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Honors Intermediate Composition

5 July 2022

Keeping Connected Across the World

Liverpool Football Club is a professional football club in Liverpool, England that was established in 1892. Although they play most of their games in England, their fan base stretches to the ends of the earth. Having fans all over the earth has some great benefits for the club, but it also has downsides. It makes it much harder for fans to communicate with each other and get involved. This causes a lot of the genres they use to communicate to be online. Other than online, fans gather at games, bars, and outside stadiums to show their support for the team.

Throughout their time as a club, Liverpool has had a history of winning big trophies and always competing at the top. This has allowed the team to have fans all over England, the United States, Germany, Norway, and many other countries. It is hard for some of these international fans to go to games in person but they can find supporters near them and to gather and support the team together. Through fan accounts on social media, these international fans can stay up to date with the team. Through the internet, Liverpool fans around the world can exhibit their incredible passion for the club and communicate with other fans without going to games.

For this analysis I wanted to use some first-hand experience from a Liverpool game that I attended at Notre Dame. This was a great experience because I was able to witness Liverpool fans across the United States attend a Liverpool game for the first time. It wasn't the same as going to a game at Anfield, their home stadium, but you could see the passion of everyone and

how much it meant to support the club. The fans were there for one common goal: to support the team. People were singing songs before and during the game and kept singing even after the match. Being at a game in person and conversing with other Liverpool fans at a game was an eye-opening experience for me because of all the different opinions everyone had about the team. Yet, every fan had one goal: to support and better the team.

Next, I looked at fan accounts on Instagram and Twitter to analyze how fans communicate online about players, games, and other news surrounding the team. I found that fan accounts are a great way to keep up to date with transfer news, injuries, and game information. They also provide a place for fans to communicate about what they thought about games and new signings: the comment section. Some of these fan accounts organize meetups to watch games or just to get together and talk about Liverpool. It is amazing to see the friendship that can come out of a shared love for the same football team. One of Liverpool's anthems is "You'll Never Walk Alone," which was originally a show tune from the Rodgers and Hammerstein carousel in 1945. They play this song before every game, and you can see online and in person the kind of unifying effect it has on the fans.

The final way I did research was analyzing fan and commentary channels on YouTube. There are many different types of videos from Liverpool fans such as commentary over games, debates with other Liverpool fans or fans of another team, and news channels talking about the upcoming season. I have learned that many fans follow these channels because it is a more time-consuming and content-filled type of media than just an Instagram post or a tweet. It provides an in-depth look at the team and offers different viewpoints. Commentary channels provide a game-like experience. Commentators sit with other fans as they comment on the game and share their thoughts about the plays as they are happening. Some of the debate channels involve fans of other teams to provide opinions that are not always in support of Liverpool. This helps

demonstrate the diverse opinions of soccer fans around the world. News videos about Liverpool are mostly about transfers, rumors, and upcoming games and seasons. I personally like watching these videos because they help hype up fans for new players and hype people up for the next season so that Liverpool's fan base gets more fanatical, and the Liverpool team has more support as they play for titles.

Throughout my research, I discovered many things about Liverpool fans, but one thing that stuck out was that they come from many different backgrounds. Most Liverpool fans are from Liverpool, England since they are based there. But many different countries have big Liverpool fanbases. Some other examples of these other countries are Finland, Denmark, and the Faroe Islands. This is due to the club's rich history of winning games and receiving winning trophies. These fans range from any age group. Kids grow up and follow in their parents' footsteps with Liverpool as their favorite club. They then pass down their passion for the club to their children. Liverpool fans also range across many different religions, especially in recent years. Many of the players are very serious about their religions and very open to the fans about it. This has caused many Christians and Muslims to become fans of the club because of the open religious beliefs of the players. The fans of Liverpool come from so many different backgrounds and have various stories to tell, which is why they are one of the most diverse fan bases in the world. This creates a bond between fans as they stand behind YNWA, which stands for "You'll Never Walk Alone," and it creates a family-like group with one common interest.

One place you could almost guarantee to run into a Liverpool fan is Anfield. This is where they play their home games and for fans of the club it is almost a sacred place. Some fans across the world can't easily go to the stadium so they have different meet-up spots like other stadiums, bars, and parks. If Liverpool has an away game, then outside that stadium becomes a meet-up spot where fans celebrate and support the club. If fans live too far away to go to

Liverpool games, then sometimes they have local meetups bars or restaurants to watch games together. All the fans of this prestigious club all come together wherever they can for one goal: to support Liverpool. When the first note of “You’ll Never Walk Alone” is played right before the game starts, all the fans want most for the next 90 minutes is for Liverpool to win.

One of the main ways Liverpool fans communicate is through fan accounts on social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter. They use these accounts to communicate information they hear about the club that other fans may not have heard of. Some of the main things that are talked about on these pages are transfer news, upcoming games, and players on the team. A lot of discourse between people happens in the comment section of these pages as they talk about the post and how they think the club will do in the upcoming game or if a new transfer will do well. The main use of the fan accounts is to keep fans updated on the club and all things involving it. While it is not a main form of group communication, it still provides a great place for discourse between fans.

Another genre of discourse that Liverpool fans use to communicate during games is commentary channels on YouTube. Two of the main commentator channels that I looked at during my research were Redmen TV and Anfield Agenda. They also make other videos talking about the club and the players, but their main videos are live commentaries before, during, and after games. The main goal of the live commentaries is to give fans that usually watch the games alone a feeling of what it is like to watch with other fans of the club. Usually, the commentators talk about the game and read the comments that people leave and have a conversation with them. Then, after the game, everyone rates the players' performances on a website and then they go over it live and talk about the game. This all helps provide the experience of meeting up with other fans to watch the game that some people may never get to experience because of where they live or other challenges.

Another way that Liverpool fans communicate more directly with each other is through group messaging apps such as Discord. There are many different groups out there for Liverpool fans to join and connect with other fans. Some of the groups are formed by owners of fan accounts to help their community communicate with each other outside of in the comment sections of posts. A lot of groups are also made for certain areas and cities, such as Liverpool fans in Cincinnati. This is used to try to organize meet ups for games or to just get together and form friendships through Liverpool. No matter what the demographic of the group looks like, the main goal is to create long-lasting friendships through their shared love for the club.

The main genre of discourse is face to face communication at the stadium during games. A lot of times they have gatherings outside of the stadium as the players' bus comes in. During this time, flares are going off and the fans are going crazy to show their support for the team. Everyone is there to talk about the team and support them by singing the anthems and songs before, during, and after the game. The main goal of the discourse at the stadium is to show support for the team as loudly as possible. This helps to inspire the team to go on and win with the fans behind them.

The main motivation of this discourse community is to support the team. There are many other different goals and motivations depending on where they are and how they are communicating, but all of them have a main goal of supporting the team. For example, in some groups online, the goal of the group is to get together and connect, but they are getting together to support the team. At games in the stadium, depending on how the team is doing, the motivation of the fans changes and the way they communicate also changes. If the team is doing good, then the morale of the supporters will be lifted, and they will be singing louder and cheering louder to show their support. Also, when the team is doing well during the season, communication on the fan accounts and in the messaging groups will be more positive. If the

team is not doing well, the communication will be more negative. There is a direct correlation between how the team is doing and the support from the fans.

The amazing thing about this community is that where you are determines what genre of discourse you depend on. If you don't live anywhere near the stadium, for example, then you most likely will rely on the fan accounts online and the live commentary channels to connect with other Liverpool fans to support the team. Because the club is a worldwide brand it creates diversity in the genres of discourse it uses. One genre does not get relied on by the whole community but depending on what area you zoom in on, one genre might be favored more than another. This just depends on the needs of certain people and if they can make it to games often.

The demographics of this discourse community show that Liverpool has developed into a worldwide football brand instead of just an English football club. You can witness people supporting Liverpool across the world as the popularity and success of the club keeps rising. The diverse group of fans shows how the club promotes good values and how the players inspire people across the world. Most of the fanbase is male, but with the club has rising female support. As the club grows, more people will start to become fans as they see other people wearing jerseys around their towns and the Liverpool fan accounts start to gain more followers.

Throughout my research about this discourse community, I learned many things about the different ways that they communicate and interact with each other and fans of other clubs. There are many different ways that they communicate online because of the global reach of the team. A majority of the fans stay connected with modern technology. They also have options to communicate off the screen at games and other fan events. The community is so diverse that one fan's experience with supporting the club can be completely different than somebody else's experience.

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