

# ***Face Culture and Its Extension under the Impact of the Internet***

**Jiaqi Zhang<sup>1,a,\*</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Communication, Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou, China*

*a. 1160851040@qq.com*

*\*corresponding author*

**Abstract:** Face culture, as one of the important special symbols in the society, plays an indispensable role in building interpersonal connections. In order to view the future cross-cultural communication from a clearer perspective, this paper studies and compares the cases of "Internet face culture represented by social media" and "traditional face culture represented by dining table culture", and concludes that both of them have been further strengthened on the basis of the original culture, rather than changed due to the impact of the Internet. other words, face culture will not disappear with the change of media or lifestyle, on the contrary, it will continue to evolve a new model and exist in interpersonal relationships for a long time. However, no matter what form of face culture, whether it has a positive impact on interpersonal communication or not, it shows strong adaptability, that is, each region will evolve its own face culture suitable for the region according to its cultural differences, and then show the diversity of face culture with the help of media.

**Keywords:** Face culture, The Internet, Cross-cultural communication

## **1. Introduction**

On the study of "face" culture, many scholars at home and abroad have given analysis and results from many angles. Through semantic analysis, Hu Xian-jin divided and interpreted "face" and defined face as "society's confidence in individual moral character", and defined face as "people's reputation from social achievements, which is society's recognition of people's visible achievements". [1]. This affirms that face is the product of personal contact with society, but it is too limited to combine honor with face, and to some extent ignores the impact of other aspects on face, such as interpersonal relationships or moral conduct.

On this macro basis, Professor Zhai Xuewei of Nanjing University takes face and human feeling as the main starting point in [2], and focuses on the various interactive relationships between individuals and society through the connection of face. It also points out that human feeling is the result of substantive exchange, and face is the right obtained in the relation. On this macro basis, face has been further explained in Chinese human society. On the other hand, Zhai Xuewei divides people in society into four categories on the basis of the former: "have face and face", "have face and face", "have no face and face" and "have no face and face". To some extent, it makes up for the limitations of the definition of face.

On the other hand, scholar Huang Guangguo proposed that the characteristics of the "differential pattern" of Chinese society [3] are mainly reflected in that they often treat people who have

different relationships with them in different ways. On this basis, he also proposed three kinds of interpersonal relationships: "emotional relationship", "instrumental relationship" and "mixed relationship". Among them, "mixed relationship" is particularly common in today's Chinese society, its main characteristics are: both parties will know more than one third party, and this kind of group will form a complex communication network. The second characteristic is that both parties are in a state of mutual acquaintance, but they cannot reach the height of "emotional relationship", and when the need arises, they cannot fully regard each other as "instrumental relationship".

It can be seen that from the perspective of psychology and sociology, face has always occupied a high importance in Chinese society. However, with the impact of the Internet and the arrival of the information society, people's communication behavior has also changed, and the form of face culture has also derived stronger diversity and unknowability.

## **2. The difference between Chinese and Western face culture**

### **2.1. China**

"MianZi" is translated as "face" in Chinese, and the meaning behind it can be understood as "self in the mirror". For man cannot see his own face without the aid of foreign objects; Chinese people usually say "give each other face" when communicating, at this time, we are the mirror, we need to let the other side see a more satisfactory self in the mirror, so as to promote the communication. [4] This also reflects the cultural characteristics of "harmony is precious" in China; But there is also a negative side effect: people will go to great lengths to give each other MianZi in order to maintain their connection. As a mirror, we will change the content according to the different objects, and we will see different ourselves because of the different mirrors of the other side. People will form a social habit of different hearts and mouths, which leads to the social environment becoming more and more hypocritical.

"Even so, for a country with such a large population base as China, the existence of MianZi is still necessary, first of all, the more population, the closer the connection between people and people, MianZi will improve the quality of communication between people and people, so as to promote the development of society." Secondly, MianZi can maintain a harmonious social relationship between people, so as to ensure social stability. However, the negative impact of MianZi is uncertain. For example, in Eastern societies, people usually associate "MianZi" with "dignity", and dignity is very important to individuals in any country, which leads to the "MianZi" being elevated to an unreasonable height in Eastern societies. In order to give "MianZi" to oneself, or to give "MianZi" to others, people may take actions beyond their ability, such as "loans", "cheating" or "gambling crimes", etc., as the recipient of "MianZi", on the one hand, in return for the other person's valuable kindness, On the other hand, in order to give themselves "MianZi", they will repeat the same behavior with the same means, and then form a vicious circle in society. "MianZi" has indeed narrowed the distance between people in Eastern society, but its negative impact also needs to be guided and restricted through corresponding policies, which cannot be ignored.

### **2.2. The West**

According to the long-term cultural environment of the West, due to its vast area and relatively few residents, Westerners have developed an open, free, independent character. Through its open education model, Westerners have a stronger sense of self-awareness than Chinese people. Westerners are more willing to spend time and energy on themselves than on others. In spite of this, individuals cannot survive independently in the society, and interpersonal communication still plays an important role in the West. MianZi has also developed in new ways in the West. Compared with

the implicit expression of the Chinese, the way of communication of the Westerners is more direct. This is not because of a lack of etiquette, but Westerners believe that direct and honest expression is the embodiment of sincerity. For example, in order to give each other face, even white lies are allowed. When giving themselves face, they usually do not conform to their own strength, such as people who usually have a moderate quality of life, when visiting relatives and friends, they will borrow a good car, or buy an expensive dress to highlight their own value. Westerners also pay attention to face, but they are more willing to create value through their own efforts, even if it is not surprising in the eyes of others. In dealing with people, Westerners are more straightforward and clear between public and private, although this may lead to a distance between people. This point is more obvious in the relationship with leaders, Chinese people may be humble because the other party is their own leader, even if their own opinions are correct, they will keep silent because of the leader's rejection, Westerners usually insist on their own opinions in this case, the leader will not necessarily feel offended. Because in the Western context, people are equal to each other, and there is no distinction between high and low is the basic consensus, while in the East, due to the long-term influence of Confucian culture, people will have local status differences due to age, occupation, seniority, and even gender.

### 3. The embodiment of face in the Internet era

With the widespread application of social media, it seems to shorten the space distance between people and give people more space for communication. But people are "alienated" by adapting to and over-relying on such low-cost applications. The concrete manifestation is: the thing created by the subject with independent initiative becomes a subject that is not transferred by human will, and even has the ability to dominate the creator [5].

In this trend, the past "face-to-face" type of communication gradually transformed into today's "peer-to-peer" communication mode. The "face to face" communication is characterized by the fact that when both sides encounter problems that cannot be solved by each other, it is easy for both sides to bring others in their respective circles, thus forming a "face", and forming a larger and more complex social circle. However, the communication on social media is basically limited to people within their own social circle, and the unique attributes of such social circle have been strengthened, such as academic circle, hobby circle, professional circle, etc., which has a high threshold of entry and certain exclusivity. When people encounter problems outside their own domain, they usually solve them through the Internet instead of seeking help from others because of their face. At this time, the face has further weakened the desire for communication in Chinese society to a certain extent. But its advantage is that people no longer pay attention to the self-image in the eyes of others as before, as the main person will not spend a lot of energy to package the eyes of others, but will devote more energy to their own professional and field. This is more similar to Western social habits before the Internet hit.

The dining table culture, which has been criticized for many years but cannot be replaced, has long existed as a bridge connecting two different groups. With the advent of online meetings, many low-value dinner parties have disappeared. Not only companies, but also people are more eager to solve immediate problems quickly through such a direct and clear way, rather than causing unnecessary trouble to each other. On this basis, the dining table culture will gradually take on the color of daily life and exist as a link to connect others' feelings. At the same time, the decline of the dining table culture will also take away the upper limit of people's communication ability, that is, similar to the solidification of the social circle, people can only contact with groups similar to their own level. However, compared with showing the "guest and me" that others want to see at the table in the past, the dining table culture at this time is more inclined to show the real "Lord and me" Mead "Lord and Me and guest and me theory"[6] to increase the emotional connection with

each other. On this basis, face will no longer have a direct and close connection with interpersonal relationships or human feelings, but as a proof of personal ability, existing between specific groups. People will focus on their own work within their fields of expertise, and gain a certain face by achieving certain achievements.

#### 4. Conclusion

With the development of economic globalization and the rise of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's influence in the world market is also increasing. At the same time, cross-cultural communication has become one of the important issues that cannot be avoided. Face culture, as one of the important means to connect various nationalities, has a clear difference between Chinese and western face characteristics. However, with the continuous development of the Internet, the face culture in different regions has extended a stronger diversity. By comparing the common habits of users in different regions using social media with their face-to-face social habits, it can be concluded that in the new era, the form of cross-cultural communication should exist, and can better narrow the psychological distance between different nationalities, so as to promote cross-cultural communication.

In general, under the influence of the Internet and various social media, face culture in Chinese society has shown a certain "westernization". The social attribute of face has been weakened to a certain extent, which is reflected in the fact that face cannot be used as a pure social tool and become a link between two unfamiliar groups. But gradually evolved into the embodiment and proof of personal ability. In cross-cultural communication, the generation gap between people is indeed reduced, but in the domestic culture, the desire for contact between people is weakened. In general, such trends can increase the quality of life of individuals to some extent, but also reduce the vitality of society as a whole. Internet culture itself presents a strong diversity, and face culture will continue to change, its advantages and disadvantages need scholars' continuous attention and research, in order to make it in a positive form to assist individuals and collective sustainable development.

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