

The Phenomenon of Contemporary Youth's "Bai Lan": Cultural Construction and Media Communication

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Abstract: *As a new variant of youth subculture, "Bai Lan" reflects the youth's stance expression and value orientation in the Internet era. Through network ethnographic analysis and semi-structured interview, this paper systematically sorts out the cultural characteristics, evolution process and complex motives of the phenomenon, and makes an in-depth analysis of the unintended consequences brought by the phenomenon in the process of dissemination, forming three research findings: First, the phenomenon is a cultural product formed by young people who weaken their identity and deconstruct traditional values under their own development difficulties; Second, the generation, expression and dissemination of "Bai Lan" culture are interactive processes between individual youth, groups and network media; Third, youth "Bai Lan" is a kind of strategic behavior, whose subjective motives can be divided into emotions and pressure vent, self-protection and self-benefit maximization. In the process of "Bai Lan", negative language framework and media distorted narrative are likely to cause objective adverse effects on youth's cognitive orientation and behavior choice.*

Keywords: Youth Subculture; Phenomenon of "Bai Lan"; Goblin Mode; Cultural Construction; Social Media; Frame Theory; Pseudo-environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous development of society, economy and culture, Chinese youth continue to initiate cultural discussions reflecting their growth path through Internet platforms, and iteratively integrate widely empathetic online expressions among the majority. As a phenomenal discourse on social media, "Bai Lan", also named as "Goblin Mode" or "Put Rotten" in English, is a new variant of youth subculture and a cultural symbol generated in the process of constructing self-identity, reflecting the changing trend of youth's current lifestyle and value orientation. The origin of "Bai Lan" can be traced back to the "tanking" strategy in the National Basketball Association, in which underperforming teams intentionally lose games to gain higher draft picks in the following season. Through the continuous spread of the Internet, the word "Bai Lan" has broken the barriers between circles and become an "essential" word for contemporary young people, expressing a psychological state and action direction of self-abandonment and corruption (Song & Qin, 2023).

The culture of "Bai Lan" has been subjected to ongoing criticism and scrutiny of public opinion because of its deconstruction and satire of the mainstream value of struggle. The People's Daily Online, an authoritative media outlet in China, denounced the practice as "propagating evasive thoughts". Besides, The Guardian described the practice as "let it rot", and other mainstream media also saw the practice as the result of negative self-suggestion. It can be seen that in official discourse, "Bai Lan" is considered to have a strong tendency of moral demeaning, being an extremely negative culture that needs to be corrected. However, in the practice of "Bai Lan", there is a phenomenon of "Bai Lan diode" co-existing positive and negative orientations: youth oscillate between "Bai Lan" and striving. On the one hand, they breed the anxiety of "Bai Lan" under external pressure; on the other hand, they dare not put "Bai Lan" into practice when facing their own future and responsibilities. This phenomenon leads to the "Bai Lan" as an Internet hot term appeared frequently on the Internet, setting off a network boom of young people "Bai Lan", but in reality, instances of "Bai Lan" are rare, with the number of students preparing for postgraduate and civil service exams remaining high, and libraries and study rooms often being fully occupied.

Thus, behind the heterogeneity of "Bai Lan", what are the underlying motivations of young people's "Bai Lan"? As an objectively existing Internet phenomenon, can the cultural impact of "Bai Lan" be consistent with the initial motivations of the youth? In view of the above problems, this paper will analyze the generation and operation mechanism of "Bai Lan" culture, and in-depth study the motivation of youth "Bai Lan" behavior. On this basis, the framework and pseudo-environment theories are used to deduce the potential impact of this culture in the Internet

era, and further clarify the essence and hidden dangers of the phenomenon of "Bai Lan" among young people, so as to make better adjustment to the phenomenon.

2. REVIEW OF THE EXISTING RESEARCH

Review of Existing literature Existing studies on the interpretation of "Bai Lan" culture can be divided into three categories: The first category discusses the usage scenarios, syntactic functions and semantic characteristics of "Bai Lan" from the perspective of pragmatics (Xia & Ma, 2022); The second type examines the negative group mentality of young people behind the culture from the perspective of psychology (Li & Shang, 2024), believing that youth's "Bai Lan" is a manifestation of a pessimistic yet somewhat hedonistic outlook among the youth (Zhang & Song, 2024), and studies how to guide and train young people to establish a positive psychological state; The third category regards "Bai Lan" as a kind of "disease", analyzes the value evolution and behavioral logic of "Bai Lan" as a youth subculture (Wang & Chen, 2022), or analyzes the essence of cognitive problems behind the cultural expression of "Bai Lan" (Ma, 2023), and proposes treatment paths for "Bai Lan".

To sum up, the current research has involved the lexical characteristics, psychological dialysis, cultural traceability and behavioral logic of this phenomenon, but there are still shortcomings in the existing research: On the one hand, the existing studies focus on the formation background of "Bai Lan" culture, and often only provide step-by-step analysis, lacking in-depth research on the interaction mechanisms among participants via online media.; On the other hand, the existing studies only interpret the role of network media as a "catalyst" in the cultural trend of "Bai Lan", without systematically analyzing the hidden dangers brought by the characteristics of network media. In view of the above two points, it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive and in-depth study on the network culture of "Bai Lan".

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research mainly adopts the research methods of network ethnography and semi-structured in-depth interview. First of all, according to field experience, the author selected Bilibili, Weibo and other Internet communities with large youth user groups and more active cultural and entertainment exchanges, and used software to search for keywords such as "Bai Lan", "Kai Bai"(start "Bai Lan") and "Lan Wanle"(completely messed up), and observed, recorded and coded analysis of users' expressions to interpret the behavior direction and psychological tendency of young people when quoting this word. Secondly, in order to get a deeper understanding of the operation process and inner motivations of young people in implementing the behavior of "Bai Lan", the author conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 8 interviewees who had published obvious "Bai Lan" content in the form of language, text or pictures in their personal social circles. In the interview process, according to the key content of the research, the author asked these young people why they start "Bai Lan" in life, how to implement "Bai Lan" and their real intention of "Bai Lan", in order to obtain the true attitude of young people towards "Bai Lan" from their own perspective, and explore the nature and development law of "Bai Lan" of young people.

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF "BAI LAN" CULTURE: VALUE TRANSFORMATION UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE

4.1 Collective Anxiety Under the External Development Dilemma

There is no doubt that the birth of the phenomenon of "Bai Lan" culture is closely related to China's current economic and cultural environment. After more than 40 years of development after the reform and opening up, China's economy has gradually moved from the stage of focusing on the speed of development to the stage of focusing on the industrial structure and quality. As traditional industries slow down and entrepreneurial opportunities decrease, social mobility becomes more rigid. Internationally, anti-globalization is on the rise. Some countries are decoupling from China in the fields of economy, trade, science and technology, shrinking China's international trade space. In addition, the application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence is seizing the original job market of young people with lower operating costs, depressing the wages of manual labor, which undoubtedly intensifies the competition among employees and promotes the process of social rat race.

In such a highly competitive and unstable environment, young people feel lost about their personal development. At the same time, due to the diversity of social roles and identities, young people face challenges in growth, education, career choice and interpersonal communication, which aggravate their identity dilemma (Fu, 2024). At

the meantime, Social-media's rapid dissemination of information places young people under broad societal expectations and judgment, amplifying their behaviors and psychological tendencies. In the face of societal expectations and harsh realities, young people experience a sense of powerlessness. This structural external environment provides cultural soil for the emergence and development of "Bai Lan", forming the realistic basis for the empathy young people feel towards it.

4.2 Individualism Attempt Under Internal Value Deconstruction

From an individual perspective, the culture of "Bai Lan" can be seen as the transcendence of individual time over social time in value priority. The youth show their rejection of rigid social rhythm and their preference for flexible life style through "Bai Lan". (Huang, 2022) As members of society, young people are often required to conform to societal rhythms—pursuing education, securing employment, getting married, and having children within socially prescribed timelines. They frequently feel an invisible hand pushing them to complete many social "tasks" they are not ready for. At present, many young people choose "Bai Lan", slow down the pace of life, shifting from external environments to self-examination and self-gratification, refuse to let the social time completely dominate their personal life, and convey the attitude of "responsible for oneself". Citywalk, which has become popular among young people in recent years, is one of the examples of paying attention to personal experience. Citywalk rejects the planning of time and lets time flow in a natural rhythm. (Jiang et al., 2023) In life practices such as city walk, people repair the physical and mental losses caused by work and life under the rule of efficiency principle, and realize the value goal of self-adjustment.

From a social point of view, the culture of "Bai Lan" is a narrative innovation in which individuals become the main body. Under the background of the increasingly obvious tendency of social atomization, young people express their rejection of the traditional values imposed by the society, such as "unremitting struggle" and "collective interests unconditionally first". In the workplace, young people realize that collectivist authoritarian behaviors such as "PUA in work" have caused damage to their personal interests; In the family, they are also dissatisfied with the value indoctrination of "learning to bear hardships" and "unconditionally reflecting on one's responsibilities" by their relatives, as well as the coercive planning that implies moral kidnapping. Therefore, young people no longer agree with the value expectations of the society for themselves, and in practice, the pursuit of grand narrative has changed to the pursuit of living narratives. In a word, the culture of "Bai Lan" reflects the young people's rejection of the modern social lifestyle and the traditional view of success, showing the value concept of paying attention to the individual and advocating individual freedom.

4.3 The New Orientation of the Core of "Bai Lan"

As a new form of youth subculture narration, "Bai Lan" has different manifestations on the basis of inheriting the typical pessimistic core of "Sang" (demotivation) culture. The subcultures show the characteristics of "multi-dimensional changes" interwoven with each other. (Qin & Dai, 2022) For example, previous forms of "Sang" culture include "Loser" who embraces laziness but not abandonment, "Buddhist-like" mentality characterized by passivity and going with the flow, and "Lying Flat" seeking ease and resisting life anxiety. These variations reflect young people's "active stigmatization" and rebellious expressions. However, as the latest variant of youth's "Sang" culture, "Bai Lan" is the result of the further intensification of the contradiction between youth and society, highlighting the intensification of youth's identity dilemma. Different from the ideological core of the above nouns, which is biased towards self-evaluation, "Bai Lan" has the characteristics of both self-evaluation and external reaction, and has a radical action-oriented direction, which can significantly influence the behavior choice of young people under the group suggestion.

5. THE EVOLUTION OF "BAI LAN" CULTURE: SOCIAL INTERACTION FACILITATED BY MEDIA

5.1 The Giving of Meaning to the Term "Bai Lan"

In the network society, people often create new words to express their emotions and attitudes, and "Bai Lan" is a new type of self-mocking expression of contemporary youth. On social media, young people focus on their own failure when comparing with others at the same stage of development or recognizing their inability to complete the set goals, and publicize their frustration of failure and self-giving attitude through social media. Thus, they render the word "Bai Lan" the ideological core of "inability to change", "escaping pressure" and "satirizing reality", which can induce the recognition of young people facing the same social situation and lay the foundation for the

culture-related spread of "Bai Lan" culture. With the recognition and acceptance of "Bai Lan" by more young people, its connotation has also received an unstructured expansion. Many young people do not always use the word "Bai Lan" in practice because of their frustration to "failure". Due to the following of phenomenal expression, they will change the meanings could have been expressed by other words such as "let nature take its course" and "being content" in daily life, or by other branches of "Sang" culture such as "Buddhist-like" to "Bai Lan", which highlights its characteristics of meaning generalization and fragmented display. (Qiu & Ding, 2024). When "Bai Lan" first came out on the internet, it simply gave people a derogatory feeling of "not thinking ahead". Now with the change of information, I think it more expresses a feeling of helplessness among young people, that is, although I have an enterprising heart, I choose to settle for the status quo because of my own strength or environment.

5.2 The Irrational Expression of "Bai Lan" Connotations

In terms of expression content, "Bai Lan" manifests as the creation of dwarfing character settings. The culture of "Bai Lan" is often accompanied by young people's self-mockery. They plant the idea of "Bai Lan" into pictures, language and videos on social platforms, constantly emphasize their failures and publicly show their weaknesses, thus achieving the purpose of self-vilification. This reflects the personality trait of "defensive pessimism" of young people. In the face of high uncertainty and pressure, young people reduce their expectations and show their pessimistic image in a self-degrading way to relieve the pressure in reality and reduce their psychological burden. (Hu et al., 2023) Young people's construction of "Bai Lan" image may not always be reliable and in line with reality. In order to lower their expectations and win the attention and resonance of others, young people sometimes exaggerate their own adversity or excessively belittle their ability. Such intentional behavior of creating people highlights the emotional catharsis effect of "Bai Lan" from another perspective. When some tasks are not done yet, people may have evaluated them as particularly difficult, and they will express their feelings in the circle of friends in advance. Soon they are likely to find that the undertakings are not as tricky as they have imagined after the actual work, but the content of the expression has been made and surely cannot be withdrawn.

In terms of expression, "Bai Lan" incites emotions with social performances. The ideological core of "Bai Lan" culture will contribute to the formation of irrational public opinion. Compared with rational public opinion, irrational public opinion is more likely to win the support of the majority of the public by using emotion guidance in the network environment where information deviation is widespread. (Cao et al., 2023) The culture of "Bai Lan" itself has the color of unconscious cathartic expression. Under the influence of the trend of "aesthetic of ugliness" advocated by it, young people perform "Bai Lan" in a dramatic form, using cultural symbols familiar to the audience to convey negative emotions such as dissatisfaction with social norms and attract more young people who are dissatisfied with the status quo to gain their emotional resonance and recognition, so that "Bai Lan" quickly evolved into a "cultural meme", which creates necessary conditions for its widespread imitation and dissemination (Zhou, 2017).

5.3 The Interactive Communication of "Bai Lan" Culture

The spread of "Bai Lan" culture mainly relies on the Internet platform, which is a process of interaction between individuals, groups and media. On social media, young people produce copywriting, memes and short videos that are in line with their own purport, making them a new "common language" worthy of being shared on the basis of the core value of "Bai Lan". As one of the most frequently used forms of media by young people, network media has the characteristics of strong interaction, decentralization and individuation, which will prolong the process and enlarge the degree of empathy. In addition, cyberspace is divorced from the real-life environment, and young people can participate in the proposal, discussion and dissemination of topics on social platforms as "another me" who is different from the real identity, which enables young people to break away from the constraints of social identity in reality, and can output opinions or emotions that they are afraid to express in the real life. On the social media where "everyone is a sharer", young people publish and share the content of "Bai Lan" and absorb other people's interpretation of it on the social platform, forming resonance and strengthening of "Bai Lan" emotion. This "echo chamber" effect caused by the interaction between individuals and groups will make "Bai Lan" a current and become more intense.

In addition, the "spiral of silence" of young individuals towards the group also inversely boosted the rise of the "Bai Lan" cultural trend. The "spiral of silence" believes that when individuals express their opinions, they will be influenced by the majority environment and opinions, so they tend to stay in line with the majority opinions, while the non-mainstream opinions will gradually be silenced. The mentality of "Bai Lan" itself has the rebellious core of anti-mainstream values, so it fits with the majority of young people's dissatisfaction with the reality they live in.

However, as more and more young people openly express their "Bai Lan" mentality on social media, this view has gradually become the mainstream view of young people. Those who wish to express content with a positive and enterprising attitude, which contradicts the core of "Bai Lan," might remain silent to avoid being seen as outliers or being accused of "preaching." These minority opinions, due to insufficient expression and dissemination, become marginalized, reducing the barriers to the spread of "Bai Lan" culture and solidifying its dominant position. Furthermore, Bilibili, Zhihu and other Chinese online platforms gathered by young people also generate terms or hot searches related to the content of "Bai Lan", push media content strongly related to "Bai Lan" to the young people through the platform algorithm, and encourage more youngsters to participate in the interaction on the theme of "Bai Lan" to increase the topic heat, thus further strengthening the development trend of "Bai Lan" culture.

6. THE MOTIVE OBSERVATION AND LATENT CONSEQUENCES OF "BAI LAN"

Under the discourse of mainstream media, "Bai Lan" has been shaped as a kind of bad behavior that gives up resistance and aims to evade responsibility. The ideological content conveyed by netizens' comments and videos on social media also seems to prove that the motivation behind "Bai Lan" is a "let it rot" mentality. However, field observations reveal a different picture: despite the online clamor for "Bai Lan," the competitive pressure among young people in reality remains intense. Library attendance has not decreased with the rise of the "Bai Lan" trend, and paradoxically, the same individuals who enthusiastically post "Bai Lan" content online can be seen studying diligently offline. This contradiction prompts a deeper investigation: what motivations drive young people to engage in the practice of "Bai Lan" culture? And what impact does "Bai Lan" have on the youth?

6.1 Observation on "Bai Lan": Strategic Behavior Driven by Complex Motives

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory points out that self-realization is the highest level of human psychological needs, and individuals have an internal motivation to drive themselves to pursue achievement and meaning, rather than giving up self-worth. While "Bai Lan" culture appears to exhibit a strong negative tendency of self-abandonment, it actually emphasizes the process over the meaning of the behavior. In practice, "Bai Lan" diverges from the original goal of self-abandonment due to its focus on the process, making it a complex behavior stimulated by multi-dimensional strategic motivations. The phenomenon of "Bai Lan" in the Internet and in reality can be explained by the following three motivations:

First, "Bai Lan" can be understood as an irrational means for young people to get rid of pressure and adjust their negative emotions. Unlike real-life environments, social media platforms provide anonymity, allowing individuals to temporarily detach from their actual lives and express their views as one of the netizens. Many young people regard the network media as a "tree hole", venting their bad emotions under high pressure without worrying about being concerned or criticized by relatives and friends. I feel that when people publish "Bai Lan" content, they want to vent some negative emotions towards reality and win the sympathy of people around them, and of course, they may just make a joke to laugh at themselves.

However, in real life, young people escape from work temporarily by shelving the task at hand, and accumulate enough energy to continue to complete the established goals by relaxing their body and mind. In some cases, this motivation will also overlap with the motivation of "procrastination". When students set goals beyond their ability due to perfectionism, they will choose to postpone the completion of the task due to low self-efficacy and lack of self-confidence, so as to temporarily escape pressure and relieve anxiety. This behavior, based on the idea of "escape is shameful but useful", is a strategic means for young people to heal themselves. (Ying et al., 2018)

Second, "Bai Lan" may also be a self-protective response to heavy pressure. Its triggering mechanism is that external pressure gives rise to internal pressure, which makes individuals choose "Bai Lan" out of self-protection motivation. Young people are in the initial stage of independent development. In the society, the youth, as emerging forces, are regarded by the society as having great potential, and bear the public expectations in terms of economic contribution and social responsibility. In the family, their relatives place anticipations on them in terms of academic achievement, career prospects and personal qualities. However, the external environment of the real society brings pressure and challenges beyond their endurance. In the domestic environment of economic slowdown and economic restructuring, young people face the adverse conditions of academic and employment competition, and are always in a state of accelerated alienation of "self-exploitation". When young people find that they have made great efforts and are still far from external expectations, they will establish a defense mechanism of

self-degradation due to the learned helplessness. By derogating their self-esteem, they will reduce the negative emotions caused by the lower self-evaluation of society and others, so as to achieve the purpose of self-protection. And this kind of motive, as a mild protest of young people, reveals the rebellious core of "Bai Lan" and reflects young people's dissatisfaction with the constraints of traditional values. I don't think anyone would start "Bai Lan" for no reason. Nowadays, many people have depressive tendencies, mostly due to academic, life, or parental pressures compared to their peers.

Finally, "Bai Lan" behavior may also be a rational way for individuals to maximize their own interests. They make deliberate choices about when, where, and to whom they "Bai Lan." Driven by this motivation, young people may choose to "Bai Lan" at the beginning of the term and then cram at the end, or they might invest less effort on an optional course that they consider "unimportant" while spending more time and energy on a compulsory subject.

It is worth noting that this kind of motivation will have the color of "egoism" when it comes to the interaction between individuals and collectives, and between individuals and others. Field experience has found that in the relationship between individuals and collectives, young people will give full play to their subjective initiative, carefully weigh the possible consequences of "Bai Lan", and evaluate and analyze the potential gains and losses. Sometimes in group work, I choose to "Bai Lan", because I think if more than half of the people do not take it seriously and I do, I will be at a great loss. In this type of "Bai Lan", young people can adjust their contribution to the group by comparing with the workload of others in the group, so as to protect their individual interests. In the relationship between individuals and others, under the domination of "egoistic" intentions, young people's behaviors show certain fragmentation and abnormality. (Wang & Chen, 2022) The young will set up a "Bai Lan" character setting, adjust and enrich it from time to time, so as to establish a "harmless" image in their social circle, especially in the mind of their potential competitors on the same track, so as to achieve the utilitarian purpose of paralyzing others and overtaking them in corners. In life, I have seen some people make others believe by repeating themselves to implement "Bai Lan" or have a tendency of "Bai Lan", so that their efforts are easier to achieve results. It is nothing more than a tool of their language.

6.2 Concerns About the Consequences of "Bai Lan": Negative Language Suggestion and Media Reality Misleading

6.2.1 Framework Suggestion and Its Impact

Framing theory is an important point of view in qualitative research. Goffman, the main contributor to the formation of its definition, believes that frame refers to the cognitive structure that people use to understand and interpret the external objective world. People's induction, structure and interpretation of real-life experience rely on a certain frame, which enables people to locate, perceive, understand and summarize numerous specific pieces of information. (Goffman, 1974). In the application of frame analysis, individuals make decisions about what to emphasize and what to ignore by understanding and classifying information. In terms of words, the culture of "Bai Lan" appears in the form of text with negative elements of "powerlessness", such as "ultimately it is still useless" and "all of the efforts are meaningless", and is gradually recognized and accepted by young people. The cognitive frame constructed by these elements will inevitably strengthen the negative elements of the young's thinking mode, making them more inclined to see the helpless side of things while overlooking the more positive possibilities when facing and completing tasks. Once the language frame dominated by "Bai Lan" is internalized by young people, young people will have doubts about their ability and future development, resulting in cognitive biases, and unconsciously choose to back off before completing unfinished tasks or give up halfway through. When young people begin to declare "Bai Lan" to the public, they may just be carrying out unconscious emotional vent, which is a kind of social performance. However, under the potential influence of the thinking frame, this unconscious "performance" of young people is likely to be transformed into conscious and practical actions, which will adversely affect their academic and professional development. In my opinion, "Bai Lan" is more like a kind of psychological hypnosis, which constantly prompts you to have this idea before you do something, and it is likely that you will actually implement "Bai Lan" in the end.

6.2.2 Media Influence and the Misdirection of Reality

Network media, as the main carrier of modern youth culture, not only affects the emergence and development of the subculture phenomenon of "Bai Lan", but also profoundly restricts the breadth and depth of young people's understanding of the social status quo. The theory of pseudo-environment proposed by Lippmann is an ideal perspective to analyze this cognitive process. According to this theory, people construct a "pseudo-environment"

to understand reality through media and other sources of information. This environment is a simplified model of the real surroundings, and all human behavior is made actually in response to the pseudo-environment. In modern society, the "public" pseudo-environment constructed by network media affects Internet users' information acquisition and social cognition all the time (Peng, 2022).

However, as the main source for the contemporary public to absorb social information, network media has many limitations in information dissemination. First, it is difficult for network media to ensure the authenticity of their own information transmission. On the online public platform, the scale of communication subjects is unprecedented and extremely diversified, and the responsibility of communication has also been significantly undermined. In order to make the news reports stand out, some network media choose to exaggerate the real information or ignore some necessary qualification elements, so as to make their news more topical; some media will spread extreme and radical views and use inflammatory language to attract users' attention. Secondly, the algorithm recommendation system will amplify the bias of network media. The personalized recommendation mechanism of social media platforms will "filter" the content that users are exposed to, and only see the information they like and are accustomed to, forming a "filter bubble". (Liu, 2020)

These characteristics of network media will induce young people's overall cognition of society be flat and biased. While browsing information related to their interests, young people are exposed to a large amount of selectively amplified negative content, such as the difficulty of youth employment and low salaries for college graduates, while they rarely encounter positive information that genuinely benefits their personal development, government policy support and corporate job demands for instance. Under the influence of continuous and targeted push of online media, young people are easily trapped in the information cocoon, forming a negative understanding of social reality. In addition, due to being flooded with messages highly related to "Bai Lan", they will believe that the illusion of "collective" of young people on the Internet is true, and tend to be convinced that "Bai Lan" is a common view of young people, while the negative stereotypes about society further logically support the subjective speculation of universal "Bai Lan," forming a self-reinforcing cycle. I feel the quality of the media varies greatly, and the process and conclusion of reporting the same social event differ. Ordinary "we-media" are also easy to fabricate rumors and deliberately exaggerate such "Bai Lan" emotions to cause students' anxiety.

The "media reality" constructed by Internet media will have a huge negative effect on young people in both cognition and action. Cognitively, this phenomenon leads young people to form a static, stereotyped overall impression of society. The highly negative perception of society and the recognition of universal "Bai Lan" current among the youth greatly accumulate negative emotions, labeling young people with a "Bai Lan" tag and causing a misalignment of their subjectivity. Behaviorally, surrounded by the partial reality woven by countless negative information, young people are prone to be engulfed by cynical emotions, forming irrational blind compliance with individual "Bai Lan," thus losing the best opportunities to understand the real society and develop themselves.

7. CONCLUSION

"Bai Lan" is the latest variant of "Sang" culture in the subculture of youth network, and its connotation reflects the up-to-date orientation of youth value. This study focuses on the phenomenon of youth "Bai Lan" culture, exploring its intrinsic characteristics, formation process, and youth motivations through network text analysis and semi-structured interviews. And the conclusions are as follows: First of all, the characteristic analysis of "Bai Lan" reveals that "Bai Lan" is youth's group discourse innovation stimulated by external social environment, and it is also the cultural product of youth's deconstruction against authoritative discourse, with strong behavioral orientation. Secondly, in terms of its operation mechanism, "Bai Lan" takes social interaction as its primary form and relies on network media as its main platform for content generation, expression and dissemination. Thirdly, in the records of the online and offline differentiated practices of the youth, the author observed three main motivations for the youth to implement the practice: emotional relief, self-protection and self-benefit maximization. These motivations demonstrate the characteristics of both rationality and irrationality in the process of youth's subjective "Bai Lan", and also indicate that "Bai Lan" has a diversified strategic tendency, rather than a negative avoidance of the world in a complete sense. Finally, based on the above cultural analysis of "Bai Lan", the research believes that due to its inherent characteristics of behavior orientation and reliance of network media, under the subliminal influence of frame of "Bai Lan" language and the misleading media environment, young people's "Bai Lan" cultural practice has potential uncontrollability, which may objectively bring adverse consequences beyond the expectations of young people's motivation. Therefore, the study suggests that the attention to youth "Bai Lan" culture should not stay on the criticism and moral condemnation of its negative content expression, but more importantly, focus on the causes of youth "Bai Lan" behavior tendency, and start to

optimize the generation and distribution of social resources and standardize the communication of network media content to make behavioral adjustment, so as to enhance the sense of social acquisition and self-worth of contemporary youth in order to help young people establish a sense of subjectivity and actively participate in social practice and personal development.

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