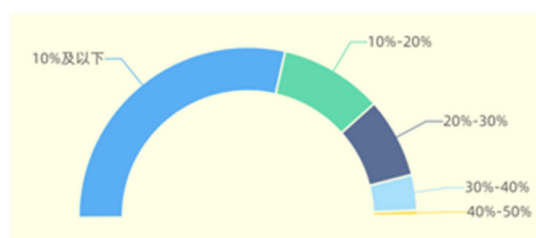
### 2.2. Survey of Star-chasing Consumption of Teenagers Represented By Middle School Students

As teenagers of a specific age, their ignorant and hot yearning for "beautiful" things makes middle school students become the "susceptible group" of star-chasing consumption. According to a special survey of celebrity chasing conducted by social Research Center of China Youth Newspaper on 1,616 teenagers in 2021 through the questionnaire network [9], teenagers' spending on celebrity chasing involves purchasing audio and video products, publications, endorsement products and peripheral products, and sending high-priced gifts, etc. 52.8 percent

of the surveyed teenagers spend more than 100 yuan per month on celebrity chasing as Figure 1 shows. 42.8 percent of the teenagers surveyed said stargazing accounts for more than 10 percent of their living expenses as Figure 2 shows. In particular, 40.2 percent of the teenagers surveyed said the main source of spending on celebrity chasing is living and pocket money from their parents, while 2.7 percent of the teenagers surveyed admitted that spending on celebrity chasing depends on loans and loans.



**Figure 1.** The monthly expenses of star-chasing of the surveyed teenagers



**Figure 2.** Proportion of star-chasing expenses of surveyed teenagers in living expenses

Data source: Social Survey Center of China Youth Daily & Wenjuan.com, 2021 Special Survey on Chinese Teenagers chasing Stars

Aiming at the social phenomenon of star-chasing consumption among teenagers, especially middle school students, the author firstly conducts literature search and data collation. Make track for a star hot issues and discussion topics, make track for a star of consumer society led the author to make track for a star representative crowd "middle school students" consumption, its make track for a star consumption level, the problem such as types, characteristics as well as the motivation and influence of preliminary thinking, and then according to the questionnaire design principles, comprehensive thinking and high school students interested in problems related to design a questionnaire to make track for a star consumption "" high school students. The questionnaire was mainly conducted for middle school students. One part of the questionnaire was filled out directly through the network platform, and the other part was distributed to junior and senior high school students as paper questionnaires. A total of 40 electronic questionnaires and paper questionnaires were distributed, 35 of which were successfully recovered with a recovery rate of 87.5%. Two invalid questionnaires were eliminated in preliminary statistics, and the effective rate was 94.3%.

The questionnaire (see the attachment for details) consists of four parts and 30 questions. The first part of the questionnaire "Basic Information" makes a descriptive statistical analysis of the respondents: in terms of personal situation, the gender ratio of the respondents is 68.75% female and 31.25% male, and the performance ratio is 43.75% excellent, 56.25% average and 0% not very good (Question 1 and Question 3). These two data ensure the authenticity of the

survey conditions and validity of the questionnaire. The respondents were aged between 13 and 18, ensuring that the survey was targeted at the starstruck group of middle school students. Considering the investigation has not yet independent psychological and environmental characteristics, investigating its biggest influence family situation, the results reflect the family of the respondents mainly reflected most of parents for a master's degree in university undergraduate course graduation or graduate student (81.25% of the total), in the enterprise for the management and staff of the total number of questionnaires (43.75%), Most of the household income is concentrated in the annual income of 210,000 to 300,000 yuan (accounting for 50% of the total number of the questionnaire) (attached with the statistical data of questions 4-6).

The second part of the questionnaire, "Conditions of star-chasing consumption of respondents", explores the factors of consumption power, including personal consumption/purchasing power, sources of star-chasing consumption, and parents' awareness/support. 68.75% of respondents admit that they are star-chasing (data from question 7), and idol worship of middle school students is a common phenomenon. The idol of "singer" and "actor" accounted for 65.4%, "appearance level" and "personality style" accounted for 64.25% (No. 8-9), reflecting the relatively simple and externalized aesthetic standards of the respondents, highlighting the necessity and urgency of guiding their aesthetic orientation and improving their moral aesthetic standards in an open environment.

The third part of the questionnaire, "Degree of Star-chasing consumption", aims to find the degree and characteristics of star-chasing consumption of middle school students by investigating consumption frequency, consumption amount and consumption field. The majority of students spend a few days each month on the following star consumption, the proportion of spending on the following star is less than 10% of pocket money and living expenses (Question 10-11), which is consistent with the economic and academic status of student consumers, reflects the majority of students more rational consumption situation of following star, with high reliability; The subjective starting point and consumption field of star-obsessed consumption (Questions 12, 13, 14 and 15) comprehensively reflect that with the growth of middle school students, their aesthetic and moral cognition is weakened by the influence of the outside world, and their self-control of their emotions, hobbies and behaviors is gradually enhanced. The source of star-chasing consumption is mainly pocket money/living expenses provided by families, accounting for 62.5% (Question 16). In terms of the influence of parents' attitude towards star-chasing (Question 17 and 18), the influence of family on students' consumption concept cannot be taken into account. The attitude towards overspending and star-chasing consumption (Questions 19 and 20) highlights the conflict between high school students' strong star-chasing consumption desire and weak financial consciousness as a unique consumer group. This kind of conflict may lead to the situation of excessive consumption and huge economic pressure, which needs to be paid enough attention by the society.

The fourth part of the questionnaire, "Star-chasing Consumption Mentality", attempts to explore the cognition and influence of star-chasing consumption of middle school students by investigating personal appeal, social influence and other relevant issues: The most considered factors of star-chasing consumption are their own heartfelt love and the factors influenced by the environment (Question 21), while the social influence of star-chasing consumption (question 22) and personal sense of gain also show diversified attitude feedback (question 23). In terms of the influence of social environment on star-chasing consumption, campus and living environment have a great influence on star-chasing consumption of middle school students, which is reflected in that most of their classmates and friends are star-chasing, and in the process of star-chasing, new friends are communicated with, as well as the consumption mentality and behavior of students due to the "information bombardment" on mass media

(Question 24-25). In addition, mass media and fan groups also exert an important influence on their star-chasing consumption, which is reflected in the fact that most students obtain information about star-chasing consumption through Weibo, B-station, Douyin and Xiaohongshu, and influence their consumption behavior (Questions 26-27). Comprehensive evaluation of the influence of make track for a star, the positive impact is mainly concentrated in the obtained some new skills and more a sense of belonging, negative impact is mainly focused on the performance and efficiency of decline (28 to 30 questions), reflecting the aesthetic standard for middle school students, the moral cognition, literacy in self growth stage from perceptual, psychological development characteristics of blind tends to be rational and objective.

### 2.3. Questionnaire Statistical Observation and Analysis

Through the statistical induction and observation analysis of questionnaire data, the author found and summarized some characteristics of middle-school students' star-chasing consumption:

First of all, the consumer psychology of middle school students chasing stars shows the characteristics of admiration, convergence and reposing, which is closely related to the physical and mental condition of the special age stage in which their aesthetic understanding is relatively superficial, their independent opinions and self-consciousness have not been fully formed, and their desire for "ideal projection reality" and seeking their role and identity.

Secondly, family and environmental factors have a significant impact on star-following consumption. At the family level, in sharp contrast to the weak purchasing power maintained by middle school students relying on family supplies, their consumption mentality based on specific age is open and advanced. Therefore, factors such as parents' attitude towards their children's star-following consumption and family economic status become key indicators of star-following consumption. In addition to family environment, campus environment is another important factor affecting the consumption behavior of middle school students chasing stars. People of the same age who get along with each other and communicate with each other are more likely to form some common preferences, which not only creates the formation of fans on campus, but also contributes to the spread and mutual influence of star-chasing consumption mentality and behavior. At the same time, under the pressure of relatively heavy schoolwork and college entrance, fear, depression and anxiety grow, and star-chasing and star-chasing consumption become their pastime to release the pressure of confusion and tension. Another factor influencing the consumption of star-chasing comes from the information age. In order to survive and develop under the condition of market economy, mass media will make full use of its news communication effect to package and beautify stars and their commercial value, so as to obtain teenagers' recognition, imitation and finally achieve the purpose of stimulating their consumption and purchase. This is very easy to affect teenagers represented by middle school students whose psychological development, cognitive development and personality development are not yet mature.

Third, the transitional age characteristics bring some new changes in teenagers' star-chasing consumption. Including: no longer limited to traditional audio-visual products and stars with the same style, but more sense of participation and a sense of access to the list voting, public welfare assistance and other diversified consumption content; The definition of multi-type consumption value that is conducive to the success of stars, the expression of self-taste and the assumption of social responsibility; Multi-channel information penetration and consumption influence in the Internet age of Web2.0 and Web3.0; The self-spiritual satisfaction obtained by star-chasing consumption and the conflict between middle school students' economic independence and consumption autonomy caused by multi-modal consumption mode and so on.

## 2.4. Investigation Enlightenment

Through the investigation and analysis of the author, in the process of socialization, the adolescents represented by middle school students whose knowledge system is not complete, social experience is not sufficient and values are not mature, As an important part of fan economy, "star-chasing consumption" formed under the joint action of family status, economic status, school education and mass media, has both subjective and objective characteristics and causes, and is a complex but meaningful social problem. Therefore, students themselves, families, schools and the whole society need to treat and guide this problem from an objective, rational, open and dialectical point of view.

### 2.4.1. View Point of Star-chasing Consumption

Star-chasing consumption belongs to the behavior of idol worship, which often has adverse effects such as comparison, blindness and addiction for teenagers whose values are not yet mature. With the boost of the entertainment tide, fans rapid economic rise, fans group consumption ability is more and more strong, fan group has become an important force in the future about icon, a lot of blind and irrational teenagers easily in the connivance of the market to the crazy, even to defer to the morals intervention in social cultural and economic healthy development: human flesh search, denigrate rumor breeds; Teenagers are crazy about star-chasing consumption, and they justifiably attach their personal loyalty to their idols to their parents' family economy. The popular fan fund-raising should be aided because of its fund-raising behavior is not standardized and lack of supervision, often become fraud and other illegal activities of the "gray zone" .....

But on the other hand, because the fans especially teenagers make track for a star consumption has good transmission, easy to cause the fans group effect, with the spread of word-of-mouth, fans will not mean make track for a star investment, coupled with the new social media tools make people communication more convenient fan and wen chong, for promoting cultural industry, play the guiding role of the production of consumption has a positive meaning; Meanwhile, the huge driving effect of fan economy on surrounding commercial economy has been highlighted: In 2016, Tmall's mid-year promotion focused on the fan consumption group, named as "Fan Carnival". According to the later statistics, from the average purchasing power, the fan group was 30% higher than the non-fan group, and from the brand's online marketing conversion rate, the fan group was 5 times of the non-fan group. In 2014, Wang Gaofei, CEO of Sina Weibo, also said that sina Weibo "benefited from the economic role of fans" when talking about its stock price trend after its listing.

### 2.4.2. View Point of Consumption Patterns

Through the reception methods such as Bai hua and JING dong Paitiao to produce advanced consumption, it temporarily alleviates the shortage of funds in middle school students' star-chasing consumption to a certain extent and meets their current demand for being close to idols. Spirit of education to guide the principle of "appropriate hydrophobic unfavorable blocking", from another point of view, advance consumption, also is the adult of a way to the cultivation of students' consciousness of honesty and credit, using legal consumer product and reasonable financial planning, not only can guide the good moral consciousness, also can cultivate the spirit of contract, into society to lay the foundation for the future.

### 2.4.3. View Point of Guidance Strategy

1) closeness and contemporaneity of examples

High school students' pursuit of idols is in line with their physical and mental characteristics. If the whole society, especially schools and families, want to give full play to the "idol" effect and transform it into a positive "role model", they must meet the physical and mental needs of middle school students and conform to the characteristics of the development of The Times:

For example, set an example of authenticity rather than "packaging and beautification", so that students can understand the hardships and efforts of stars growing up from grassroots; For example, to set up a model with The Times, so that students from the emotional resonance, so that it has the appeal and persuasive; For example, role models close to students can only arouse the identification of middle school students with similar age and growth environment, and can give them real help and demonstration [10].

#### 2) Diversified and hierarchical growth guidance

The types of "idols" and their success paths are different, and the society, especially school and family education, should also have a broader understanding of the definition of "success" and "beauty". "Idol" in singing, dancing, acting and other fields shine, but "idol" requirements of the innate conditions may not be every fan can have, but we can still through efforts to become culture, labor, science, hero and other fields of "idol". A more diversified and hierarchical cognitive understanding of "success" and "beauty" is the best guidance for the growth of teenagers represented by middle school students, and the transformation of "distant stars in the sky" into "people who can also be people" through their own efforts.

#### 3) Create a harmonious and inclusive family atmosphere

As analyzed above, the main source of star-chasing consumption of teenagers represented by middle school students is still borne by their families. Parents' understanding and attitude towards star worship and subjective and objective factors of consumption greatly affect their adolescent mentality. Instead of simply and violently "chasing and obstructing" and "nagging and pleading", we should listen and understand with an inclusive and open mind and through dialogue and communication. We should help our children analyze and think about the reasons for chasing celebrities and their "achievements" with an objective and rational attitude, and patiently improve their aesthetic taste and cultural literacy. In order to promote their own reflection and self-selection to replace the intervention and intervention of the outside world, not only in line with the psychological acceptance characteristics of middle school students in the rebellious period, but also easier to create a harmonious and relaxed family atmosphere, help children release pressure, enhance self-confidence.

#### 4) Objective and true responsibility of mass media

The prosperity and competition of mass media industry driven by the wave of science and technology have affected and destroyed the real and objective industry norms of journalism to a certain extent, causing great harm to teenagers who are weak in discriminating but keen on collecting various media information [11]. Therefore, the communication media should take the dissemination of healthy and positive culture as the theme, and reflect the positive energy scientifically and effectively with real and objective reports, including the growth story behind the stars and stars, to guide middle school students to realize that hard work is the only way to achieve success through hardships and twists and turns; For example, the objective publicity and continuous supervision of stars' immoral behaviors enable middle school students to understand stars, understand the society and evaluate others; The report of extreme events of star-following and star-following consumption should uphold a correct attitude of judgment to avoid negative effects on middle school students.

### 3. Conclusion

Look from the survey, the fans and their consumption behavior qualitative in "imitating, eccentric, impulse ultra" inherent views have not completely objective characterization of the contemporary represented by middle school students of teenagers in make track for a star and make track for a star on the consumer attitude and behavior, in this aspect also needs the rationality from the view of the development of the whole society.

In the process of the continuous development of China's entertainment market, the group behavior of "fans" is also gradually becoming standardized. For example, with the development of information technology and social networks, fans are no longer just receivers of information, but receivers, processors and disseminators of information. In this process with a strong sense of participation, on the one hand, the young fans get satisfaction, give vent to the pressure and get motivation; On the other hand, the open public opinion environment also urges teenagers to reflect on the negative problems caused by star-chasing and its accompanying consumption input; At the same time, more teenage fans said that under the influence of their idols, they had more positive and positive behavior changes. This series of survey results break the traditional meaning of people's "superficial, blind, naive" cognition of fans, at the same time, remind the whole society to pay attention to the new generation of teenagers under the publicity of enthusiasm to become mature and rational strong self-growth. At the same time, it also calls for more and more in-depth attention, discussion and guidance from teenagers who are represented by middle school students.

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