

Under the influence of digital media, the sexualization and objectification of idol industry

Huixuan Huang*

Diploma Program, Shanghai Shangde Experimental School, Shanghai, 201315, China

Abstract. With the development of media technology, a variety of media platforms appear in the public eye, which also promotes the development of the entertainment industry. It gives fans more channels to follow their favorite idols. This article will explore how the development of the media age affects the degree to which the masses sexualize and objectify idols. The entertainment industry that this article focuses on is the Korean entertainment industry. The results of the study showed that although most fans did not deepen the degree of sexualization and objectification of love beans due to the influence of media development. However, there are still some groups who are influenced by this and sexualize and objectify idols. So there are other factors contributing to the increasing trend of idolization and objectification in the entertainment industry. Among Chinese fan groups, the degree of sexualization and objectification of idols has not been fully affected by the development of the media age.

1 Introduction

The development of digital media can be reflected in the emergence of various innovative network media platforms, the speed of information transmission and the scope of network information transmission [1]. Idol industry refers to the theory that idols in entertainment companies attract the attention of fans through performances, concerts, book signing and other forms, prompting fans to obtain profits by purchasing tickets and accessories, etc. The idols will hand over a certain proportion of the profits to their entertainment companies.

The degree of use of social media will have an impact on a person's identity, aesthetics and ideas [2]. The more time people spend on social media, the more likely they are to be influenced, especially by teenagers [3]. People have a herd mentality. Because teenagers have not fully formed fixed values, they are more likely to imitate some behaviors they see on media platforms, such as some groups' sexualized and objectified remarks or actions on idols. In most people's minds, fan groups are the followers of idols and have a positive impact on idols [4]. However, with the development of society, some fan groups appear to have a negative impact on idols and may not be aware of it, and the sexualization and objectification of idols is one kind [5].

With the rapid development of media technology, human beings have more media to spread information. And people's dependence on social media is growing. At the same time,

* Corresponding author: duqing@ldy.edu.rs

the phenomenon of fans and viewers sexualizing and objectifying idols is becoming more frequent in the entertainment industry. In the current context, objectification means that people are treated as tools, machines or objects, losing their social identity and humanity, and are regarded as mere material or living things [6]. Sexualization can be understood as associating a particular person or object with sexual content, or raising and awakening a sexual consciousness within a person. The aim of this paper is to explore the influence of the development of mass media on the degree to which idols are sexualized and objectified in the media age.

2 Method

A questionnaire survey is adopted in this topic to collect data and analyze it. The object of the questionnaire is limited to young people (14-25 years old), because the research topic is about the sexualization and objectification under the idol industry, so young people will have a better understanding of this industry, and are more suitable to do this questionnaire, and avoid sampling error. However, this questionnaire survey did not limit the age and gender of the respondents, so that the data could be sufficiently large and unbiased as far as possible.

This study used questionnaires as the research method because the questionnaire format is convenient for both researchers and participants. Moreover, the form of questionnaire is convenient for researcher to use the quantitative method for analysis.

As for the questionnaire design, it can be divided into two parts. In the first part, the researchers asked the participants about their personal basics, such as asking about their gender, age, educational background, and recreational interests. The questions in the second part use Likert scales (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree)/Single-choice/Multiple-choice.

The questionnaire survey lasted for 4 days. A total of 64 questionnaires were collected, and the information availability rate was 100%.

3 Result

In terms of demographic, the participants whose ages were between the 18 and 24 had Ninety-five percent. The percentage of participants whose age were between 25-34 are 3%, and about 2% participants were older than 35. The gender of the participants was mostly female, and only 6 percent were male. The second is to investigate the educational level of the participants. 67.19% of them have a Bachelor's degree. 18.75% had an accidental equivalent degree in high school diploma. Only 4.69% have a Master's degree and only 1.56% have less than a high school diploma. In general, the educational level of the participants is mainly concentrated on the Bachelor's degree. Finally, the participants were asked which region of the entertainment industry they were interested in. The data showed that 56.25% of the participants focused on Japanese and Korean entertainment. There were 22 participants who focused on Chinese domestic entertainment. Western entertainment accounted for 6.25% of the participants. The remaining regions accounted for only 3.12%. So the entertainment industry that most participants focus on is Japanese and Korean entertainment. In Japanese and Korean entertainment, the sexualization and objectification of idol is also the most common in the entertainment industry compared with other regions.

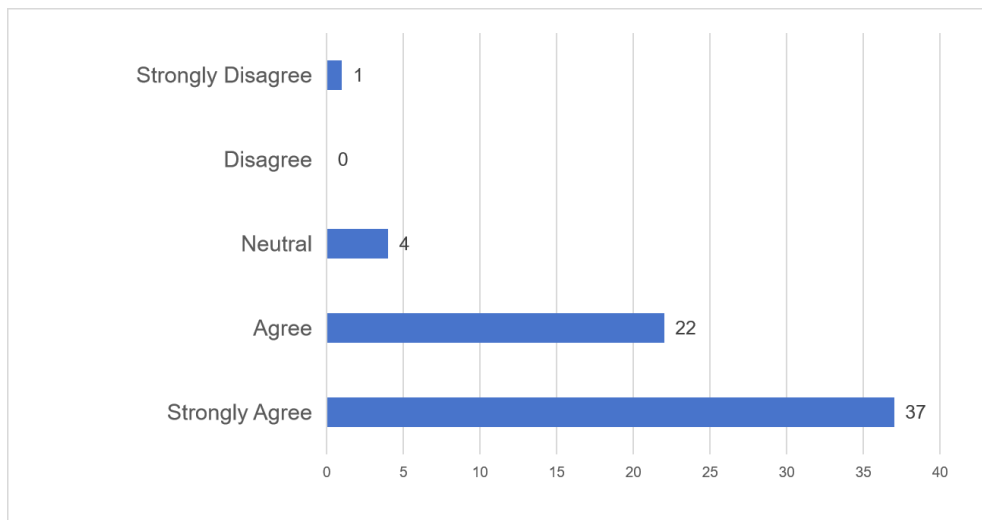


Fig. 1. Answer of “I believe idols have a responsibility to manage their body image.”

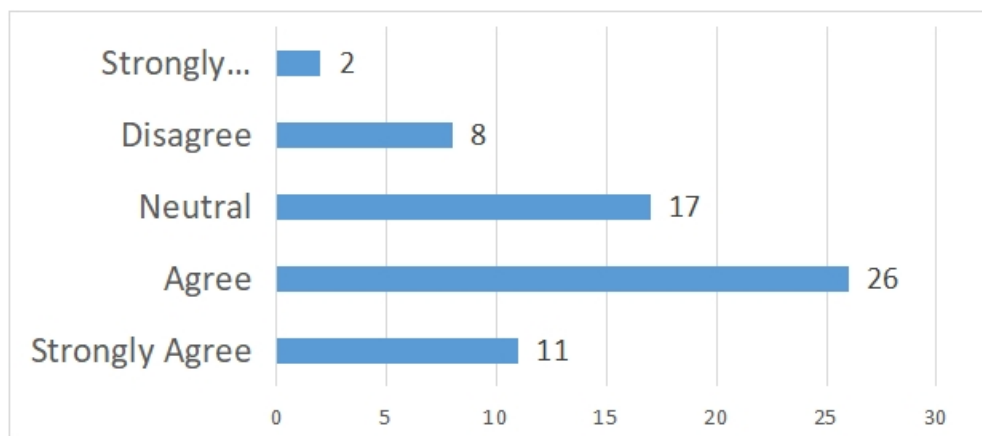


Fig. 2. Answer of “I think viewers or fans are too concerned about the appearance and physical gender characteristics (e.g. breasts, abs, etc.) of idols”

Most of the people in Figure 1 believe that idols should see it as their job to manage their figures (59 agree or strongly agree). However, in Figure 2, most people think that fans pay too much attention to idol's appearance and physical gender characteristics. 26 people agree, 11 people strongly agree, and only 10 people disagree.

In Figures 3 and 4, participants began to choose neutrality more frequently, with 17 people choosing neutrality in both questions. Figure 3 shows that most people believe that idols have no obligation to satisfy their fans' sexual fantasies. Figure 4 shows that most people do not have a strong opinion about idols staying single. In addition, some participants gave other responses: “Image management is also important. As a fan, I can accept the occasional imperfections of my idol’s appearance, but the idol himself can not be indifferent to his image all the time; As an idol, you do not have pretty look anymore, what else do you want? I pay you to look good, not to fall in love; Appearance and body shape are also part of what idols use to make money, so idols need to in as good a shape as possible when facing fans.”

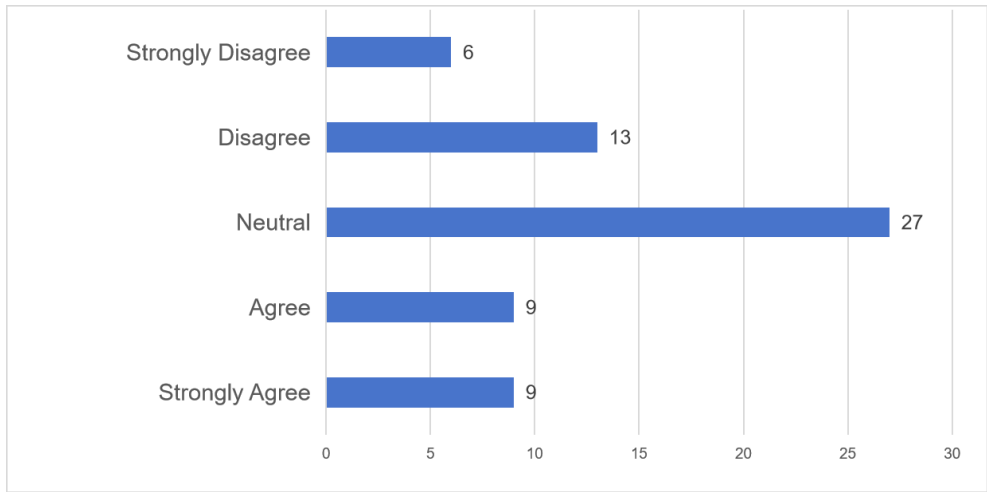


Fig. 3. Answer of I think idols have an obligation to fulfil their fans' sexual fantasies (e.g. to wear revealing clothes, etc.).

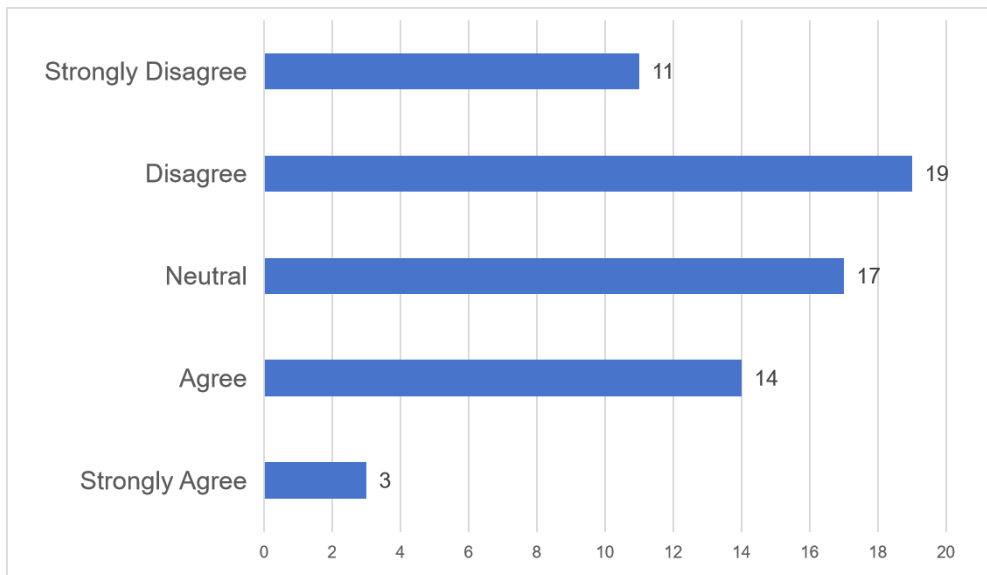


Fig. 4. Answer of "I wish my idol would always stay single."

4 Discussion

First of all, in response to "the entertainment industry that most participants focus on is Japanese and Korean entertainment." The reason why people are now more focused on Japanese and Korean entertainment is first because the Korean cultural industry attaches great importance to the Chinese market, a South Korean investment agency pointed out to the media that if China relaxes the import of Korean cultural products, it is expected that at least 15 Korean dramas can enter the Chinese market, and the copyright income alone is expected to be as high as 90 billion won [7,8]. Moreover, South Korea has set up three professional government agencies to promote and support the production of Korean entertainment content. Moreover, most of the idols in Japanese and Korean entertainment show an ingratiating

attitude and easy-going character to the audience, thus making most of the audience enjoy the feeling of being ingratiated, which is also one of the more obvious factors that sexualize and objectify idols in Japanese and Korean entertainment [9]. Fourth, another possible factor for Chinese people to prefer Japanese and South Korean entertainment is geographical location. Japan and South Korea have geographical advantages over other countries in the entertainment industry. Because they are closer to China. This also increases the probability that Chinese audiences will go to see their favorite idols perform. Moreover, in recent years, the epidemic has affected. Many people will stay at home for a long time, which undoubtedly increases their access to digital media platforms. Thus, it is easier to come into contact with statements about sexualization and objectification of idols, and thus be influenced [10].

5 Conclusion

In this paper, questionnaire survey is used to study the influence of the development of media platforms on the degree of love beans being sexualized and objectified in the media age. After the data analysis of the questionnaire. It was found that among Chinese fan groups, the development of media platforms had less impact on the degree of Aidou's sexualization and objectification. The results differ from those predicted. That's partly because the study had some limitations. For example, the sample size of the questionnaire survey is too small, resulting in sampling error. Moreover, most of the sample sources are from China, which has limitations and the sample distribution is not extensive enough. These two sampling errors make the sample unrepresentative and cannot represent all the target population. Therefore, the future research vision is to distribute a large number of questionnaires and publish them on a number of global media platforms. Expand the entertainment industry studied to all regions, not limited to the entertainment industry in Japan and South Korea. Expand the number of samples and the breadth of the region. Increase representativeness of the sample.

References

1. A. Asadi, A Role of Digital Media on Discussing about the Diplomacy in the World. *Open Journal of Political Science*, **07**(02), 267–275 (2017)
2. S. E. Davis, Objectification, sexualization, and Misrepresentation: Social media and the college experience. *Social Media + Society*, **4**(3) (2018).
3. K. Zoellner, Gratification Theory Provides a Useful Framework for Understanding the Information Seeking Behaviours and Needs of Distinct Populations. 438 - 449 (2010)
4. Y. Zhao, Analysis of the social impact of fandom culture in “Idol” context. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*, **10**(04), 377–386. (2022)
5. Gill, R., & Orgad, S. The shifting terrain of sex and power: From the ‘sexualization of culture’ to #MeToo. *Sexualities*, **21**(8), 1313–1324. (2018)
6. D. J.K ellie, K. R. Blake, & R. C. Brooks, What drives female objectification? An investigation of appearance-based interpersonal perceptions and the objectification of women. *PloS One*, 14(8), (2019).
7. X. Chang, Research on Cultural Product Marketing—Thinking of Korean dramas’ effect in China. *Dian Zi Shang Wu Ping Lun*, **04**(03), 45–50. (2015)
8. S.B erg, Local Buzz, global pipelines and Hallyu: the case of the film and TV industry in South Korea. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, **4**(1), 33–52. (2018).

9. J. Park, From Cultural Export to Economic Engine: Examining the role of K-Pop in the growth of the South Korean economy. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 11(05), (2023)
10. W. Li, Study on the Choice Preference of Public Entertainment Activities under the Influence of the Epidemic. *Tong Ji Xue Yu Ying Yong*, **11**(03), 457–471. (2022)