The influence of social media using on women's willingness to marry from a risk-perception perspective

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Abstract: In recent years, women's willingness to get married continues to be depressed, and "marriage anxiety" has become a wide issue. Women living in environments with more abundant social media exhibit such characteristics even more pronounced. Based on this, this study made assumptions from the perspective of social media, contact intensity, positive policy perception and information screening ability, and studied 211 female social media users to analyze the influence of social media on their willingness to get married. The article found that the use of social media has a direct impact on women's marriage anxiety, and decentralized and interactive communication of social media strengthens women's perception of marriage risk, thus arousing women's "rethink" about marriage. The stronger the female users 'perception of positive policies on women's rights, the stronger their ability to screen information when facing relevant news.

Key words: risk perception; social media; willingness to marry

1 Introduction

With the continuous change of The Times and the continuous development of the society, people's marriage will and marriage behavior is also constantly changing and developing. In the social context of low fertility rate, deepening population aging degree and continuous declining demographic dividend, it is necessary to pay attention to the willingness and behavior of the people of the right age to marry. At present, according to the world marriage data released by the United Nations Population Department, by 2030, the number of people in marriage aged 20~29 in China will decrease by 8 percentage points compared with 2013.And women were significantly less willing to marry than men. We observed that women living in more abundant social media environments were more characteristics.

Based on the above reality, this paper will use the risk perception point of view to explore the impact of social media using on women's willingness to marry and the solutions to related problems. A random sample survey was conducted by questionnaire to analyze the impact of social media using on women's willingness to marry and its effect mechanism.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Risk perception theory and its application

Risk perception refers to people's attitudes, beliefs, intuitive judgments, and psychological responses to specific risks, which are jointly influenced by both personal psychological cognition and socio-cultural factors (Slovic, 2000). Risk perception first came from social psychology, and was then introduced into the field of risk management and communication. Currently, the research on risk perception in communication mainly focuses on the use of media and public risk perception. For example, Kaspasson proposed the risk social amplification framework (social amplification of risk framework), arguing that information about risk is amplified through social and individual "processing", and that media communication has an important impact on people's perceived risk events (Pidgeon, 2010). By amplifying or weakening the public's risk perception, the media lets the public form a symbolic social experience of risk(Schwing,et.al, 1980). More frequent media using and interpersonal discussion (Lin,et.al, 2013), more personal experience (Chen,et.al, 2020), and lower controllability (Liu, et al, 2021), all raise risk expectations (Kim, 2018). The rise of social media in the Web 2.0 era challenges traditional communication models. In social media platforms, users can reach a wide range of audiences and interact and communicate in time, so social media can better influence people's risk perception, and become an important bridge and channel for risk perception transmission, gradually evolving into an "amplifier" of social risk (Ning L, et al, 2020).

With the advent of the omnimedia era, many scholars have further studied the theory, for example, Wang Kun pointed out that media reporting is an important factor affecting individual risk perception, reasonable and effective using of the media for risk communication, can make the dissemination of risk information more efficiently, Better channel the negative public emotions about risk, to help the government and enterprises to better conduct risk management (Wang, 2015); Li Pengfei also confirmed that facing the issue of adolescent online game addiction, there is a deviation in the risk perception of other groups in society and adolescents, and verified that the opinions of "KOL" in youth game groups will have an impact on the risk perception of online game addiction among teenagers (Lee, 2022).

In addition, many scholars analyzed the research objects from the perspective of risk perception, covering politics, economy, culture and education, such as Zhang Jucheng and Fang Xuhong, who studied the risk perception of overseas tourism terrorist attacks by Chinese citizens (Zhang, et.al, 2018); Cao Chen studied social risk assessment under risk perception (Cao, 2021); Foreign scholars Angawi Khadijah studied the positive impact of COVID-19 information on individual risk perception on social media (Khadijah, et. al,2022). Overall, however, there are very few literatures analyzing the impact of social media using on women's willingness to marry from the perspective of risk perception theory.

2.2 The impact of social media on women

Up to now, domestic and foreign studies on the impact of social media on women mostly focus on marriage, love and parenting, self-image construction, appearance anxiety and other aspects. In the existing research, some scholars conducted a questionnaire survey on 346 female college students in three universities, believing that the new media is interactive, instant and open, spreading diversified views on marriage and love. They have had an impact on the contemporary female college students' concept of marriage and love, which is characterized by random motivation, diversified ideas, open behavior and weak moral awareness (Du, 2016). Scholars used the Cultivation Theory as a theoretical tool to investigate the impact of WeChat official account on college girls' marriage and love outlook by content analysis, questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, pointing out the positive impact of promoting women's self-reliance, promoting women's marriage autonomy, advocating scientific sexual concepts, and the negative impact of fear of marriage and education, obvious utilitarian tendencies, and excessive demands on men to pay (2021). Liu Juan and Song Tingting, through in-depth interviews and online text analysis of women's perception of reproductive risk in the use of social media, believed that mass media coverage of the "three child" birth policy strengthened women's awareness of reproductive policy, while decentralized and interactive social media enhanced women's perception of reproductive risk, thereby arousing women's "rethinking" of fertility. The Internet, which takes "everyone is equal" as its internal logic, provides a platform and space for women's pursuit of self-worth and group communication and interaction, and then influences women's reproductive intentions by strengthening gender awareness (Liu, et.al, 2022). Chen Xiaoli, taking unmarried women who are not pregnant as the research object, respectively explored the impact of information types and social media indicators on women's attitudes towards natural childbirth, and believed that compared with non narrative information, narrative information would have a more positive impact on women's attitudes towards natural childbirth through transmission and social norms (Chen, 2021). Black R and other scholars investigated the experience of women using social media Facebook to support breastfeeding, and found that the psychological change of "increased self-efficacy" is helpful to breast feeding.

In addition, Zhou Yuxin believes that behind the dependence on self embellishment behavior is the construction of ideal self-image in self-presentation, so as to improve self-identity and social identity. However, due to the gap between reality and ideal self-image, it may lead to individual beauty dependence, or even extreme physical practice (Zhou, 2022). Foreign scholar Becker E et al. have conducted experiments on several female subjects of appropriate age, Make it watch the ideal body and normal body on social media. The results indicate that, Compared with the former, the latter has a more positive impact on women's body image and mood during pregnancy (Becker, et.al, 2022). Pan Wenjing and others studied Chinese adult female TikTok users, Investigate the impact of social media on its viewing frequency, their self-objectification, their social tendency to watch short videos, their intention to change their appearance, and their demographic characteristics (Pan, et.al, 2022).

In general, there are relatively few studies at home and abroad on the influence of social media on women's marriage willingness from the perspective of risk perception. This paper enriches the theoretical research content and makes it more perfect. At present, the concept of marriage and love of men and women of the right age affects many problems, such as family formation, the growth rate of population and the aging of the society, which is not only related to the practical problems of personal survival and development, but also related to the harmonious and stable development of the future society. Analyzes the impact of social media on women's willingness to get married, and puts forward corresponding suggestions for various problems, which has certain practical significance for eliminating the negative impact of social media and guiding social groups to build a correct view of love and marriage.

3 Method

3.1 Study hypotheses

Under the mass communication, the network media shows decentralization, interactivity, fragmentation and so on, which has changed the willingness of some women to marry. These changes and anxiety are also related to the way media information is produced. This paper intends to use the questionnaire surveys and textual analysis method to answer the following questions.

H1: The longer they look at the information on their phone about women being subjected to domestic violence or non-marriageism, the more anxious they become.

H2: The more the perception of policies to encourage marriage and childbirth on social media, the greater the relief of women's anxiety about marriage.

H3: The more discerning women are exposed to media information, the less impact on their willingness to get married.

3.2 Study design

In order to demonstrate how the use of social media affects women's willingness to get married, this paper will first conduct a questionnaire survey to find out the frequency of users' media use and information acquisition methods. Secondly, the Liszt scale was used to detect the impact of social media on women's willingness to get married. This study will issue questionnaires to 211 people, and by analyzing the results of the questionnaire, we found the relationship between social media use and women's willingness to get married.

4 Results

In this study, the hypothetical variables of social media using intensity and social media using preference reduce dimension and become the two dimensions of use frequency and information acquisition, and the reference of "social media use and psychological state" factor was added to study the relationship between constructive media and public anxiety. Meanwhile, in order to obtain the real situation of social media use on women's willingness to marry, this study used the Likert Level 5 scale, using a score of 1 (Strongly disagree) -5 (Strongly agree).

A total of 211 questionnaires were collected in this questionnaire survey, among which many unmarried women were interviewed, accounting for 89.6%, most of them were young people, and 81% were aged 18-24. In terms of media use, most people rely on social media, and 60% accounted for more than 3 hours.

From the descriptive analysis, the number of people who "often" see negative news about women being subjected to domestic violence or non-marriage accounted for the highest proportion, 40.3%, and nearly 40% said they "occasionally" marriage anxiety, "very obvious" of the marriage anxiety crowd also accounted for about 20%, only 4.3% of the subjects "very yearning" marriage, and "very resist, not marriage" crowd accounted for 19%, revealed the universality of marriage anxiety in the current society.

According to Pearson's correlation analysis, H1 was not true ($r=0.127$, $p=0.065$), indicating that women's anxiety about marriage was not significantly associated with the frequency of exposure to negative news. However, the correlation frequency of social media use and women's marriage anxiety showed a significant correlation ($r=0.144$, $p=0.036$ *). H2 does not true ($r=0.087$, $p=0.209$) and H3 ($r= -0.018$, $p=0.790$). However, in the relevant analysis of policy perception and information screening ability, the two are significantly correlated ($r= -0.246$, $p=0.000$ * *), the stronger the positive policy perception of women's rights, the better the information screening power in the face of relevant news.

In general, although women's anxiety about marriage is not significantly associated with the frequency of negative news exposure, analyzing the frequency of social media use and women's marriage anxiety is significantly correlated, indicating that the use of social media will have a direct impact on women's marriage anxiety. Under the special situation of the epidemic, the frequency of social media use shows a straight rising trend, and it also makes the society face up to the emotional demands of women's marriage anxiety again.

5 Discussion

5.1 Gaze under public fields: Female marriage anxiety is widespread

Social media platforms are a public field for people to communicate, creating a space for women to have emotional support, but also deepening the regulation of women's marriage. Under the pressure of gaze and gaze, women's marriage anxiety has become the object of social media consumption, which is constantly constructed as the anxiety itself. And the emotional

appeal of healthy marriage that should be paid attention to is alienated into the so-called "marriage anxiety". The prevalence of the very few "very desirable" marriages and the "non-marriage doctrine" in this survey data confirm the existence of this problem.

Risk perception theory points out that people's attitudes, beliefs, intuitive judgments and psychological responses to specific risks are influenced by the combination of personal psychological cognition and socio-cultural factors. That is, an individual's view of a particular event is significantly related to the information he is exposed to, the environment and so on. Nowadays, social media has penetrated into every corner of People's Daily life. Some marriage-related news, ideas and policy information are widely spread on social media platforms, attracting the attention of most female users and affecting their views on love and marriage. Later, the industrialized society makes women's employment opportunities and their income increase. The internal division of labor of families and the gender roles of men and women in the traditional society have changed significantly, and women are no longer confined to family roles such as housework, educating children and supporting the elderly. At the same time, the media also plays a role in promoting the deconstruction of traditional gender culture and the awakening of female gender consciousness. Therefore, the widespread existence of marriage anxiety, on the other hand, also reflects the independence and liberation of women's thoughts in the Internet age.

To relieve women's marriage anxiety depends on the joint efforts of all parties in society. When formulating relevant marriage policies, the government should pay more attention to the protection of women's rights and interests in marriage, So that women's personal safety, property safety and other relevant policies to guarantee in marriage. Relevant departments can hold public lectures and distribute brochures for publicity and education, and can also spread positive marriage concepts through online media and radio and television, so as to correctly guide women's view of marriage.

5.2 Agenda setting effect manifest: Social media information magnifies risk cognition

This study found that social media exposure intensity significantly positively influences female users' perceived risk of marriage.

On the one hand, decentralized social media fields give individuals the right to speak out. The risk information related to marriage is constantly processed and reconstructed through social media, combined with multiple media forms such as pictures, animation and videos, to strengthen women's risk experience about marriage life. These information may be one-sided and emotional. But its vivid presentation will necessarily affect the perception of marriage risk. Social media Forms amplification effect affecting society through mass communication and interpersonal communication. When female users are highly exposed to marriage-related information on social media platforms, the audience's perception of marriage risk will increase, which fully reflects the agenda setting function of social media communication. It first constructs the risk picture, which affects women's judgment on the perception of marriage risk. When social media spreads a lot of relevant information, especially under the interactive communication

of social media, the relevant risk information is further spread and spread, the risks will be amplified, women's risk cognition will be deepened, and even have panic mood. Thus, in risk events, social media communicators should take the initiative to provide sufficient and reliable information to help audiences to make correct judgments about risks.

On the other hand, the Internet with "everyone equality" as the internal logic has narrowed the differences between men and women in resources, skills and knowledge, enabled women to obtain more information, resources and opportunities. It also provides a platform and space for women's self-value pursuit and group communication and interaction. Nowadays, women will consider more factors such as social environment, career prospects and sexual life when choosing marriage. As a public opinion field and a magnifying glass of hot events, issues about marriage risks have greater opportunities to be exposed on social media platforms, and will often spread in the form of subverting the traditional single narrative and gender concepts.

The more frequently women use social media, the more likely they are to follow online trends.Social media awakens women's sense of independence and influences their willingness to marry. This requires social media communicators to timely provide public opinion guidance, pay attention to the dissemination of information on risk control measures, help audiences to improve their ability to deal with risks, and reduce the sense of uncontrollable risks. Social media users should pay attention to objectivity and prudence when spreading topics about marriage issues, speak based on reality to avoid exaggerating the bad aspects of marriage life. So as to avoid young women with poor social experience, low level of education, and psychologically immature psychology to form an incorrect view of marriage.

5.3 Impact of cognitive intermediary factors: information perception drives the information screening ability.

In this survey, according to the data, the policy perception and information screening ability were coranalyzed, showing a significant correlation. That is, the stronger the perception of positive policies of women's rights, the stronger the information screening ability in the face of relevant news. The cognitive intermediary model proposed by Eveland points out that news attention and news thinking are the two major intermediary factors affecting the audience from information acquisition to cognitive formation (W. P. Eveland,D.V. Shah & N.Kwak, 2000). This means that when the audience has strong learning motivation, they will actively pay attention to news information, triggering deeper news thinking, and thus contribute to more obvious learning effect. Among them, the high media exposure will trigger the audience's attention to the marriage information, so that the information receiver can obtain relevant experience, and further trigger the thinking about the information content, this thinking is easier to be internalized into the audience's knowledge system, and have a deeper impact on the willingness to marry. The higher the frequency of media information dissemination, the more attention the audience pays to the information. Especially under the motivation of active learning, the more the audience is affected by the information. Women who often sees policy information on marriage rights when using the

media will form their own thinking frame. When being in a similar media environment again, they will use your own framework to judge about the marriage report or exposure content, which can identify reliable information.

However, it can also be seen from the survey results that on the social media platform, the traditional one-way communication model has been broken, presenting a decentralized information communication model. A large number of fragmented information interferes with the audience's cognition. In the face of diversified information, "The Magic Bullet" has failed, the effect of information communication has been tested, and the audience's cognition and thinking of information is heading for snack. In the face of the new communication dilemma, how to give better play to the correct intervention effect of social media is a problem that needs to be considered by all parties.

Thus when spreading or making marriage view content, social media platforms should not excessively render the wrong values such as utilitarianism in marriage in order to get social media traffic, and avoid guiding female users to form a wrong view of marriage. There should be corresponding bottom line and rules to be set up to optimize the communication of love and marriage information, vigorously support creators to publicize positive and correct views of love and marriage, spread the corresponding responsibilities of personal behavior to themselves, families and society in various forms, and effectively guide users to establish a correct view of love and marriage with positive public opinion. Female users themselves should also actively improve their own media literacy and view online information rationally. For the complicated information in the Internet world, we should cultivate our own judgment ability, so as not to be induced by bad information on social media. Facing the information attitude and social hot spots on the Internet, we should treat it correctly, avoid blindly follow the trend, and establish a correct view of love and marriage.

6 Conclusion

Women's risk perception of marriage is not limited to the individual psychological level, but also needs to be comprehensively investigated in combination with social, cultural and political behaviors. To solve women's marriage anxiety involves not only the macro level of policy, but also the micro level of individual factors and the power of media platform. There are also some deficiencies in this survey, especially when the sample size was insufficient when using the questionnaire, and the subjects' age and educational background were relatively concentrated, which cannot more accurately reflect the different views of all ages, which affected the accuracy of the final results. However, this survey on the impact of social media on women's willingness to marry adds an individual-level supplement to the risk perception research, and also provides a news communication horizon for the study of the willingness to marry.

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