

# The Influence of Fan Economy on the Consumption Behavior of Senior High School Students

Xinyan Li

BASIS International School Guangzhou, Guangdong, China  
Bp20050205@gmail.com

**Abstract.** Following the universal prevalence of mobile Internet, the learning life of minors has also become inseparable from the Internet. As a main component of the Internet economy, the fan economy has also subconsciously influenced the consumption behavior of minors, especially the senior high school students who fall in the adolescent stage. On the basis of the fundamental information, study situation, knowledge of fan economy, consumption situation and consumption concept of senior high school students by means of a questionnaire survey, this paper carries out a comparative analysis on the consumption behaviors of senior high school students in international schools and ordinary senior high school students to probe the influence of fan economy on the consumption behaviors of senior high school students.

**Keywords:** Fan Economy; Consumption Behavior; Senior High School Student.

## 1. Introduction

Following the prevalence of the mobile terminals and the Internet, the Internet has been embedded in the daily lives of an increasing number of teenagers, to the extent that star-chasing has emerged as part of their cyber lives. In accordance with the 2020 National Research Report on Internet Use of Minors released by the Teenagers Rights and Interests Protection Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League and the China Internet Network Information Center, the proportion of Chinese minor Internet users participating in fan-chasing reached 8% in 2020. The fandom girl has served as a label for numerous post-00s, of which post-00s refers to those born after 2000, with an age bracket of 13 to 22 years old, most of whom are teenagers. They have grown up in the Internet era in China, where they have been immensely influenced by the Internet, instant messaging and social media.

Since senior high school students have entered the transitional stage of youth and maturity, they have been heavily influenced by the sophisticated online information and various entertaining media reports. The fan phenomenon has also emerged as an influential subculture among senior high school students, which has exerted a certain degree of influence on their academic life. In the meantime, the penetration of the Internet economy has increasingly turned senior high school students into a substantial force in the fan economy, whose consumption habits may also be influenced in a corresponding manner. On the one hand, chasing after idols serves as a momentum for themselves, while on the other hand, the irrational chasing and uncontrolled consumption of some fans have also rendered senior high school students to be radical and fanatical, which is detrimental to their future development.

Following the advancement of education marketization and the improvement of family economic level, the influence of international curriculum has been continuously expanding in the field of fundamental education in China, with the introduction of AP, ALEVEL, IB and VCE courses into the classrooms of international senior high schools. In contrast to traditional compulsory education in China, international education allows students to be exposed to economics, business, and finance courses at an earlier age, while the critical thinking and organizational strategies of students are also strongly highlighted. In this context, the research on the consumption behavior and tendency of international senior high school students and ordinary senior high school students in the fan economy, as well as the analysis of the corresponding influences, is not only conducive to guiding senior high school students to chase stars in a rational manner and consume in a rational manner, but also partially probe the cultivation methods of senior high school students.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The influence of Idolatry**

The motivation for chasing stars is predominantly derived from idolatry, which refers to a kind of attention and emotional projection by an individual or a group to a subjectively identified figure or image with inspiring effects, including internal identification and emotional attachment, as well as external behavioral tendencies[1,2]. Idolatry is capable of being categorized into three types, namely entertainment social, intense personal and borderline pathological. Among them, entertainment social merely concentrates on the entertainment attributes of idols, where star-chasing simply serves as a social means of life and a form of entertainment, which represents a positive influence. In contrast, intense personal and borderline pathological bear a sense of compulsion and tendency to pathological behavior, which falls under the negative influence[3]. In the meantime, idolatry also involves identification and imitation, in which people entrust their idols with something they are deprived of but always desire in life, which represents an identification with ideal attributes, while falling under positive influence[4]. Researches on idolatry in China have been more concentrated on the middle school student population, since the middle school student stage is the dynamic period of individual idol behavior. Furthermore, the majority of studies have concluded that idolatry plays a relatively significant positive role in facilitating the growth of middle school students [5,6].

### **2.2 Fan Economy and Mobile Internet**

Along with the evolution of mobile Internet and social platforms, fan economy has progressively emerged as the primary approach to Internet economy. The fan economy extensively refers to the business income-generating behavior structured on the relationship between fans and persons concerned, while the persons concerned are traditionally celebrities, idols, and industry luminaries[7]. The promotion of mobile Internet for fan economy primarily derives from the information that can be democratized, where social media platforms are employed to construct a fan base in a cost-effective manner. Prior to the advent of smartphones and social applications, it was exceedingly challenging and costly to make all sorts of information reach everyone. Nevertheless, people are in a position to view information on their cell phones with ease when the Internet emerges. The Internet has brought the flat platform economy to the limelight, which converts the transfer of information from individual to individual into a connection between resources and individuals. The other is the platform economy on the basis of social networks, in which social media is intimately connected to a series of platforms that control distribution (Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and so forth), which are commonly employed by people as a channel for content distribution. When people intend to watch videos to unwind during their leisure time, advertising serves as the greatest helper in spreading the information. The emergence of this burgeoning format has furnished another platform for fan consumption.

### **2.3 Social Psychology of Senior High School Students: Social Community and Fan Economy**

Star-chasing has turned into a form of social interaction among senior high school students. The fandom refers to a social interest, while the previous star-chasing was something a single person was attracted to. In contrast, the current fandom involves the revelry of a group of people. In particular, the post-90s and post-00s, who are the aborigines of the Internet, enjoy a broad range of interests with a higher demand for personalization. Nevertheless, they also sense isolation simultaneously, the so-called indoorsman and indoorswoman generation is more longing to communicate with others as well as receive great concerns. In addition to social needs, membership in the fandom also represents the desire for collective life in the age of individualism. Fans generate popularity for idols with robust sense of organization and discipline. Under this system, fans are never merely followers of idols, whose consumption for idols is never a passive effort. Within this all-round interactive star-chasing system, the fandom has evolved into an influential force in the

cultural market[8]. During daily life, you are quite unlikely to be capable of blending in the communication with others if you do not chase stars at all. Meanwhile, chasing stars also allows you to acquaint yourself with people outside your circle of life. As far as teenagers are concerned, they are stuck in their studies all year round, while chasing stars serves as a pathway for them to escape from their studies as well as explore social space.

### 3. Survey Planning and Implementation Instructions

#### 3.1 Objectives and Contents of the Survey

Through investigating the awareness of senior high school students about the fan economy and their current status of consumption behavior towards various products, as well as comparing the various consumption patterns between ordinary senior high school students and international senior high school students, this study is designed to probe the influence of the fan economy on the consumption behavior of senior high school students. In conjunction with the actual situation, this study compiled a questionnaire after interviewing certain senior high school students, while referring to the relevant practices of the available studies.

#### 3.2 Survey Questionnaire Design

The research questionnaire was developed on the basis of the available research, while incorporating interviews with the surrounding students and personal experiences with several revisions. For the sake of upgrading the quality of the questionnaire, a small-scale survey on this questionnaire was conducted to optimize the numerical settings of the options and the structure of the questions. Meanwhile, the final questionnaire was identified into five sections, including basic information, economic sources and daily expenses, knowledge of fan economy, consumption behavior of idol products, as well as consumption concepts.

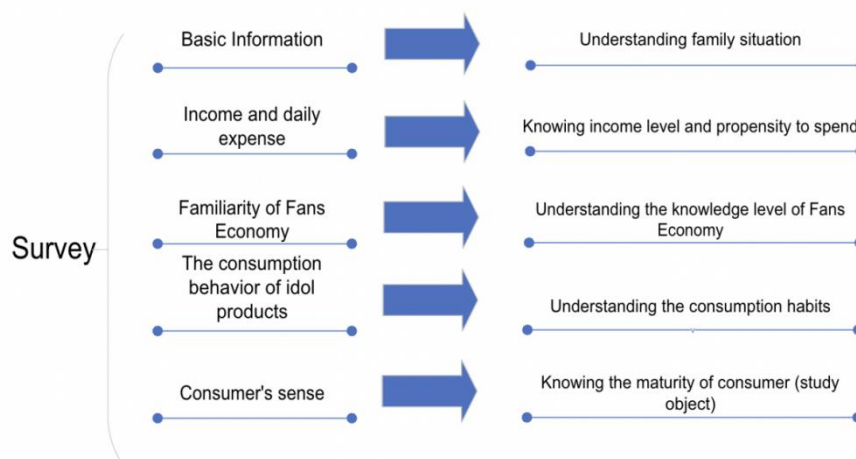


Fig.1. Questionnaire Design Process

#### 3.3 Survey Methods

In view of the actual situation and the regional epidemic prevention requirements, this questionnaire adopted a combined survey method of electronic questionnaire and in-school distribution questionnaire. In this paper, the questionnaire was designed online by means of the WJX platform, and the questionnaire was distributed to those who matched the sampling requirements by means of the social platforms WeChat, QQ, Weibo and so forth, while the results were collected on the platforms. Apart from the online survey, the offline survey of this paper was primarily conducted by randomly inviting students on campus to fill in the questionnaire during class breaks and lunch breaks.

### 3.4 Survey Object and Scope

This paper primarily took the senior high schools in Guangzhou of Guangdong Province as the examples, which covered some ordinary senior high schools, international departments of general senior high schools, and international senior high schools. Since most of the social platforms are reliant on relationship networks for questionnaire dissemination, which cannot adequately satisfy the randomness, the questionnaires were also adopted to be distributed in the relevant super topics of Guangzhou senior high schools, with a view to enhancing the randomness of survey respondents and upgrading the accuracy of the findings.

## 4. Questionnaire Analysis

In this case, the questionnaire was distributed on the Internet, with the respondents limited to senior high school students. Given the limited number of respondents, the number of female students was outweighed by the number of male students, the specific numbers of male and female are shown in Figure 2.

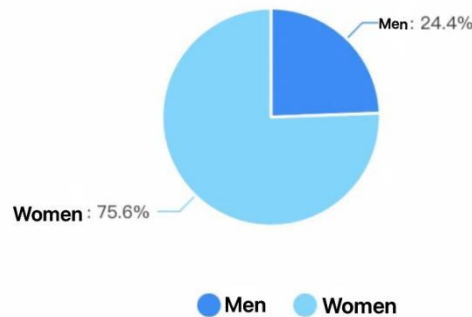


Fig.2. Percentage of Male and Female Interviewed

As can be gleaned from Figure 2, the largest proportion of respondents lay in the female category, accounting for 75.6% of the respondents. In addition to the gender bias in the interview with the author, the results are also bolstered by the fact that there are more female users in social media, who are also more socially engaged. Females in this age group are just entering or studying in senior high school, where they have just been granted substance permission to chase stars. In the same time, the type of school of the respondents was also investigated, with more respondents from international senior high schools than from domestic senior high schools. Nevertheless, the difference is not sufficiently dramatic, which enables a priority study of international senior high schools, as well as a comparison with domestic senior high schools, the results of which are shown in Figure 3.

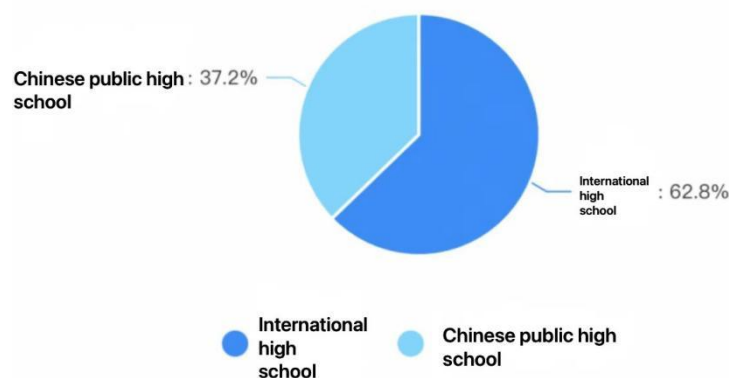


Fig.3. Type of Senior High School Attended by Respondents

Figure 4 illustrates the sources of living expenses. Since most of the respondents have just entered senior high school or are currently enrolled in senior high school, they do not receive an excessive amount of pocket money, which also includes family provision, New Year’s bonus, part-time jobs, online stores and so forth (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Nevertheless, in the case of senior high school students, since they are not exposed to excessive spending on food, housing and transportation, most of their monthly pocket money is available for personal consumption. In a preliminary perspective, the respondents of this questionnaire are relatively appropriate for the analysis of the research topic of this paper.

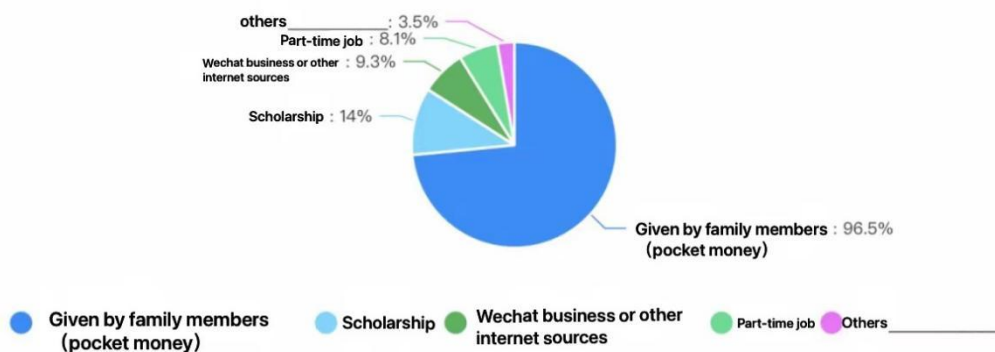


Fig.4. Source of Living Expenses

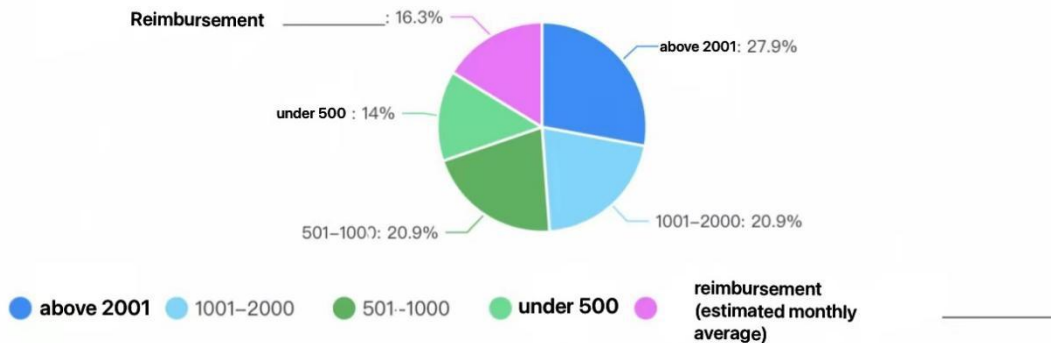


Fig.5. Average Monthly Living Expenses

Moreover, we also determined whether star-chasing would influence the quality of students’ lives as well as their grades in school by examining the academic stress of senior high school students, the specific academic stress of which is shown in Figure 6.

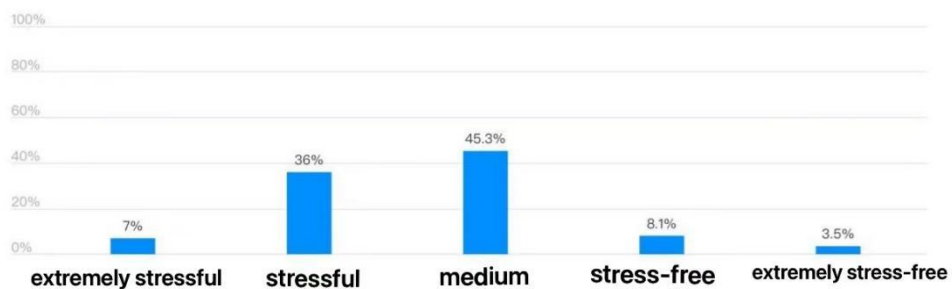


Fig.6. Self-rated Academic Burden

As can be gleaned from Figure 6, the academic stress of most senior high school students hovers out of being in the middle of somewhat weighty and alternating work with rest, which demonstrates

that there is still extra free time left for star-chasing outside of study. In the modern society, there have been numerous parents who consider star-chasing as a self-destructive behavior, which will lead to poor grades, bad personality, gradual rebellion and so forth. In contrast, a large proportion of students regard their idols as a spiritual support for themselves, taking them as role models to strive for betterment, while studying diligently to achieve the same excellence as their idols, which in turn will facilitate their studies.

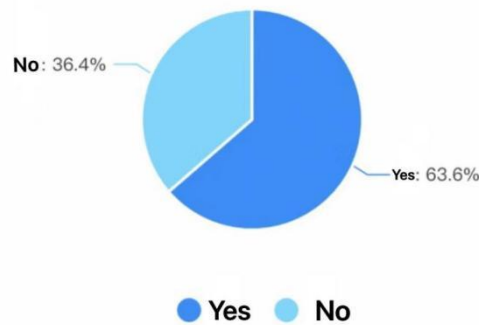


Fig.7. Whether Parents Support the Spending of Their Children on Fan Economy

As can be gleaned from Figure 7, the majority of parents are optimistic about their children’s star-chasing. On the other hand, the number of international students is relatively high in this questionnaire, whereas the majority of parents support their children’s star-chasing, which is demonstrated in Figure 2. In this regard, it is evident that parents of international students grant their children more self-choice, less interference, as well as more substantial freedom in their lives.

Table 1. Living Expense Statistics for International and Domestic Senior High Schools

	Under ¥ 500 (people)	¥ 501-1000 (people)	¥ 1001-2000 (people)	above ¥ 2001 (people)	Total (people)
International Senior High School	5	8	12	19	44
Chinese Senior High School	7	10	6	5	28

It is evident from Table 1 that 43% of international senior high school students receive a living expense of RMB 2,001 or more as compared to 18% of domestic senior high school students by percentage. The average living expenses of domestic senior high school students range from RMB 501 to RMB 1,000, while international students range from RMB 1,001 to RMB 2,000. As a result, it can be noted that international senior high school students possess more disposable pocket money to spend on chasing stars, which in turn illustrates that they represent a substantial part of the fan economy.

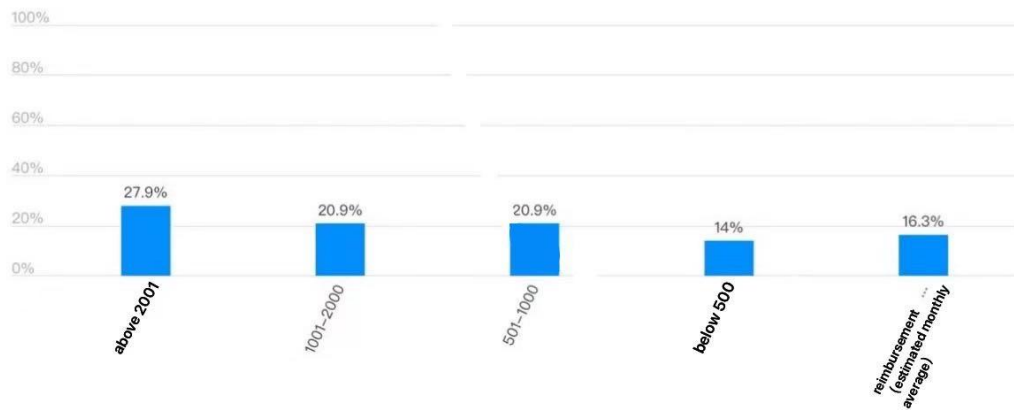


Fig. 8. Average Monthly Living Expenses

It can be revealed from Figure 8 that 27.9% of the senior high school students interviewed in this survey are capable of receiving more than RMB 2,000 monthly in disposable living expenses, while 20.9% are capable of receiving living expenses ranging from RMB 1,000 to RMB 2,000. The number of students with living expenses ranging from RMB 500 to RMB 1,000 is the identical to the former, in which 14% of students receive living expenses of less than RMB 500, while the remaining 16.3% get living expenses in a reimbursement system. Through the responses of 86 senior high school students of this questionnaire, we are in a position to conclude that the majority of senior high school students possessing a living expense of RMB 2,000 or more. This demonstrates that students are allowed to spend this expense to support more of the fan economy, thereby leading to the growth of the popularity of the fan economy.

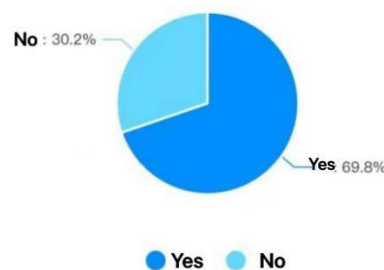


Fig. 9. Whether Having an idol

As illustrated by Figure 9, the number of senior high school students who have idols accounts for 69.8%, while the number of senior high school students who do not have idols accounts for only 30.2%. This demonstrates that the young people in present-day society tend to place the perfect image in their mind on their idols, thereby performing as a kind of spiritual attachment. Meanwhile, this also embodies the growth of the fan economy in the alternative. In contrast, the perception of the fan economy does not increase with the growth of the fan economy, the results of which are depicted in Figure 10.

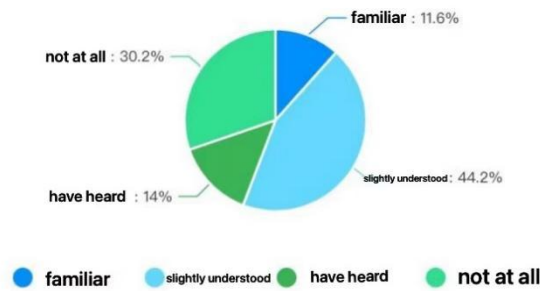


Fig. 10. Awareness of fan economy

It can be concluded from Figure 10 that only 11.6% of senior high school students are perfectly knowledgeable about the fan economy. In contrast, 30.2% of senior high school students are completely ignorant of the fan economy, which ranks third among the four options. The number of those who are slightly acquainted with the term stands at 44.2%, while 14% have merely received the name. In this regard, it indicates that most young people are only capable of inferring the meaning of the entire phrase in accordance with a single word, while a minority of them are actually knowledgeable about the genuine meaning of fan economy. This phenomenon is an indication that current senior high school students are not thoroughly introduced to the fan economy, which remains an under-appreciated part of education.

Moreover, the majority of senior high school students differ in their perspectives on fan economy after collecting their views, which are presented in Figure 11.

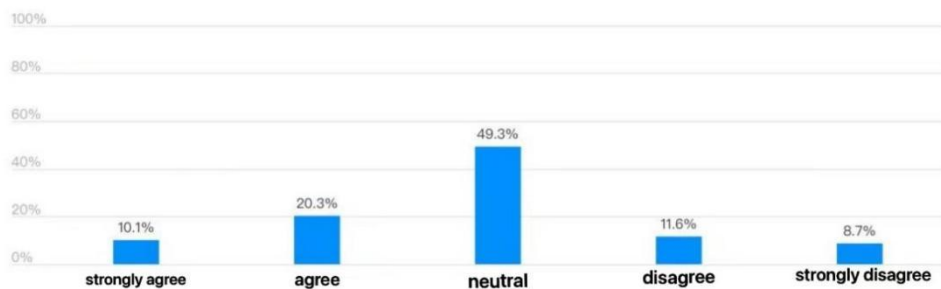


Fig.11. Perspectives on Fan Economy

In accordance with Figure 11, the current perception of the fan economy is employed by senior high school students to evaluate it. Those who strongly approve of the fan economy account for 10.1%, 20.3% approve of it moderately, 11.6% do not approve of it so much, 8.7% do not approve of it at all, whereas 49.3% of them prefer to remain neutral. It can be concluded from the results that the majority of senior high school students hold a moderate attitude toward star-chasing and the amount of money spent in it. Meanwhile, the two extreme groups of senior high school students hold about the identical percentages, which also indicates that each of them takes a different view on the fan economy.

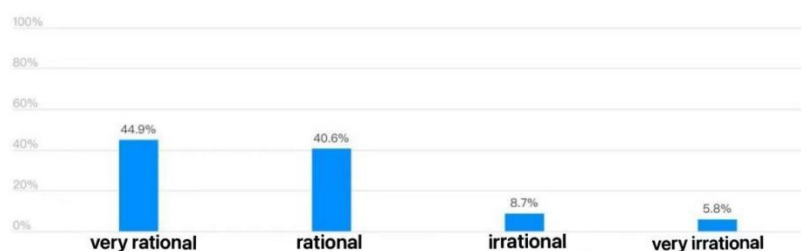




Fig.12. Whether to Purchase Idol Products in a Rational or Selective Manner

In accordance with Figure 12, 44.9% of senior high school students consider themselves to be rational in making choices when purchasing idol products, 40.6% consider themselves to make rational choices in general, 8.7% consider themselves to be less rational in general, whereas 5.8% of senior high school students consider themselves to be highly irrational in making choices when purchasing idol products. At this age of senior high school students, most of them have already developed maturity, which makes the majority of them perceive that they will make rational choices. In contrast, the number of people who are generally irrational will be in the minority, which is not merely restricted to senior high school students, but rather applicable to all adults. As a result of this data, it can be assumed that the influence of the fan economy on the consumption of senior high school students is negligible.

Table 2. Collection of International and Domestic Senior High School Students for Preferred Liberal Arts and Science Subjects

	Math and Statistics (people)	Chinese and English (people)	Total (people)
International Senior High School	26	30	56
Chinese Senior High School	9	21	30

As evidenced in Table 2, 46% of international senior high school students prefer mathematics and statistics, while 30% of domestic senior high school students have a preference for mathematics and statistics. International senior high school students who prefer liberal arts account for 54%, while domestic senior high school students account for 70%. Since this data is available exclusively for the population surveyed, we are only in a position to determine that both international and domestic senior high school students prefer perceptual thinking within the 86 senior high school students, which is attributable to their preference for the liberal arts. Liberal arts places more value on the interpretation and self-judgment of a given matter by the student, which does not involve a significant amount of logic and reasoning. As a result, it is also apparent that most of the students surveyed are more likely to consume on the basis of their own internal motivation, rather than devoting a lot of time to take into account practicality.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Given the influence of the increasingly emergent fan economy, the consumption of senior high school students has also been evolving with the variations. The following conclusions were drawn from the above research.

First, since contemporary senior high school students suffer from a high level of stress, they are in need of identifying an outlet to voice their emotions, whereas star-chasing serves as a well-defined channel. During the period of star-chasing, they are compelled to devote a considerable amount of time and money to approach their idols, thereby accomplishing an inner yearning.

Second, the term social integration also carries great significance for senior high school students in modern society. They are expected to master the art of making friends, stabilize their friendship circle, as well as enlarge and filter their circle of friends, which is of utmost difficulty. The easiest way to integrate into society lies in chasing stars. Since the average pocket money of current students is higher than the previous average, they will spend money to bring themselves more in tune with the times.

Third, contemporary parents have turned relatively tolerant when it comes to their children chasing stars as a result of changing times. To put it differently, they will grant their children some pocket money to pursue whatever they please. As a result, these children will also make use of this money to get involved in the fan economy.

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