Internet and Subculture : Research on Virtual Identity of Zhihu Knowledge Sharing Community

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Abstract: In recent years, with the gradual development of Internet technology, the communication media has also developed from the original telegraph to today 's online interactive communication, and a virtual community has emerged with ' interest ' as a bridge. Based on the theory of identity, this paper makes a fundamental analysis of the members of Zhihu virtual community, and tries to find out the influencing factors that affect the construction of virtual community identity. Specifically, through the correlation analysis of interaction frequency, education level and personal economic status, it is found that the identity of Zhihu virtual community is restricted by the three parties.
Keywords: Zhihu community, identity, subculture

1 Introduction

1.1 Background introduction

In recent years, with the acceleration of China 's Internet ethnicity and stratification, the virtual community with ' interest ' as the link plays an increasingly important role in the life of Internet users. In this context, I found that whether it is a fan community on WeChat, or a knowledge sharing community such as Zhihu, Hupu, its internal members have a unique discourse system and communication methods. People often present a more unified way of expression and interaction in the face of social hot events. I am curious about this : how does the virtual community affect members ' sense of self-identity ? Will the exclusive way of communication help to establish the identity of members ? This paper investigates the users of Zhihu in the network by means of questionnaire survey. The reason for using the questionnaire survey is mainly because of the large number of users, and there are a large number of potential users, it is difficult to directly use interviews to obtain effective data. The random distribution of questionnaires in the network can not only save the survey time, but also cover a large area of user groups.

2 Literature review

2.1 The formation and establishment of virtual cultural community

2.1.1 Foreign research

The gradual popularization of virtual community has aroused wide concern of international scholars.French sociologists Bruno Latour, Michel Caron and John Law summarized it from the perspective of sociology, and pointed out the theory of actor network, that is, to follow the actor, choose one from various heterogeneous actors, and show the public the actor-centered network construction process by following the actor. In 2019, He Dehong scholars pointed out in the study of virtual community identity from the perspective of " actor network theory " that American sociologist Scheer put forward the theory of " community liberation. " In his book " social network and place : social relations in urban environment, " he pointed out the role of social network in the life of urban residents, pointing out that residents living in non-adjacent areas form a group through specific relationships (such as common interests or hobbies, common values, etc.), thus forming their own social network. In 2000, Howard Rheingold pointed out in 'The Virtual Community : Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier. ' that virtual community is a social group generated by Internet users after interaction. It is a group of people engaged in public discussion on the Internet.After a period of time, they form a network of interpersonal relationships with each other. A number of foreign scholars in 2008-2010 years of research found that in the Internet virtual community, users usually because of a common topic of interest and gathered, through a variety of ways (BBS, blog, micro-blog, etc.) to express their views or to participate in the discussion of related issues, the user 's participation behavior is mainly reflected in the reading, posting and replying posts. The research on topic propagation in virtual community network mainly includes the analysis of virtual community network topology and the construction of topic propagation model. This kind of research has been highly concerned at home and abroad and has achieved certain results.

2.1.2 Domestic research

Domestic scholars have also carried out corresponding research on special groups in virtual communities. From the perspective of sociological structure and function, for example, Zhang Wen pointed out in 2006 's " Research on Interest-related Groups in the Change of Urban Social Structure-the Perspective of Daily Life ' that the reasons for the emergence of Huangmei Opera fans are discussed from the background of the change of urban social structure. Scholars point out that interpersonal communication based on interest can provide people with instrumental support and emotional support, thus promoting group identity and giving birth to a new relationship community. Zheng Hangsheng, a sociologist, also defined the network virtual community in his " Chinese society in transition and the transformation of Chinese society " in 1996 : a community with cultural identity formed by frequent social interaction of Internet users in electronic cyberspace. However, although these studies have carried out related research from the

perspective of sociology and psychology, they have neglected the perspective of subculture research.

2.2 Cultural identity and identity

2.2.1 Foreign research

In 1990, Michael Blake 's " Subculture and Juvenile Delinquency " pointed out that " subculture " as a concept was first proposed by American sociologist Talcot Parsons in his analysis of American middle-class youth culture. After that, anthropologist Ralph Linton proposed that young people created a distinctive cultural form that was divorced from adult society, which further opened the perspective of subcultural studies. On the basis of subculture, American youth activists in the 1860 s creatively proposed the ' counterculture ' German historian J.G.von Herder pointed out in ' On World History : an Anthology ' in 1997 that nation-states based on cultural identity can survive in the long history.

2.2.2 Domestic research

Domestic scholar Hu Jiangfeng also pointed out that subculture and counterculture are not completely distinct. In the practice of criticism, subculture and counterculture are usually used indiscriminately. In 2011, Ma Zhonghong, a scholar, pointed out that youth subculture is changeable, youthful and challenging, which is different from the adult culture of social subjects. Chen Shilian 's " cultural identity, cultural harmony and social harmony " in 2006 pointed out that cultural identity refers to the social psychological process in which individuals internalize and generate a sense of belonging to their own culture and cultural groups, so as to obtain, maintain and innovate their own culture. Cultural identity includes social value standard identity, religious belief identity, customs identity, language identity, artistic identity and so on. Cultural identity is the process of forming ' self ', Montaigne said : ' The most important thing in the world is to know yourself. In 2001, Guo Shuyong pointed out that identity was originally a concept of philosophy, sociology, psychology and other disciplines, referring to the self-identity and personality of a social actor, which was the stipulation of the social actor different from his social actor. Identity was originally a concept of philosophy, sociology and psychology, referring to the self-identity and personality of a social actor, which was the stipulation of the social actor different from his social actor.

2.3 Questions raised

However, these studies have not studied the phenomenon of cultural identity in virtual communities from the perspective of subculture, nor have they solved the problem of how subculture constructs identity. Therefore, from the perspective of subculture, this paper analyzes the following questions : How does virtual community affect members ' sense of

self-identity ? Will the exclusive way of communication help to establish the identity of members ?

3 Questionnaire survey method

3.1 Hypothesis establishment

Based on the above problems, this paper studies the influencing factors of establishing identity and puts forward the following hypotheses.

H1:The higher the frequency of interaction between members of the virtual community, the higher the identity of the members of the community.

H2:The higher the education level of members, the lower the identity of the community.

H3: The higher the economic status of the members, the lower the identity of the community.

3.2 Sampling method

A total of 201 valid questionnaires were collected in this questionnaire survey. Among them, the samples were mostly over 18 years old in age distribution, more than 80 % of them had bachelor 's degree or above in education distribution, and more than 5000 yuan in disposable income distribution.

This questionnaire survey uses the five-level Likert scale to measure the virtual community identity of Zhihu.Therefore, in the data analysis, the relevant sentences in the scale are summed and averaged to generate a new variable ' virtual community identity ', which is included in the subsequent data analysis. The independent variable ' interaction degree ' includes three dimensions : the frequency of users ' likes, comments and posts in Zhihu.These three variables are measured by the five-level Likert scale.

4 Research findings and discussion points

4.1 Zhihu community user characteristics

Zhihu community users are characterized by youth, high education and stable income. A total of 201 valid questionnaires were collected in this questionnaire survey. Among them, the samples were mostly over 18 years old in age distribution, more than 80 % of them had bachelor 's degree or above in education distribution, and more than 5000 yuan in disposable income distribution. This questionnaire survey uses the five-level Likert scale to measure the virtual community identity of Zhihu.Therefore, in the data analysis, the relevant sentences in the scale are summed and averaged to generate a new variable ' virtual community identity ', which is included in the subsequent data analysis. The

independent variable ' interaction degree ' includes three dimensions : the frequency of users ' likes, comments and posts in Zhihu.These three variables are measured by the five-level Likert scale.

4.2 Correlation analysis results

Through Pearson correlation analysis, it was found that the interaction frequency of Zhihu users was significantly positively correlated with their sense of community identity. Among them, the frequency of likes was significantly positively correlated with community identity ($r = 0.508$, $P < 0.01$), the frequency of comments was significantly positively correlated with community identity ($r = 0.478$, $P < 0.01$), and the frequency of posts was significantly positively correlated with community identity ($r = 0.494$, $P < 0.01$). The research hypothesis H1 was supported.

There is a significant positive correlation between the user 's personal education level and his identity with the Zhihu community ($r = 0.276$, $P < 0.01$), which indicates that the higher the individual 's education level, the stronger his identity with the Zhihu community. The research hypothesis H2 is not supported. However, there was a significant positive correlation between the user 's personal economic status and his identity with the virtual community ($r = 0.205$, $P < 0.01$), which was contrary to the expected direction. The research hypothesis H3 was not supported.

4.2.1 The higher the frequency of interaction between virtual community members, the higher the identity of members.

In order to study whether the frequency of interaction between virtual community members will affect the identity of community members, this paper divides the frequency of interaction into three levels : the frequency of likes, the frequency of comments, and the frequency of posts. Whether to comply with community norms as a measure of identity standards, and as a dependent variable. Pearson correlation analysis was performed on the two groups of data to test their correlation.

In this paper, the Pearson correlation coefficient analysis of 200 valid data is carried out. The statistical results show that the correlation coefficient between the frequency of likes and the sense of community identity is 0.508, the significant level is $P < 0.01$, and the significant level is 0.01. The correlation coefficient between comment frequency and community identity was 0.478, the significant level was $P < 0.01$, and the significant level was 0.01. The correlation coefficient between posting frequency and community identity was 0.494, with a significant level of $P < 0.01$, reaching a significant correlation at a significant level of 0.01. This shows that the interaction frequency of virtual community members has the ability to shape identity. Hypothesis 1 has been verified, and the interaction frequency of users is significantly positively correlated with their sense of community identity.

The biggest feature of Zhihu community is its interactivity. The essence of interactivity

is that the communication feedback between communicators and recipients gradually increases with the deepening of communication, but at the same time, it is different from the ordinary interaction in reality. In the virtual community, everyone has the right to receive and publish information, that is, the role of the communicator and the recipient can be freely converted in communication. Therefore, many people will exchange views, share feelings, and even put forward resistant interpretations of posts posted in the Zhihu community. The development of Internet technology has changed people 's concept of time and space. People have gradually evolved from face-to-face community communication to network virtual community interaction. At the same time, the virtual community does not require people to provide real information. People can use a new identity to join the community of interest to express their views, and thus complete the construction of self-identity in this interaction.

The establishment of Zhihu virtual community can not only narrow the distance between strangers, but also meet people 's inherent social needs. With the acceleration of urbanization in today 's society, people are gradually involved in the fast-paced life. There are different groups in the communities where people live in the city. Because of various differences, the communication between them becomes less and less. For example, go out to meet with their neighbors, only greeting each other ; meeting between colleagues at work is only a simple greeting. In the long run, people 's spiritual life will become empty and lonely. The virtual community created by Zhihu can gather people with common topics, and each user can post, like, and comment on them. This has contributed to the fact that although people in the community have not met, but because they have the same hobbies. People can experience spiritual satisfaction that is not available in the real world, and retrieve the sense of belonging of the ancients in the past, which is ' a friend in the sea, a neighbor in the world ', and gradually internalize themselves as a member of the ' family '.

4.2.2 The higher the education level of members, the lower the identity of the community.

There is a correlation between the education level of virtual community members and community identity. In this questionnaire survey, it was found that the proportion of bachelor degree or above in the distribution of academic qualifications reached more than 80 %, which was closely related to the country 's strong support for higher education. Therefore, we use it as a dependent variable and identity as an independent variable for Pearson correlation analysis to test its correlation.

Through data analysis, the results obtained are : the correlation coefficient between education level and identity is 0.276, and the significant level is $P < 0.01$, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between the two. This shows that the degree of education of virtual community members can affect the construction of identity. Hypothesis 2 has not been verified, and there is a significant positive correlation between the user 's education level and their sense of community identity.

This also indicates that in today 's information age, people 's educational level is gradually improving, but people 's spiritual needs can not be fully met. According to Maslow 's theory of needs, he divides human needs into five categories : physiological needs, security needs, social needs, respect needs, and self-realization needs. In the first two, I think it is the basic needs of human beings. With the development of society and the progress of science and technology, these needs are basically saturated. With the acceleration of the pace of life, people 's free time becomes less and less, especially those intellectual groups, who find their own confidants in the real society and cannot find their own groups around them, like being in an ' island '. Therefore, most people will devote themselves to the virtual community. There are a large number of intellectual talents in the virtual academic community, where they can share their recent gains, exchange their experiences, appreciate each other, respect each other and constantly improve themselves. This precisely meets the latter three spiritual needs (social needs, respect needs, self-actualization needs), which can build and stabilize the identity of the community group.

But at the same time, I also found that today 's college students are also an important factor leading to this result. Most of the college students use Zhihu for entertainment purposes. They can find the content they are interested in in the Zhihu community and meet their own game psychology, while those with lower education levels. Most people do not know much about Zhihu APP, or even have never heard of it, which is also a factor that leads to less and less point-to-point communication between people.

With the country 's vigorous development of higher education, the knowledge level of social groups will gradually increase, and the demand for virtual communities will also increase. Therefore, in the future, while vigorously developing material life, we should also pay attention to the satisfaction of human spiritual life.

4.2.3 The higher the economic status of members, the lower the identity of the community.

The economic status of Zhihu virtual community members is related to community identity. This survey found that the distribution of disposable income is mostly more than 5000 yuan. It is enough to show that people 's material living standards have been significantly improved. Therefore, the economic status (disposable income) is used as an independent variable, and the community identity is used as a dependent variable. The two sets of data are analyzed by Pearson correlation analysis to study the correlation between the two.

Combined with the above analysis, the correlation coefficient between the user 's economic status and identity is 0.205, the significant level is $P < 0.01$, and there is a significant positive correlation between the two. Therefore, the economic status of virtual community users will affect the individual 's identity. Hypothesis 3 has not been verified, and the user 's personal economic status has a significant positive correlation with their sense of identity in the virtual community.

Economic status determines the material living standards of individuals. In today 's

society, material desires are rampant, everyone is working hard for their own interests, and the spiritual world has become extremely scarce. The sharing virtual community built by Zhihu can create a platform to share their own information, and can also receive the information they want. This two-way ' encoding-decoding ' process narrows the distance between each other in a virtual space. The level of economic status affects the social environment and cultural codes that individuals can contact. So that it can resonate with most of the views in the community and help to integrate into the virtual community. The virtual community brings them the possibility of a short ' escape ', so that they will not be bound by social pressure and speak freely.

5 Conclusion

In summary, this study uses the questionnaire survey method to study the identity of the members of the Zhihu virtual community in the face of social events, and there will be a unified discourse and interactive identity research. Through research, it is found that interaction frequency, education level and economic status are significantly positively correlated with identity. Hypothesis 1 is established, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are not established. This study finds that the integration of time and space structure by Internet technology has created a virtual space with multi-temporal coexistence. The interaction between community members has expanded from the initial ' I ' centered social network to the interaction between ' we ' and ' we ' in different virtual communities. The process is always permeated with the thinking and construction of anthropological self-identity.

However, this study also finds that people rely too much on virtual communities and ignore face-to-face communication in real life, which will make the whole society indifferent. And because the virtual community can not confirm the true identity of the members, there are also a series of vulgar and kitsch community culture, so in the future research, please also pay attention to the adverse effects of virtual community on social relations, so as to expand the relevant research.

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