

Analysis of Alienation Behavior of Young Women's Internet Leisure in the Era of Attention Economy

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Abstract

In the era of attention economy, our lives are being consumed invisibly, and we spend more and more free time in online leisure. The seemingly free Internet world actually makes us pay a heavy price for our time. This article takes Internet leisure as the starting point, takes young women as the research object, and adopts the research method of semi-structured interviews to analyze the alienation behavior of Internet leisure caused by the invisible manipulation of attention under this kind of information inflation. The results show that the alienation behavior of young women's online leisure in the attention economy era is mainly manifested in three aspects: the inversion and deterritorialization of real life experience, the shallow thinking of anti-intellectualization, and the distortion of value choices. And pointed out that maintaining rationality is an important means for us to deal with this alienation.

Keywords

Attention Economy; Online Leisure; Alienating Behavior; Grounded Theory.

1. Introduction

With the development of economy and society and the change of people's values, leisure has become an important daily behavior of people. In February 2021, the "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China" showed that online leisure is one of the main Internet activities of Chinese netizens. It can be said that carrying out online leisure activities has become an important leisure form. Especially in the era of normalization of the epidemic, online leisure has become the leisure choice for most young people. And there is such a phenomenon: people originally open a certain webpage with a certain purpose, and after entering, they are attracted by the recommended page, and after the last swipe, they forget their purpose and even forget the time. It can be said that most people's online leisure is dominated by attention. People are coerced to do things that are not from their hearts, and this is the formation of "alienation". The reason for this alienation is that nowadays machines, especially computers, are running faster than ever. Then, how far this alienation has developed based on the individual dimension, and how do people face this alienation, this is the research question of this paper.

This article will start from the dimension of individual perception and select young women of different occupations as the research object to explore the alienation behavior of young women's online leisure in the era of attention economy.

2. Background

At present, domestic research on Internet leisure mainly discusses the advantages and disadvantages of Internet leisure, the impact of Internet leisure on physical leisure, or the group characteristics of different groups of Internet leisure from the perspective of philosophy, sociology and ethics. Yin Gang and Zhen Feng used the logarithmic linear saturation model and chi-square analysis techniques to study the differences in the influence of online leisure on physical leisure in the socioeconomic attributes and leisure activities of different residents [1].

Zhao Lin et al. explored the relationship among residents' socioeconomic attributes, informatization level, online leisure activities and travel [2].

In recent years, the rapid development of information technology has led to continuous changes in human behavior. The alienation of online leisure has attracted the attention of scholars and corresponding research has been carried out. Liu Ju criticized the role of leisure, thinking that in the consumption era, leisure time Being alienated into consumption time [3], Dong Aihui pointed out that the excessive materialization of leisure life of new Chinese women can easily make them fall into irrational pleasure experience and hedonistic dilemma, so that their spiritual life presents a pathological state [4]. and there are many hidden dangers in women's leisure, such as: the possible regeneration of "one-dimensional people", the excessive materialization of leisure content, the virtual generalization of leisure forms, and the generalization of personal information leakage [5].

To sum up, the existing research has extensively discussed the alienating behavior of online leisure. However, in the era of attention, under the bombardment of massive information, attracting users' attention and making selective clicks is the key to the alienating behavior of online leisure. The premise is that there are few studies that have conducted in-depth discussions on the alienation behavior of online leisure. Based on the perspective of individual perception, this paper uses grounded theory to systematically analyze the alienation behavior of young women's online leisure, and discusses and summarizes accordingly.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

Grounded theory is a method to construct a theoretical model by encoding and analyzing the original data based on the researcher's personal knowledge and experience with the support of existing theories and literature [6]. This method is an effective method for constructing a theory based on empirical data[7] , especially suitable for theoretical construction when the subject research is immature, and has been applied in many fields[8] . In order to simplify the coding procedure, this paper uses the data analysis software NVivo for auxiliary analysis [9,10].

3.2. Interview Outline Design

This paper chooses the semi-structured interview method for data collection. Before the formal interview, a preliminary interview outline was determined based on the results of literature research and the researcher's personal experience. Then, two interviewees were invited to conduct pre-interviews to revise the first draft and establish a formal interview outline, as shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Interview outline

Interview topic	Main content
Introduction (Terminology Explanation)	Attention Economy, Alienation of Internet Leisure and Examples
Respondent Information	Gender, age, education background, major, etc.
Key problem	(1) Do you realize that you are alienated in the process of online leisure? Specific examples can be given. (2) What factors do you take into account when you are dominated by attention and lead to leisure alienation behavior? Please describe in detail. (3) How did you feel or experience when you realized that you had alienated online leisure behavior? Please describe in detail. (4) What other factors do you think lead to your alienated behavior in online leisure?

3.3. Sample Selection and Data Collection

This paper selects young women of different occupations as interview objects. From November 2021 to January 2022, 9 women aged 20-35 are recruited (see Table 2). Due to the epidemic, the data collection work in this paper (The design and revision including outline, pre-interview, formal interview and data transcription, etc.) lasted nearly 3 months, and all interviews were conducted online. After the interview, the interview recording was initially identified and transcribed by voice transcription software, and then proofread and corrected manually to form standardized documents. The 9 confirmed original materials were named in the order of 1-9, with a total transcription of 25,190 words.

Table 2. Basic information of the interviewee

Numbering	Profession	Age	Education level
1	Primary School Teachers	26	junior college
2	civil servant	23	junior college
3	Internet workers	26	master
4	student	20	Undergraduate student
5	graduate	26	master
6	self-employed	33	high school
7	beauty salon staff	28	high school
8	junior high school teacher	24	Undergraduate
9	student	25	Master's degree

4. Grounded Analysis

4.1. Text Encoding Analysis

Open coding is the first step in the extraction of text, including two parts: "labeling" and "conceptualization". Among them, "tagging" is the process of organizing sentences into phrases using short tags according to the emotional tendencies expressed by the original sentences. "Conceptualization" is to further refine and compress the existing tags to form a more theoretical and scientific concept phrase. In the open coding stage, sentence-by-sentence coding was used to encode the original data, and a total of 76 reference points were extracted. By conceptualizing the reference point using "local concepts", 21 initial concepts such as live streaming shopping, herd mentality, online blogger recommended purchases, and irrational purchases are obtained; The nine basic categories of loss, submissive consumption, etc. are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Coding example

Original statement	Initial concept	Basic category
My online leisure methods mainly include watching videos, such as Douyin, Bilibili, etc., or online shopping. In the past, I used to watch live broadcasts and reviews on Taobao by myself. Now I usually go to shopping before buying things. Take a look at some bloggers who wear clothes, good things to recommend bloggers and other recommendations, and	Watch live shopping, herd mentality, online bloggers recommend purchases, irrational purchases	Loss of self-discrimination, loss of individuality, submissive consumption

then go to shopping software to choose. As a result, I will follow the trend and buy a lot of things that I don't just need. I think this may be a kind of alienation phenomenon you mentioned. (respondent 2)		
After joining the Internet company, I now feel that my "Internet speed" is very slow. Many times I can't catch the stalks of my colleagues. They really stay online all the time. So now many times I basically surf the Internet in my spare time, and I have to eat this latest "melon" in my stomach. (Respondent 3)	Integration into groups, common topics, influenced by others	Slave of information
The purpose of my downloading Weibo was originally to look at the trending searches, so as to avoid ignorance of the current popular events, but then I found that every time I clicked on Weibo, it took half an hour to definitely not get it out, there were too many keywords It's getting my attention. (Respondent 9)	Understand real-time hot news, time is wasted, keywords are too many and complicated	Slave of information
I like to open the danmaku when I watch the video. I will like it when I see an interesting danmaku. Sometimes the danmaku recommends similar content. I will search for it, and sometimes I will go there. (Respondent 8)	Information relevance, common hobby groups, and building interest groups	Perception of authenticity in virtual leisure communities
Now I prefer to swipe Douyin. I usually open the "recommendation" page directly, and I like this more and more now. Making news and the like into short videos, and understanding them through commentary and other methods can reduce a lot of pain. The burden of reading the text, although I know that this method is not very good, the system will continue to push this kind of thing to me, and it wastes a lot of time, but many times I feel that my attention is dominated, and I can't control the repeated sliding screen . (Respondent 7)	Accustomed to recommending pages, accepting the domination of algorithms, self-knowledge but not autonomy, repetition and diversification of information	loss of autonomy, loss of intelligence
There was a time when I really liked staying up late and swiping my phone. I was sleepy at 11:00 p.m., but I had to do it before going to bed, but I clicked on the links one by one, and it was already 11:40, and I was about to turn off my phone. I found that there happened to be another interesting title that led me to click on it, and it went on and on like this, holding on to the drowsiness of my body, until one or two o'clock, and finally found that what I just watched was really meaningless, so I now I really doubt that this is really leisure? I am out of my illness (Respondent 9)	Unable to control the sliding of the finger on the screen, the attention is occupied by meaningless information, the body is viciously dominated	Loss of sense of freedom in leisure, the theory of meaninglessness of leisure

4.2. Theoretical Saturation Test

As far as theoretical saturation is concerned, it is generally believed that when the original data basically can no longer provide new categories and relationships, three or more copies of the

data should be verified. If new categories and relationships cannot be found, it means that the research results the theory reaches saturation. In this paper, theoretical saturation is used as the criterion for the selection of interview subjects, and the interview is stopped when it is found that new categories or relationships cannot be extracted from the interview data. It was found that new categories and new relationships could not be found during the interview to the sixth person, but in order to ensure that the categories were rich enough, two more people were selected to verify the theoretical saturation. As a result, no new categories and new relationships were still found. Judging from this Research builds theories at saturation.

5. Conclusion

The alienation behavior of young women's online leisure in the attention economy era is mainly manifested in three aspects: the inversion and dislocation of real-life experience, the shallow thinking of anti-intellectualization, and the distortion of value choice.

In the virtual world, people change from manipulation to out of control, forming the inversion and dislocation of real-life experience. Internet platform business models are all about collecting, analyzing, and selling that data to third parties (usually advertisers). Long-term leisure through the web, algorithms trade our attention for a traffic economy, and they are carefully designed for our points of interest to make us receptive. In the leisure of returning to reality, it has brought the loss of people's sense of depth and history, brought about the disappearance of the reality of life and the richness of individuality, and also brought about the crisis of humanistic spirit. This may be the current youth association. The reason for the frequent impetuosity and emptiness.

Due to the typical characteristics of computer programs, while enjoying the "feast" of online leisure, we may lose our thinking and form anti-intellectual shallow thinking. The longer people spend online, the massive amount of information no longer has more meaning for individuals, and the ability of individuals to feel information is degrading. Information that has not been integrated and digested remains in the human brain, which will subtly interfere with people's thinking and affect the ability of individual thinking. Even rely on the Internet and lose self-thinking.

The process of people enjoying online leisure is also the process of constantly receiving information. This distorts our value choices. The hyperlinks on the Internet determine the fragmentation of information. We often get fragmented and more perceptual information, which makes people lose the ability to judge the truth. In this state, leisure can only be at the level of will, and leisure in the true sense cannot be realized.

Overall, attention is most valuable in this modern age of the attention economy. Now people have more free time, but subjectively feel time is more tense than ten or twenty years ago, because our attention is dominated by too much information and we forget to pay attention to time. In the process of online leisure, in fact, we have not achieved a satisfactory leisure experience. Therefore, when people use media tools to transform the world, they themselves are transformed by the media at the same time. For individuals, attention is a scarce resource. How to allocate it so that it will not be kidnapped by the media and fall into the predicament of information overload, and at the same time achieve an ideal state of leisure on the Internet, is a part of human survival in the future. an important skill.

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