

Public Abstract

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In the last decade, comic books and comic book fan culture have become more popular in mainstream culture, with TV shows and movies depicting both comic book characters and comic book fans. However, very little has been mentioned, let alone researched, about the female comic book fan and her perceptions of the industry. Using focus groups and online surveys, this research examines the perceptions of female comic book fans about the comic book industry, the messaging of the comic book industry and the target markets of those messages. It also examines how these perceptions may or may not affect female fan behavior. This thesis found that female fans believe that the comic book industry targets male fans over female fans, and listens and values their preferences more. In regard to behavior, it found that female fans believe that their fandom is a type of community building and by creating large groups they can have a stronger voice and affect change within the comic book industry.