

Factors Influencing Emotion Sharing Intention Among Couple-fans of Movie and TV Drama on Social Media : The Case of China

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Abstract

Purpose - The Chinese fan community includes a significant number of young and middle-aged individuals, playing a crucial role in emotional mobilization and social engagement. In recent years, the impact of Celebrity Pairing or Character Pairing (CP) on Weibo has grown notably, partly due to features like Super Topics and Hot Searches. This phenomenon has enhanced fan engagement, resulting in heightened participation in discussions and interactions on the platform. Our study targets CP fans of movies and television dramas on Weibo and aims to identify the factors that drive their emotional sharing.

Design/methodology/approach - The research methodology integrates Self-Determination Theory and Social Sharing of Emotion Theory within the EASI (Emotion, Attachment, and Social Integration) model. This approach aims to uncover how CP fans meet their emotional needs via social media and determine the factors influencing their sharing intentions and behaviours. Data were collected through online surveys, yielding 504 valid responses

Findings - The analysis, performed with SPSS and Smart PLS software, reveals that self-determination, interpersonal relationships, and social media tolerance significantly affect fans' intentions to share content. Specifically, intrinsic motivation, driven by self-determination, is a critical factor in CP fans' propensity to share content, highlighting the importance of 'inward socialization.' Additionally, the study finds that external factors, like the social media environment, play a more minor role than internal motivators.

Research implications or Originality - This research enhances quantitative research methodologies by identifying intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that satisfy the emotional needs of CP fans. It distinguishes between individual, interpersonal, and collective/social factors as motivational elements, providing insights into the emotional and psychological needs of the Chinese movie and TV drama fan community.

Keywords: CP Fans, Sharing Intention, Self-Determination, Social Sharing of Emotion, Social Media Tolerance.

JEL Classifications: C31, D21, D83, I23, L86, O32

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I. Introduction

As of August 2023, the top 10 celebrities on Weibo have a combined total of over one billion followers. Around 48.5% of these followers fall under the Gen-Z demographic, refer to those born after 1995. This particular segment, mostly made up of young and middle-aged individuals, significantly influences emotional mobilization and social interaction. The Chinese government acknowledges the importance of this group and highlights the necessity for efficient guidance, management, and supervision. In China, fan culture has become integral to mainstream cultural life, transforming almost any subject into a fan circle and any notion into a Celebrity Pairing or Character Pairing (CP) (Chang, J. & Zhu, S.L., 2021; Liu Y., 2023).

Originating from Japan's ACGN homoerotic culture, CPs refer to character pairings with romantic nuances. Over time, this concept has broadened, empowering fans to create character pairs in diverse contexts that extend beyond typical romantic narratives. These pairings challenge traditional boundaries, such as age, gender, status, and roles, showcasing the expansive imagination and creativity inherent in ACGN culture. (Wu, D. 2020).

The 2022 Weibo Entertainment White Paper highlights a growing trend where celebrities, films, and television dramas are increasingly linked to CPs. It is especially noteworthy that more than half of Weibo's top 20 CPs are derived from TV dramas in China, Thailand, and other countries. This trend indicates that fans are deeply involved in CP-related discussions, significantly enhancing the visibility and popularity of related media on platforms like Weibo. However, despite the extensive influence of CP culture and its notable impact on the media landscape, there remains an evident lack of academic research focused on CP fans and their communities.

Previous research has extensively explored various facets of fan communities, such as identity (Feng, Q. N., 2023; Song, X. N., 2022), participation behaviors (Yu, J. M. & Lang, J. S., 2021), and cultural dynamics (Yan, Y. M., 2020; Wu, D., 2020). In the realm of fan emotions, studies predominantly focused on the emotional engagement and labor of female fans from a gender perspective. However, these studies often portray CP fans as a homogeneous group, overlooking the diversity in information needs, emotional responses, and values among various fan subsets. This gap extends to a limited focus on visible behaviors and immediate needs, neglecting the deeper motivational forces, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that propel these actions. Recognizing that individual psychological needs are molded by personal abilities and the broader socio-cultural milieu is crucial (Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L., 2000). To address these gaps, this study seeks to comprehensively investigate the factors influencing CP fans' inclination to share movie and TV drama-related content on social media, employing quantitative methodologies. Drawing from Social Emotional Sharing Theories and Self-Determination Theories, this research examines the impacts of intrinsic motivation, interpersonal relationships, and social media influences on sharing behaviors. The paper concludes by discussing its theoretical implications, recognizing its limitations, and outlining potential avenues for future research in fan studies.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of CP Fans and Coupling

CPs are classified into three main categories. 'Official CP' signifies character pairings created by the original author, clearly defined in the source material, establishing an undisputed bond among fans (Yu et al., 2023). 'Unofficial CP' refers to pairings that fans derive from implicit hints within the narrative, lacking definitive narrative support. These are based on fans' interpretations of potential relationships between characters. 'Collage CP' represents a creative venture where fans combine characters from various narratives into new pairings, reflecting their unique interests and emotions. Examples include merging characters like Voldemort from the Harry Potter series with Lin Daiyu from A Dream of Red Mansions, showcasing fan culture's creative spirit (Xu et al., 2023).

The CP culture revolution challenges traditional romantic narratives, offering fresh perspectives and interpretations (Jenkins, Henry, 2016; Fisk et al., 2006). This shift is evidenced within fan communities by adopting unique acronyms, terminology, and nicknames that capture the essence of different CPs. Fans use pronouns and language creatively, adding depth to character descriptions and scenarios. They engage deeply with the source material, showcasing their interpretations through various media, including texts, gifs, and videos. Furthermore, fans find common ground in online communities, connecting over shared interests without physical interaction. Online platforms like Weibo Super Topics, Douban, WeChat, and QQ groups are vital for CP fans, facilitating playlist creation, data analysis, comment moderation, and content sharing. These activities underscore their dedication to the fan community. The anonymity provided by these platforms encourages open interaction, creating a safe environment for sharing and bonding. Within these emotionally rich communities, fans are motivated by the joy of sharing and connecting, often valuing emotional resonance over factual precision. As Hu (2017) notes, fans prioritize the narrative's authenticity over its factual correctness, favouring stories that align with their interpretations and expectations.

2.2. Emotional Sharing of Fans

Researchers investigate the distinct emotional experiences of various fan groups, such as sports (Newson M. et al., 2023; Prayag et al., 2020), music (Olsen et al., 2022; Slade et al., 2021), and CP fans. Personal aspects like psychological projection, social needs, and external factors, including pop culture and the internet influence CP fandom. The impact of these elements evolves through stages: exploration, formation and stability, and rupture (Zhou W. et al., 2023).

The demand-satisfaction model examines the emotional motivations and processes captivating CP fans, presenting CP culture as a reflection of the social and psychological needs of the youth. Female CP fans, for instance, seek democratized intimacy to address gender dilemmas and relationship complexities, creating an idealized love model through 'coupling' for alternate emotional fulfillment. Moreover, existential anxiety drives CP fans to an idealized emotional space, freeing them from traditional societal expectations (Xu et al., 2023). This realm serves as an escape from reality, as highlighted by Yang Y. N. (2022).

The focus of recent research has shifted towards female fan bases from a gender perspective, underscoring studies on female fans (Fenton, A. et al., 2023), female anchors (Tu et al., 2019), middle-aged married female fans (Mirae et al., 2023), and young female CP fans' emotional experiences (Xu et al., 2023). This shift from traditional perceptions of women as 'objects to be gazed at' to 'subjects to be gazed at' represents a change in female consciousness and a challenge to patriarchal norms (Wu et al., 2020; Xing, H., 2021).

Additionally, the relationship between fans' emotional experiences and their engagement with social media is attracting more attention. Social media facilitates the formation and maintenance of psychological connections across varied groups without requiring mutual interaction. Media figures profoundly influence their fans' growth and development through genuine life sharing, self-expression, and fostering intimacy through emotional engagement (Marwick, 2015). Active engagement of fans on social media enhances their well-being and encourages value co-creation between content creators and the audience (Aoki, K., 2022). The pursuit of companionship, a primary motivator for media consumption, is satisfied via pro-social relationships (Hoffner et al.; B. J., 2022). Research on fan communities, like the study by Caro Castaño, L., & Gallardo Hurtado, L. (2023) on the 'Estirando el chicle' audiovisual podcast, shows that fan satisfaction stems from entertainment, community belonging, self-expression, identity, and life improvements. Sundet, V. S., and Petersen, L. N. (2020) explored the reasons for fan engagement and disengagement with the 'SKAM' online community, revealing that fan motivations intersect with interpersonal, social, and transmedia elements. Emotions such as grief and fear, shared experiences, and the need for social support in specific contexts like cancer communities shape public responses on social media, deepening our understanding of the dynamics between emotional sharing, social support, and digital platforms (Wang et al., 2020).

Research in fan emotion seeks to understand the emotional needs and satisfaction levels across various fan groups, focusing on emotional consumption, labour, and female fans' experiences from a gender perspective. However, a significant gap exists in understanding CP fans, a rapidly growing community segment with considerable influence potential. Distinct from group or exclusive fans, CP fans form intricate emotional connections with their preferred character pairs, leading to complex emotional interactions between fans and characters, as well as among fans themselves. Therefore, directing research toward CP fans can provide unique and valuable insights.

Additionally, previous research has primarily addressed specific fan behaviors and their need satisfaction, often neglecting the underlying motivations (intrinsic and extrinsic) and the behavioral patterns that drive these needs. Acknowledging that an individual's psychological needs are shaped by personal attributes and the environmental challenges within their social and cultural contexts are crucial, as Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) emphasized. The interplay of individual, interpersonal, and collective/social factors is crucial in shaping emotional needs and sharing habits among different fan types, regardless of their involvement in emotional labour, gender dynamics. Social media platforms, serving as essential intermediaries, significantly influence these dynamics. Therefore, exploring how these factors affect fans' willingness to share emotions is essential. While past research has predominantly employed qualitative methods like in-depth interview and participant observation, there is a notable lack of quantitative studies to evaluate the willingness and behavior in emotional sharing.

2.3 Social Emotion Sharing Theory (SSE) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

This study employs two fundamental theories: Social Emotion Sharing Theory (SSE) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

SSE was introduced by Rimé et al. in 1991. It suggests that individuals spontaneously discuss emotional events and express their feelings to others when affected by such events (Rimé et al., 1998; Rimé et al., 1991). Initially, this process of emotion sharing primarily occurred through direct face-to-face interactions or indirectly via diaries, letters, and poems. However, the rise of social media has broadened both the topics and methods available for expressing emotions (Rimé, B. et al., 1994). However, the rise of social media has broadened both the topics and methods available for expressing emotions (Bazarova et al., 2015). Key factors influencing this social sharing include the structure and size of an individual's network, their choice of media platforms, and the density of their social connections (Choi et al. C.L., 2014; Lin et al., L., 2012; Lin, H. et al., 2014). The Social Emotional Sharing Theory, widely utilized in sociology, psychology, journalism, and communication, is based on the following concepts: 1) Individuals have a need to share their emotions; 2) Emotions can be contagious; 3) Sharing emotions promotes social support and emotional connection; 4) Emotions can be communicated through various channels.

From 1991 to 2001, initial research on the social sharing of emotions primarily concentrated on individual emotional experiences. This period saw significant studies by scholars like Finkenauer and Rimé (1998) investigating the nuances of emotional expression, relief, and memory (Rimé, B. et al., 1999). Positive and negative emotions are expressed in social contexts, with common emotions like happiness, love, fear, anger, and sadness being freely shared. However, emotions such as shame and guilt are disclosed less frequently. This trend is particularly noticeable in discussions related to health issues like HIV/AIDS (Cantisano N. et al., 2013), cancer (Camilo C. et al., 2014; Wang et al.; L., 2020), and COVID-19 (Cauberghe, V. et al., 2021; Metzler, H. et al., 2023), as well as in the context of traumatic events such as terror attacks (Rimé, B. et al., 2010; Garcia et al.; B., 2019) and political violence (Cárdenas, M et.al., 2014). Social constraints significantly influence emotional sharing, with societal and cultural norms affecting individuals' openness to sharing certain emotions while deterring the disclosure of others. These constraints can lead to individuals facing challenges in sharing their emotions, potentially resulting in their gradual isolation from social interactions (Rimé, B., 2018).

Between 2001 and 2011, research shifted towards an interpersonal approach in the study of social emotion sharing. This period saw investigations into the effects of gender (Brody et al., 2008), language expression (Bermond, B. et al., 2007), and ethnicity (Bermond, B. et al., 2007) on how emotions are shared. Rimé (2018) emphasized that expressing and sharing emotions significantly influence interpersonal dynamics and cultivate a collective identity within relationships. Sharing emotions and self-disclosure serves as a unifying force, facilitating the development of strong social connections.

Since 2012, there has been a distinct pivot towards examining how emotions are collectively shared across larger groups and communities. This includes exploring emotions during celebrations (Rimé, B., 2012), emotional fluctuations in gatherings, protests, and demonstrations (Pizarro et al. et al., 2022), as well as emotional synchrony and transcendence in religious and

secular settings (Włodarczyk, A. et.al., 2023). Findings suggest that such collective experiences lead to transformative effects, marked by intense emotions, increased energy, and empowerment. This shift often results in reduced self-focus, heightened social awareness, and, sometimes, encounters with what is considered sacred (Rimé et al., D., 2023). The studies also underscore the significance of the emotional atmosphere and rituals in facilitating these experiences.

SDT formulated by American psychologists Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci in the 1980s, aims to understand human behavior through the lenses of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, among other factors. SDT highlights how social environments significantly influence motivation, personal growth, and the development of self-motivation, vitality, and integration in varying contexts and cultures. The theory also examines how social settings facilitate or hinder these growth processes.

SDT delves into different types of motivation and external regulations to ascertain the dominant motivational forces at any moment (Ryan et al., 2000). Over time, researchers have expanded SDT into five sub-theories: Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), Causality Orientations Theory (COT), Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), and Goal Content Theory (GCT). These investigations encompass a broad spectrum of topics, including cross-cultural motivation and health, intimate relationships, and the roles of mindfulness awareness and unconscious processes in behavioural regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

BPNT, a core component of SDT, serves as a critical framework in studies investigating autonomy support, psychological need satisfaction, subjective vitality, and effort in diverse contexts. It highlights three essential psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness, linking them to well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2010).

SDT has been extensively studied in the educational field, focusing on the relationship between autonomous learning motivation and positive outcomes. Wei (2013) investigated the connection between future time perspective, learning motivation, and engagement, finding that autonomy needs most influence college students with low future time perspective and high internal motivation in terms of learning motivation. Conversely, competence and relatedness needs have a lesser impact on motivation. Chen et al. (2010) investigated how SDT applies to online learning, highlighting the importance of need satisfaction and contextual support in fostering motivation. While motivation or self-determination in their research did not directly correlate with learning outcomes, the study underscores the relevance of SDT in understanding motivation within online education contexts. Erturan-Ilker et al. (2018) tested the universality of BPNT across diverse academic subjects and cultures, stressing the essential role of autonomy supportive teachers in enhancing students' psychological need satisfaction.

SDT is commonly incorporated into psychological research. Chen et al. (2015) examined the fulfillment and thwarting of psychological needs—autonomy, relatedness, and competence—across diverse cultures, highlighting how need satisfaction positively influences well-being, whereas need frustration contributes to ill-being. Li et al. (2019) investigated the interplay between the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs, stress responses, and the incidence of sports injuries among university athletes.

Studies have applied SDT to understand user behaviors in today's social media-centric environment. For instance, Wan and Sun (2023) analyzed social media users' privacy disclosure decisions using SDT. Zhou Y. (2023) examined the willingness to engage on social media

platforms and the specific experiences of the elderly and civil servants with social media. These studies probe into how fulfilling psychological needs influences the willingness to use social media among these diverse groups.

The SSE theory examines the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and collective dimensions of fans' emotional needs and sharing, with a particular emphasis on social media's role as a communication medium. Meanwhile, SDT delves into the intrinsic motivations behind emotional sharing among fans of CPs, mainly through the perspective of basic psychological needs. This paper selects SSE and SDT theories as the theoretical framework to analyze the dynamics of emotional needs and sharing among CP fans and between the fans and the CPs themselves. This dual-framework approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the emotional landscape within fan communities.

III. Measures and Hypothesis

3.1 Sense of Self-determination and Sharing Intention

In contemporary times, social media has significantly transformed mass communication, becoming the public's primary information source. Researchers have focused on the tendency to share information on social media, particularly regarding the spread of rumors and brief debunking videos (Wang et al., 2023). This includes the concept of 'sharing intention of rumor information,' defined as the attitude towards distributing rumor content, explicitly refers to individuals' readiness to share such information with others (Wang et al., 2021). Zhang et al. (2022) examined the determinants of audience-sharing behavior regarding film and TV drama content, emphasizing social media's transformative influence on mass communication and viewers' changing habits. Viewers now seek virtual companionship and diverse discourse on social media platforms, moving beyond traditional family-centric film viewing to share experiences across space and time through actions like liking, commenting, and re-tweeting. Consequently, the concept of 'sharing intention' among film and TV drama enthusiasts on social media can be defined as the predisposition or eagerness of fans to share personal thoughts, emotions, multimedia content, and articles on online platforms. This inclination is primarily demonstrated through liking, commenting, re-tweeting, and sharing content (Ma et al., 2018).

Our review of SDT identifies three crucial internal factors affecting personality development and self-regulation: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Autonomy involves the desire to decide one's actions and behaviors independently (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975). For CP fans of films and TV dramas, this autonomy is evident in their choices of platforms and how they express emotions.

Competence refers to the ability to effectively interact with the external environment and maintain a sense of control (Zhang et al., 2022; Harter, 1978; White, 1963). For CP fans on social media, their knowledge, experience, and ability significantly influence their intentions to share content.

Relatedness represents the wish to form close connections, trust, and care within interpersonal relationships. (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Baumeister & Leary, 2017; Reis, 1994). As fans

establish self-identity within communities, their advanced needs for respect, trust, and group recognition intensify (Zeng et al.,2020).

SDT suggests that automatic or controlled processing may restrict exploring options that fulfill an individual's needs and values (Ryan et al.,1997). Enhancing awareness can help individuals identify cues related to these fundamental needs (Brown & Ryan, 2003), leading to better regulation of behavior that satisfies these needs. In fan communities, emotions significantly impact the satisfaction of psycho-social needs, intimately connected to self-perception. Consequently, we propose the Sense of Self-Determination, comprising three sub-variables: Sense of Autonomy, Sense of Competence, and Sense of Relatedness.

Therefore, our hypotheses are:

- H1:** Sense of self-determination is positively correlated with sharing intention among CP fans of movies and TV dramas.
- H1a:** Sense of autonomy is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.
- H1b:** Sense of competence is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.
- H1c:** Sense of Relatedness is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.

3.2 Interpersonal Dynamics and Sharing Intention

SSE theory suggests that individuals are primarily motivated by affective and cognitive needs to engage in emotional social sharing (Zhai, 2022). People share emotions to fulfill personal needs and build interpersonal connections (Sun & Lu, 2009).

This sharing helps individuals meet their socio-emotional needs for support and comfort through interactions with significant others (Rimé, 2009). The attention and support received during emotional, social sharing can enhance intimacy, foster interpersonal connections, and lead to long-term benefits (Gable et al., 2018; Nils et al., 2012).

Rimé (2009) proposed a model of Interpersonal Dynamics of Social Sharing of Emotion, which includes predictions related to 1) interest, 2) emotional contagion, 3) empathy and sympathy, attachment behaviors, and 5) enhanced affection for the narrator. In social media, sharing emotions involves emotional events, contextual information about the emotional response, and emotional labels (Rodriguez Hidalgo et al., 2015). Engaging in these sharing behaviors can help foster emotional regulation, physical and psychological well-being, and life satisfaction among fans of movie and TV dramas.

Building on the interpersonal dynamic model of emotional and social sharing and considering the unique characteristics of fans of movies and TV dramas, this study formulates the following hypotheses:

- H2:** Interpersonal relationship is positively correlated with sharing intention among CP fans of movies and TV dramas.
- H2a:** Interest perception is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.

H2b: Emotional Contagion is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.

H2c: Attachment Behavior is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.

H2d: Enhanced Affection is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movie and TV drama.

3.3 Tolerance of the Social Media Environment and Sharing Intention

According to Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), social environmental events are linked to intrinsic motivation, considering both controlling and informational factors. The supportive or controlling nature of the social atmosphere affects individual intrinsic motivation differently (Ryan, 1982; Ryan et.al., 1983). Similarly, Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) highlights the importance of social environmental conditions in internalizing external motivation, which aligns with enhancing intrinsic motivation. Greater acceptance, inclusivity, and autonomy support within the social environment contribute to a comprehensive internalization of surrounding social values and norms.

In the context of social media, fans of CPs in movies and TV dramas are notably active and influential. These platforms serve as arenas for information exchange, emotional sharing, and various fan activities. Therefore, when considering the social media landscape for CP fans, it is crucial to examining the norms, values, rationality, and inclusiveness prevalent in these online communities, as these elements profoundly shape fans' engagement and sharing behaviors.

The research on tolerance in the social media environment encompasses reputation management (Aula, 2010), identity deception (Tsikerdekis et al., 2014), rumor detection (Liu et al., 2016), and extreme speech (Johnson, 2018). Generation Z is a significant component of CP fans. Özkan, M., & Solmaz, B. (2017) proposed in a study that Generation Z exhibits a notable tolerance towards otherness, especially in online networking contexts. This is characterized by their open attitude towards different races, social statuses, political beliefs, religions, sexual orientations, and abilities within their social networks. This tolerance fosters diverse and inclusive online communities. In this context, "Tolerance in the Social Media Environment" is defined as the acceptance and inclusiveness by social media platforms or users towards varying opinions, cultures, backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, and other diversity factors (Zheng & Zhang, 2013).

Therefore, our research hypotheses are as follows:

H3: A social media environment that is relaxed, rational, and has strong norms of expression is positively related to sharing intention among CP fans of movies and TV dramas.

3.4 Mediating Effects of Tolerance in Social Media Environments

Social media, a potent tool for emotional communication, influences tolerance through emotional contagion. Challenging and reinforcing social norms can enhance tolerance toward diverse cultural and social groups through exposure to varied perspectives and emotional expressions (Van Kleef et al., 2010). Fitri et al. (2021) highlight the critical role of critical thinking in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward social media and tolerance. While online interactions in cyberspace extend adolescent socialization beyond physical boundaries, they also expose users to negative influences such as extremism, violence, intolerance, and terrorism. These dangers are exacerbated as intolerance is widely propagated through social media.

Tolerance is often measured by peace, love, appreciation of differences, and openness. Rathnayake et al. (2017) discovered that certain gratifications from social media are linked to increased tolerance. These benefits stem from features that foster community building and provide access to diverse information sources, expanding user perspectives and promoting interactions within a varied network, ultimately enhancing social media platforms' enjoyment and utility.

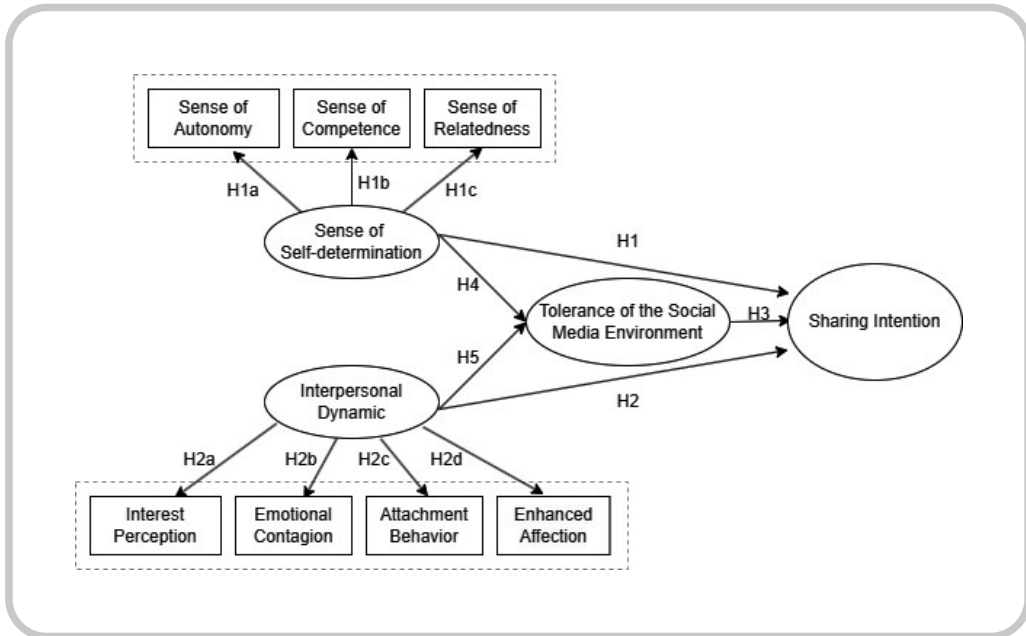
Social media has transformed fan interactions and the sharing of emotions within fan communities. However, challenges such as information overload, a spectrum of comments from supportive to controlling, and negative behaviors like verbal attacks, rumor spreading, and privacy invasion have negatively impacted fan engagement, especially in fan cultures like the "fan circle" (Tian et al., T., 2021; Zhang et al.; M.D., 2022). For fans, the tolerance upheld by these rules of discourse, value norms, and spaces for expression on social media is essential for effectively sharing contents and emotions.

This study suggests that social media tolerance plays a crucial role in connecting CP fans' self-determination, interpersonal motivations, and their sharing intention. As a result, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H4:** Tolerance in the social media environment mediates the relationship between sense of self-determination and sharing intention.
- H5:** Tolerance in the social media environment mediates relationship between interpersonal dynamics and sharing intention.

This study has constructed a model to illustrate the factors that affect the willingness of movie and TV drama CP fans to share emotion (Fig. 1). The model encompasses two principal dimensions: Sense of Self-Determination and Interpersonal Dynamics. Recognizing that CP fans mainly express emotions via social media, the research focuses on assessing the influence of social media tolerance on their sharing behaviors, set against various social background factors.

Fig. 1. Research Model



IV. Method and Results

4.1. Method

In this study, we utilized Wenjuan.com, an online platform comparable to Amazon's Mechanical Turk, to create, distribute, and collect questionnaires. Initially, participants completed a demographic survey detailing their gender, age, education, occupation, and location. Subsequently, the survey evaluated self-determination, interpersonal dynamics, social media tolerance, and sharing intentions among CP fans using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We collected 523 questionnaires, of which 504 were valid, yielding a 96% validity rate.

The demographic breakdown of the participants (N=504, 83.5% female) revealed that the majority (85.3%) were aged between 18 and 30 years. Additionally, 70.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher. By occupation, students formed the largest group at 52.4%, followed by company employees (18.1%) and organizational staff (16.5%). From a geographical perspective, 49.4% of the respondents hailed from cities classified below Tier 3, whereas 36.9% came from new Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities.

The study further examined the patterns of emotional sharing among CP fans on social media. It found that the primary platforms for gathering information and expressing emotions about movie and TV drama CPs were short-video platforms like TikTok (74.4%), dynamic posts on microblogging super topics (55.8%), and original CP videos on Bilibili (49.4%). Secondary

sources included WeChat groups, interactions with other fans, and content shared by acquaintances in QQ groups (22%).

Regarding the types of content, CP fans predominantly favored edited and synthesized videos (82.1%). Sharing information and emotions with close friends was highlighted as significant by 68.8% of CP enthusiasts. Regarding sharing timing, 75% of respondents reported sharing information immediately (60.3%) or within the same day (14.7%). Standard sharing methods were 'multiple times with one person' (36.1%) and 'multiple times with multiple people' (27%). Interestingly, 27.8% of respondents preferred 'not sharing,' which resonated with 51.2% of respondents who chose to 'enjoy their interests without communication.'

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

The study examined the constructs of Autonomy (AS), Competence (CS), and Relatedness (RS) in detail. Autonomy, measured by three items (AS1, AS2, AS3), showed a mean score ranging from 3.16 to 3.57 with standard deviations from 1.02 to 1.07. The high factor loadings (>0.86) indicated strong item reliability. The construct demonstrated excellent internal consistency and reliability ($\alpha = 0.852$, $CR = 0.910$) with a substantial level of explained variance ($AVE = 0.771$). Competence, assessed by three items (CS1, CS2, CS3), had mean scores around 3.53 and a standard deviation of approximately 1.02. The factor loadings were excellent (>0.895), ensuring item validity. The composite reliability was high ($CR = 0.910$), and the average variance extracted (AVE) was satisfactory (0.771). Relatedness, comprising four items (RS1 to RS4), provided a comprehensive measure of social connection within the framework. Interest Perception (IP) and Emotional Contagion (EC) were discussed in a general sense, focusing on emotional and interest-driven aspects of social media interactions. Interpersonal Dynamics included constructs like Dynamic Behavior (AB) and Enhanced Affection (EA), crucial for understanding social interactions on the platform. Tolerance of the Social Media Environment (TSME) was evaluated through three items (TSME1 to TSME3), with mean scores ranging from 3.80 to 3.90 and standard deviations around 1.10. The high factor loadings (>0.907) indicated the construct's validity, along with excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.873$, $CR = 0.942$) and a remarkable level of explained variance ($AVE = 0.843$). Sharing Intention (SI) was measured using three items (SI1 to SI3), with mean scores between 3.43 and 3.50 and standard deviations from 1.18 to 1.28. The construct exhibited very high reliability and validity, supported by factor loadings above 0.863 and robust measures of internal consistency and reliability ($\alpha = 0.907$, $CR = 0.922$, $AVE = 0.797$) (Table 1).

In assessing discriminant validity, we followed the Vemell-Lark criterion. (Table 2) illustrates that the scale exhibits favorable discriminant validity. Interpersonal Dynamic shows a highly significant correlation with Sense of Self-determination (0.901), a strong association with Sharing Intention (0.765), and a notable link to Tolerance of the Social Media Environment (0.750). Likewise, Sense of Self-determination strongly impacts Sharing Intention (0.769) and moderately influences Tolerance of the Social Media Environment (0.681). The relationships of Sharing Intention with Interpersonal Dynamic (0.765) and Tolerance of the Social Media Environment (0.656) highlight the interconnectedness of personal autonomy, social interactions, and social media tolerance.

Table 1. CFA, Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

Measuring Items	Constructs	Items	Mean	S. D.	PLS loadings (>0.7)	T value (>1.96)	α (>0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
Sense of Self-determination	Sense of Autonomy (AS)	AS1	3.57	1.04	0.860	59.143	0.852	0.910	0.771
		AS2							
		AS3							
	Sense of Competence (CS)	CS1	3.16	1.07	0.879	62.168			
		CS2							
		CS3							
	Sense of Relatedness (RS)	RS1	3.53	1.02	0.895	85.837			
		RS2							
		RS3							
RS4									
Interpersonal Dynamic	Interest Perception (IP)	IP1	3.86	1.09	0.862	55.317			
	Emotional Contagion (EC)	EC1	3.37	1.08	0.915	79.121	0.923	0.945	0.812
		EC2							
		EC3							
	Attachment Behavior (AB)	AB1	3.63	1.10	0.912	74.335			
	Enhanced Affection (EA)	EA1	3.59	1.14	0.915	88.650			
Tolerance of the Social Media Environment (TSME)	TSME1	3.90	1.10	0.907	67.508				
	TSME2	3.87	1.08	0.934	101.140				
	TSME3	3.80	1.12	0.913	76.578				
Sharing Intention (SI)	SI1	3.49	1.18	0.909	84.238	0.907	0.922	0.797	
	SI2	3.43	1.24	0.905	82.540				
	SI3	3.50	1.28	0.863	58.714				

Note: Partial Least Squares (PLS), Cronbach's alpha (α)

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test

Construct	Interpersonal Dynamic	Sense of Self-determination	Sharing Intention	Tolerance of the Social Media Environment
Interpersonal Dynamic	0.901			
Sense of Self-determination	0.829	0.878		
Sharing Intention	0.765	0.769	0.893	
Tolerance of the Social Media Environment	0.75	0.681	0.656	0.918

Note: Used the Vernell-Lark criterion

4.2.2 Correlation Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis results revealed that the sense of self-determination, interpersonal dynamics, and social media environment tolerance are independent factors positively affecting the intention to share.

The model exhibited a strong fit, as evidenced by an R^2 value of 0.656 (>0.6), indicating that these variables can explain over 65% of the variation in sharing intention. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated a significant F-value of 317.923, with a P-value less than 0.001. This significant result suggests that at least one independent variable notably influences the willingness to share. More specifically, self-determination ($\beta=0.394$, $p<0.05$), interpersonal dynamics ($\beta=0.349$, $p<0.05$), and tolerance towards the social media environment ($\beta=0.129$, $p<0.05$) were all found to significantly and positively influence sharing intentions. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the independent variables range from 2.262 to 3.839, all below the commonly used threshold of 10 (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			Allowance	VIF
(Constant)	-0.040	0.122		-0.326	0.745		
Sense of Self-determination	0.473	0.057	0.394	8.170	0.000	0.303	3.298
Interpersonal Dynamic	0.383	0.056	0.349	6.791	0.000	0.260	3.839
Tolerance of the Social Media Environment	0.140	0.043	0.129	3.260	0.001	0.442	2.262

Note: $R^2=0.656$, $F=317.923$, $P=0.000<0.001$, Dependent Variable : Sharing Intention

4.2.3 Structural Equation Modeling and Research Hypothesis Testing

(Table 4) presents results from a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM); the analysis, The analysis indicates that Sense of Self-determination significantly predicts Sharing Intention, with a path coefficient of 6.775 and a medium effect size ($F^2 = 0.145$). Interpersonal Dynamic also positively influences Sharing Intention, with a coefficient of 4.783 and a smaller effect size of 0.078. Tolerance of the Social Media Environment has a positive but weaker impact on Sharing Intention, as shown by a coefficient of 2.185 and an effect size of 0.021. All paths are statistically significant with p-values below 0.05, emphasizing the robustness of these findings. These results highlight the crucial roles of personal autonomy, social interactions, and tolerance towards the media environment in shaping users' intentions to share content on social media platforms.

Table 4. Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Path	Path Coefficient	STDEV	F ² (≥0.02)	P(<0.05)	Remark
Sense of Self-determination-> Sharing Intention	6.775	0.060	0.145	0.000	Accepted
Interpersonal Dynamic-> Sharing Intention_	4.783	0.069	0.078	0.000	Accepted
Tolerance of the Social Media Environment-> Sharing Intention	2.185	0.060	0.021	0.029	Accepted

4.2.4 Analysis of the Mediating Effect of Social Media Tolerance

In this study, we employed the Bootstrap method to analyze the mediation effect, setting the bootstrapping sample size at 5000. We estimated the 95% confidence intervals using the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of the estimation series.

As for the mediating role of Social Media Tolerance between Interpersonal Dynamic, Sense of Self-determination, and Sharing Intention. The results indicate that Social Media Tolerance partially mediates the connection between Interpersonal Dynamic and Sharing Intention, showing an indirect effect of 0.078 and a total effect of 0.407, accounting for 19.2% of the variance. On the other hand, the pathway from Sense of Self-determination to Sharing Intention through Social Media Tolerance has a weaker indirect effect of 0.025 and a total effect of 0.432, resulting in a VAF of 5.8%, suggesting a minimal mediation effect based on the set criteria. These results emphasize the significant role of Tolerance of the Social Media Environment in connecting interpersonal dynamics to sharing intentions on social media platforms, showcasing a substantial yet partial mediation effect. However, the impact of Sense of Self-determination on Sharing Intention seems less influenced by Social Media Tolerance, indicating that direct paths play a more crucial role in this scenario.

V. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Implications

The study's multiple linear regression analysis indicates that self-determination, interpersonal dynamics, and social media environment tolerance independently contribute to the intention to share. These elements significantly and positively impact the propensity to share, with self-determination emerging as a particularly influential factor for film and TV drama enthusiasts (CP fans). The concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness play crucial roles in shaping CP fans' sharing behaviors, grounded in the community's emotional connections and relationships. Prior studies underline the significance of addressing fans' autonomous emotional needs. Fans often idealize their favourite figures to satisfy their desires for identity and connection. This idolization leads to various forms of attachment—self-projective, kinship, and substitute—that meet emotional requirements such as belonging and self-actualization. These

attachments foster a reciprocal relationship between fans and their idols (Zeng et al., 2020).

Interpersonal dynamics significantly affect their propensity to share, as interest perception, emotional contagion, attachment, and enhancement correlate positively with sharing behaviors. For CP fans, who are predominantly women, the motivation for engaging in fictional relationships stems from the desire to create, perceive, and share idealized images of intimate relationships. These fans tend to focus more on imaginary relationships rather than real-life ones, comparing CP fans to individual idols and different idol pairings. The emotional connection and interaction between two individuals can form the foundation of their intimate relationship without needing societal approval, as 'emotion replaces social norms as the legitimacy basis of the relationship' (Xu et al.; H., 2023). Upon forming unique emotional bonds, CP fans typically participate in 'acquaintance socialization' and 'self-socialization' during emotional exchanges. CP fans predominantly share insights and feelings with trusted friends and peer circles. Motivated by needs for esteem and self-actualization, they emotionally evolve from individual to collective identification, preserving emotional cohesion within their community. This reinforces a relationship characterized by spontaneity and autonomy.

CP fans often prefer sharing their emotions with close, real-life friends and engaging in repetitive discussions on familiar topics with individuals or groups. Approximately 30% of respondents choose to keep their interests private, opting for solitary enjoyment. Research indicates that online spaces' anonymity and diverse values create a sense of security, allowing fans to connect with like-minded strangers. This often leads fans to conceal their identities and engage with unfamiliar groups who share similar interests. Despite a preference for virtual interactions, CP fans also strengthen and broaden their real-life social connections through discussions of shared interests, contributing to broader societal engagement. However, in today's more open society and the prevalence of social media, interpersonal relationships have become more personalized, leading to a decline in the desire for social connections. Young people are increasingly less interested in socializing, focusing personal emotions or internal socialization instead. This trend of 'self-sharing' reflects a shift towards internalized emotional expression influenced by societal norms.

Participants largely concurred that a social media environment perceived as relaxed, authentic, rational, and well-regulated enhances the likelihood of fans sharing emotions. However, the impact of external factors, such as the social media environment, is relatively minor compared to internal motivators and interpersonal dynamics. The impact of a Sense of Self-determination on Sharing Intention seems less influenced by Social Media Tolerance. Various studies assert that the substantial autonomy exhibited by fan groups on social networks has resulted in a pronounced sense of group identity. Social media platforms, notably Weibo, have emerged as facilitators of emotional polarization within these fan groups, leveraging re-tweeting, liking, and commenting mechanisms. These platforms capitalize on their rapid dissemination, broad reach, and user-friendly interfaces. However, in our study, while participants agreed that an ideal social media environment encourages sharing, the actual tolerance of the social media environment had a negligible effect on CP fans' propensity to share. Instead, the primary focus remained on the spontaneity and autonomy of emotional expression.

5.2 limitations

The limitation of our study is its focus on active CP fans of film and television within the Weibo super topics. Future research should expand its scope by examining other types of CP fans. Additionally, it is crucial to broaden the research to include cases from countries with well-established fan cultures, such as South Korea. Furthermore, forthcoming research should explore factors influencing fans' sharing intention beyond self-determination, interpersonal dynamics, and social media tolerance. It should investigate the specific content and emotions fans are likelier to share and delve deeper into the multiple impacts of creating emotional atmospheres and rituals on individuals, interpersonal relationships, and society.

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