Communication fatigue and self-escape: a study on the use behavior of "peeling off life" in WeChat Moments

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Abstract: Under the COVID-19 pandemic, people's social life is more dependent on social media, while the content of WeChat Moments is "peeling off life". Based on the social media fatigue theory, this study uses questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore the reasons for the "peeling off life" of the Moments and its impact on users' real social behavior. This paper argues that online marketing flooding has led to changes in users' cognition of platform functions, while the increase in the proportion of online social behaviors has exacerbated users' avoidance of interpersonal relationship maintenance, indirectly contributed to the reduction of users' emotional expression, and thus led to the birth of users' social anxiety in the real world.

Keywords: WeChat Moments; Social interaction; Emotional value; Self-identity

1.Introduction

At the beginning of 2022, the national COVID-19 pandemic showed a multi-point distribution trend, and prevention and control measures such as regional silence and home isolation were adopted in many places to reduce the flow of people. In this context, users ' social interaction relies more on the network platform. According to the 50 th China Internet Development Statistics Report ' released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of June 2022, the number of Internet users in China reached 1.051 billion, and people are increasingly relying on online social platforms. At present, the social platform attributes of the network platform are increasingly prominent. Social media has become an important tool for self-expression and emotional communication in the post-epidemic era, but the WeChat Moments presents different characteristics.

In the era of the rise of the Internet, the WeChat Moments, as a self-image management platform representing strong relationships, has gained popularity. With the deepening of its application, the user's use behavior is increasingly constrained by the real social relations. In the past two years, with the enhancement of WeChat in the maintenance of non-intimate relationships, the life sharing of WeChat friends gradually faded out of sight. A large number of advertisements and businesses are full of them. The WeChat Moments shows the characteristics of publicity and commercialization, and the social attributes of life gradually disappear. Recently, the topic of "no trace of life in the Moments " on WeChat has aroused hot discussion. We have observed that

when social media blurs the public and private boundaries, and modern social stress is overloaded, many people have social anxiety, insufficient self-identity, and tired impression management, resulting in negative resistance psychology "peeling off life" to avoid social interaction.

We are curious about this phenomenon: why do many people's Moments "peeling off life"? What kind of impact will this behavior have on their social behavior in real life?

2. Literature review

The phenomenon of communication fatigue has aroused the research from multiple perspectives. LeeCC, a foreign scholar, made a general analysis of the use of social media from the perspective of combining emotion and behavior, pointing out that users who use social media for a long time will have bad emotions, thereby reducing the use of social media. Foreign scholars Bright et al. analyzed and pointed out that the factors affecting social media fatigue include users' concerns about privacy security in the use process, as well as their sense of self-worth and existence in the use process of social media. ParkH, a foreign scholar, discussed the negative impact of users' social media fatigue, pointing out that with the deepening of social media fatigue, users will reduce their enthusiasm for life, affect their normal life and reduce their work efficiency.

Wang Qianya, a domestic scholar, started from the phenomenon that WeChat users do not continue to use the Moments, and made an in-depth study of the factors that cause social fatigue. He found that the interaction anxiety between users and others, the concern anxiety about privacy, and the anxiety about self-evaluation are all the factors that affect social media fatigue. Domestic scholars Niu Jing and Meng Xiaoxiao conducted a detailed study on users' self-disclosure from the perspective of social media trust. Their research shows that social media trust affects users' self-disclosure through the intermediary variable of online interpersonal trust. However, Jiang Jianguo, a domestic scholar, has conducted a detailed study on the communication fatigue and emotional alienation caused by the generalization of WeChat Moments. His research shows that many users' Moments has deviated from the essence of Moments due to the continuous expansion of WeChat Moments 's consumption function and the constant dissolution of social value. The emotional function has been weakened and has become a tool for marketing and entertainment.

Scholars at home and abroad mainly analyze the impact of social media fatigue on the behavior change of users' social platforms from the psychological and behavioral perspectives. Secondly, on the use behavior of WeChat Moments, different scholars have analyzed the motivation of user behavior change from the perspective of user value cognition and emotional attitude, but ignored the relationship between social platform behavior change and real social interpersonal attitude. This paper attempts to find out the corresponding rules by studying the corresponding relationship between the "peeling off life" phenomenon of social media sharing content and real social behavior, and propose suggestions for such users to reduce social anxiety behavior.

3. Research methods

This paper attempts to answer the above questions by using the research methods of questionnaire and interview.

3.1 Questionnaire

3.1.1 Assumption establishment:

Based on the above questions, the following assumptions are proposed:

H1: The more users expect to gain self-identity from their Moments, the less willing they are to publish life related content;

H2: The more users expect to get social experience from their friend circle, the less willing they are to publish life related content in their friend circle;

H3: The publishing frequency of life related content in one's own Moments is reduced, which is easy to cause interpersonal anxiety in reality;

In order to prove the hypothesis, this study adopts the questionnaire survey method, sampling the population and making a questionnaire.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The survey will complete the data collection, sorting and analysis process on October 15, 2022. The survey mainly focuses on open and closed questions. The main contents are: (1) Confirmation of basic information: including gender and age. (2) Dimension reduction statement part of argument X. (3) Dimension reduction statement part of dependent variable Y. This questionnaire contains 23 questions, including 3 single choice questions and 20 matrix questions. It is distributed online through WeChat Moments, microblog and questionnaire star mutual filling community.

3.2 In depth interview:

3.2.1 Preparation of interview outline:

The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.

The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewees, including their gender and age.

In the second part, the research questions are reduced to interview questions. This includes the reasons for the "peeling off life" of their WeChat Moments, and their social anxiety behaviors.

The third part serves as preparation, which mainly involves the possible problem of deep excavation. In the process of interview and research, the researchers tried to avoid the four ethical problems and deviant behaviors emphasized by the scholar Al - an Bryman: (1) causing damage to

research participants; (2) not using informed consent permit documents or materials; (3) infringe the privacy of research participants; (4) deceiving research participants. And if the interviewee has any question or dissatisfaction that he/she is unwilling to answer during the interview, he/she can remain silent or withdraw halfway. The interview materials that the interviewees stated that they would not disclose were not included and quoted in this study.

3.2.2 Selection of interviewees:

In this study, 10 interviewers who sent out the life class reduction in their Moments were interviewed in depth for 10-15minutes. The interview will begin in September 2022 and end in October 2022. The interviewees first included the students around them, and then collected more research samples through the snowball method. According to the maximum sampling principle of the qualitative research method, when the 10th interviewee was recruited, all the interview content was enough to answer the research questions, and the sample collection was ended. The interviewees are different in age, occupation, location and other aspects, and the degree of homogeneity is low. The interview was conducted in WeChat. The interview results were compiled into a verbatim draft, with a total of 7238 words. The processing of interview content is completed by the author.

4. Research findings and discussion points

4.1 Social anxiety leads to a vicious circle

A total of 217 valid questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which 45% of the respondents said that they published their WeChat Moments less than once a month. From the perspective of descriptive analysis, the average of respondents' willingness to reduce their life style WeChat Moments reached 3.7 points. It can be seen that more and more people are unwilling to present their personal lives on social media.

Pearson correlation analysis shows that there is a significant negative correlation between self-identity expectation and social experience expectation and reducing the willingness to publish life style friend circle ($r=-0.275$, $P=0.000$; $r=-0.239$, $P=0.000$), which indicates that the more users expect to obtain self-identity and social experience from WeChat friend circle, the less they are willing to reduce the willingness to publish life style friend circle. The research hypothesis H1 and H2 are not supported. At the same time, there was a significant positive correlation between the willingness to release life style friends and social media anxiety ($r=0.337$, $P=0.000$), indicating that the stronger the user's fatigue toward social media, the more likely he was to reduce the frequency of WeChat friends. The research hypothesis H3 was supported.

Social media is the main platform for social activities during the epidemic period, and the social behavior displayed by users on the platform affects the choice of real social behavior to some extent. Generally speaking, the anonymity of social media can reduce the constraints that individuals are subject to when they socialize in real life, but the social relationships of

acquaintances in the WeChat Moments greatly weaken this feature. In addition, the information overload, social overload, service overload and other problems of WeChat Moments are affecting the positive experience of users. With the increase of multi-party social pressure in the online world, users' social media fatigue frequently appears, which not only affects users' online behavior choices, but also reflects users' social anxiety in real life.

Social anxiety refers to the obvious and excessive anxiety experience caused by the fear of negative evaluation of others in the social process. Social anxiety has not only contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon of "peeling off life" in the Moments, but also showed a trend of expansion under the influence of this phenomenon.

H1 and H2 are not tenable, but the research on them makes us find that groups who are willing to express themselves and gain social experience on social platforms are more inclined to publish life related content. The Moments of life content is responsible for self-consciousness emotions and information venting. When users give up publishing such content due to poor social experience, it also blocks the "vent" of emotions, and negative emotions cannot be released for a long time, leading to reduced self-efficacy. There is a negative relationship between self-efficacy and the state of self-identity acquisition, and individuals with low self-identity often have crises in the current and subsequent development stages, and produce negative emotions and behavioral experiences such as anxiety and fatigue. Therefore, users tend to aggravate social anxiety in real society after having the psychological experience of "others do not recognize me". In addition, the escape from the network social relations will also aggravate the imbalance of autognosis, which in turn will lead to the anxiety of real interpersonal communication and a vicious circle.

Although the intention of "self-expression and social experience on social platforms" is in direct proportion to the behavior of "publishing life related content in the Moments ", the phenomenon of "no trace of life in the Moments " on WeChat objectively exists, so it can be inferred that such users are gradually decreasing. If such users take social experience as the main purpose, with the continuous expansion of social anxiety groups and the continuous reduction of interaction groups, their social experience will also face the risk of being unsatisfied, becoming potential "peeling off life" people in the Moments, forming a new vicious circle.

4.2 Marketing flooding changes users' platform cognition

During the epidemic, affected by the epidemic prevention and control regulations, the number, scale and site selection of offline activities were severely limited. A large number of activities were held on the track with eyeliner, and online public activities increased dramatically. At the same time, as social media is embedded more deeply in people's daily life, online publicity is becoming more and more important. In this context, the marketing content of the online social networking platform is increasing, showing a trend of flooding. As the mainstream social networking platform, WeChat Moments has become increasingly prominent in its commercial functions. Many interviewees noticed this change, "Now in my Moments, there are many people sending We Business advertisement, asking voting, as well as finishing their working task of sharing information in Moments. " (S1) Some interviewees who sent marketing content said, "In fact, at the beginning, I didn't want to send anything about my work, which really bothered others,

but I must send them. We need clicks. And everybody did, I don 't feel guilty " (S2)

Business information in the Moments has soared, and the proportion of life content has decreased. For users who can hardly see "life traces" in the information stack, the "product show" that was swiped on the screen broke the original expectation of normal social interaction in the WeChat Moments, and reshaped the users' platform function cognition. Many interviewees think that the nature of the current Moments is different from that of the previous Moments."I have a feeling that the Moments has changed from a simply sharing platform to an intentional tool."(S3) "Once upon a time, I used it to record life, share moods and so on. Now it has become a marketing tool, a window for others to peek at you. "(S4)

While users' positioning of their Moments has changed from "recording life platform" to "free publicity tool", the content release of their own Moments has also changed accordingly. "Everyone doesn't send their life information. When I look at my Moments, I think I 'm the only one sending live-action content, I felt embarrassed and didn't fit in with others. Then I didn't make much of it. Now I will only use it to forward the work content". (S5) The proportion of marketing content continues to rise, which affects users' willingness to send life related content to the WeChat Moments, and their daily life and feelings about life gradually withdraw from the social arena of some users.

4.3 Users make concessions to maintain interpersonal relationship

Under the epidemic, offline social networking is severely restricted, and users use social media more frequently. With the gradual increase in the proportion of social media platforms in daily social life, socialized individuals are getting more and more attention for their every move on the platform. As a signal of social attitude, it is very easy to become the social origin of a series of interpersonal events.

In order to avoid the possibility of deterioration of interpersonal relationship, some users will choose to be patient and maintain the status quo when they want to send part of their life style Moments out of the desire of "the less trouble the better". Some interviewees said they wanted to hide the negative life friends' circle content, "I would like to know what others thinking when they see my Moments, because I don't want others to feel uncomfortable with what I sent in my Moments. When they haven't touch my bottom line, I will bear it. If it's really offensive for me t, I won't mention specific things and people. After all, I don't want to fight, I just want to let off my steam" (S6) In addition, some interviewees would choose to change communication channels, in order to reduce the impact of social events, " I generally don 't interact with others, what I want to say in private chat, Moments can see. I have to consider what I want to send. If I choose to chat privately, there will be no trouble." (S7) This phenomenon is due to the growing influence of social behavior in the Moments on interpersonal communication. In order to maintain the existing interpersonal relationship, users choose to reduce the frequency of publishing life related content in the Moments. In the long run, such users' sense of existence on social platforms has gradually faded, and the Moments for life related content has gradually disappeared.

5. Summary and reflection

In the case of repeated and multiple outbreaks of the epidemic, social media has further penetrated social life. Users have been using the WeChat Moments for a long time and frequently, resulting in increasing social pressure. In this case, users will inevitably feel tired of social media. The phenomenon of "peeling off life" in WeChat Moments is just one of the typical examples.

In view of this phenomenon, this study has conducted a corresponding study on the correlation between the frequency of users' life content and the purpose of users' sending friend circles, as well as users' interpersonal anxiety in real life. At the same time, this study included the impact of the epidemic on users' social media use into the research process, and discussed its accelerating effect on social media fatigue. This research analyzes 217 questionnaires and the answers of 10 interviewees through questionnaires and interviews, and draws the following conclusions:

The "peeling off life" of the Moments actually blocks the window for users to vent their emotions, hinders users' psychological adjustment and self-adaptation, and promotes the generation or strengthening of real social anxiety. The expansion of this phenomenon in the past two years is inseparable from the acceleration of social life penetration of social media by the epidemic. During the epidemic period, online marketing flooding triggered a change in users' perception of the platform's functions, which in turn prompted users to change their own behavior choices. Users are tired of maintaining interpersonal relationships, and their social tiredness is further deepened, which eventually leads to the elimination of life related content in the Moments.

In view of this phenomenon, the researchers believe that the platform can build a more reasonable sharing platform for users by introducing new social play methods, so as to increase the way to enhance the user's sense of participation to achieve the goal of reducing the user's sense of social media fatigue. At the same time, users can try to reasonably measure the value of social interaction in the Moments, and find appropriate ways to vent their emotions and decompress, so as to get rid of the negative and passive state as soon as possible.

However, this study is limited to the age stage of 17-30 years old, and there are deficiencies in the age span of the survey objects. In future research, it may be necessary to pay more attention to the relationship between social media use behavior and real social psychology at other age stages, and expand research and practice on the content presentation of WeChat Moments.

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