The impact of Internet media reports on women's fertility intentions from the perspective of risk social perception

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Abstract: From the perspective of risk social perception, this paper analyzes whether Internet news reports have an impact on women's willingness to have children. Using the questionnaire survey method, the questionnaire survey was conducted with women as the main body, focusing on the analysis of women's risk perception in news reports, and the impact on women's willingness to have children under this risk perception. Through the survey, it was found that the more women were exposed to fertility risks, the stronger the risk perception intention, and the stronger the risk perception, the weaker the willingness to give birth. The difference between this paper and other scholars at home and abroad in studying women's fertility intentions is that this paper puts the topic of women's fertility intentions from the perspective of risk perception.

Keywords: Risk Society, Female fertility intentions, Human-machine collaboration, Push with precision

1 Introduction

As early as the industrial age of the nineteenth century, a risk society was born, and today's Internet age has had a huge impact. This impact is the result of the intensification of the radicalization of modernization, technicalization and economic development. Under the catalysis of the Internet era, the risk society will not only cause a local and small impact, its impact is global, and even affects the entire society. The risk society has brought not only macro totalitarian growth, racial discrimination, wealth differentiation and other crises, but also brought about the news report that "women are pregnant but automatically leave their jobs due to the company's low treatment" and the female doctor's "raising children to prevent old age is unreliable, women no longer want children" such a fertility concept. In the face of endless reports, it affects women's different views on their willingness to have children. Among them, we observed that in the risk society, and Internet media reports are associated with women's willingness to have children. We were curious: How does women's exposure to news reports cause women's willingness to have children? What impact does the frequency of exposure to

female fertility news reports have on fertility risk perception? What is the impact of fertility risk perception on fertility intention?

2 Literature Review

2.1 A literature review of studies on women's fertility intentions

The study of women's fertility intentions has led to multi-perspective studies abroad, foreign scholar Knobloch-Westerwick Silvia; Willis Laura E; Kennard Ashley R conducted an experimental analysis of whether media exposure has a significant impact on family planning, a vital public health issue, from the perspective of social identity theory. The experiment examined whether media portrayals of women's social roles influenced the fertility intentions of 166 American, non-student, never-married, childless women ages 21-35. After the end of registration and the baseline period, participants read the magazine for 5 consecutive days. Stimuli presents women as mothers/housewives, beauty ideals or professional roles. Three days later, the attendees again indicated the number of children they wanted and the time they planned to be born for the first time. Exposure to the ideal image of mother / housewife and beauty increases the number of desired children. Exposure to professional imagery increases the time it takes to plan to the first child compared to the aesthetically ideal image – an effect mediated in part by a shift to more progressive gender norms and assimilation. It follows that the media's description of women's social roles has a certain impact on their willingness to have children. Scholar Melanie Guldi; Chris M. Herbst analyzed the impact of technology development on women's fertility willingness from the technical perspective of the development speed of Internet broadband, and concluded that the increase in broadband access reduced the birth rate of babies by 7%. It can be seen that the development of Internet technology has had a negative impact on women's willingness to have children. Foreign scholar Kohler H P; Behrman J R; Watkins S C analyzes the perspective of social networks, and the authors argue that these mechanisms can be distinguished by analyzing the density of social networks and their interaction with the proportion of contraceptive users in network partners. Its analysis shows that the impact of society is the main aspect of social networks that affects female fertility.

In the study of domestic scholars on women's fertility intentions, Professor Zhang Jianzhe conducted a more detailed study on women's fertility willingness in China based on the psychological mechanism of female group stress in the social media environment, and his research shows that the transmission behavior of women's "fear of birth" in the social media environment leads to a certain extent to over-prevention of fertility risks, women's social pressure doubling and emotional release, fertility risk anxiety between groups, and gender antagonism between men/women. Domestic scholar Qiao Jiaru used the questionnaire survey method from the perspective of women's use of online media to study women's fertility intentions in China. The results show that the use of online media enhances women's "sense of

presence" about fertility risks, and the use of online media plays a dual function of amplification and attenuation in the process of fertility risk affecting fertility intention, but the direct effect of online media use on fertility willingness is relatively limited. Domestic scholar Wang Sijia also conducted research on women's fertility intentions, and from the perspective of media discourse power, the scholar concluded that there is a certain correlation between media discourse and women's conception of fertility, but it is not an absolute linear relationship, and media discourse is only an intermediary link that transmits various factors, and ultimately affects the construction of women's fertility view.

In general, although these scholars have studied the psychological mechanism of individuals, the use of the Internet, and the discourse of media power, they have ignored the impact of the agenda construction of news reports on women's fertility willingness from the perspective of risk social perception.

2.2 A literature review of risk society theory

The research on risk society in foreign academic circles originated from the German sociologist Ulrich Beck's book "Risk Society", "World Risk Society" and "Reflexive Modernization" in 1986, in which he first proposed the concept of "risk society" and described the characteristics of contemporary society. On April 26, 1986, Unit 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the former Soviet Union exploded, destroying all the nuclear reactors and leaking a large amount of radioactive material, causing a catastrophe of the century. The ensuing mad cow disease in Britain and the 9/11 terrorist events in the United States provided evidence for the theory of a social risk society. Subsequently, foreign scholars have conducted in-depth and extensive discussions on risk society theory from different perspectives, and to summarize, there are three main schools of risk society theory: one is the "risk society theory" represented by Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. From an objectivist standpoint, they carried out a "reflection on modernity" on the course of Western modernization since the Industrial Revolution. The second is the theory of "risk culture" represented by Mary Douglas and Scott Rush. They take a subjectivist standpoint, don`t believe that risk has increased in contemporary society, but that people's awareness of risk has increased, and the perceived and aware risk has increased. The third is the complex self-system theory represented by the German sociologist Nicholas Luhmann. He takes the stand of social agnosticism and opposes Baker and Giddens' critique of objectivity in the risk society.

The research on risk society in domestic academia originated from the "SARS" crisis in 2003. In recent years, China has translated and published some Western risk society theory works, which has laid a good foundation for China's research on risk society theory, and experts and scholars in many fields in China have conducted in-depth research and achieved more relevant research results. From the perspective of the research process, domestic research on social risks can be divided into three stages: early, middle and near. In the early stage, China's academic circles have not yet formed a systematic risk society theory, basically following the

Western tradition and theoretical paradigm to introduce the relevant theories of Baker, Giddens and other scholars. The medium-term research mainly combines the specific social risks that occur in China's social transition period, such as the gap between the rich and the poor, mass events, etc., to explain the characteristics and impact of current social risks in China. In the past one or two years, China's social risk problems have been very prominent, and emergencies have shown a "blowout style". As early as 2006, Baker said in an interview on China: "Contemporary Chinese society is entering a risk society due to great changes, and may even enter a high-risk society." At this time, the research on the topic of risk is more about how to avoid, prevent and manage social risks.

However, these studies do not use the risk society to study women's fertility intentions, so they do not answer the question of the impact of online news media reports on women's fertility intentions from the perspective of risk perception.

2.3 Questions

Therefore, from the perspective of the perception of risk society, this article will try to answer the following questions: What impact does the frequency of women's exposure to news reports have on women's willingness to have children? What impact does the frequency of exposure to female fertility news reports have on fertility risk perception? What is the impact of fertility risk perception on fertility intention?

3 Method

This article uses the questionnaire method to try to answer the above questions.

3.1 Questionnaire method

3.1.1 Hypothetical establishment:

Based on the above questions, the corresponding assumptions are proposed here:

H1. The frequency of exposure to female news reports has a negative impact on women's willingness to have children

H2. The frequency of exposure to female news reports has a positive impact on the perception of fertility risk

H3. Fertility risk perception has a significant negative impact on fertility intention

To prove the hypothesis, a questionnaire was used to sample the population and produce a questionnaire.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The corresponding subject of this hypothesis is the female population.

First, we conducted a representative sampling of this group and selected women in society as the population studied; second, we sampled women of different ages; third, we stratified multi-stage sampling with a 95% confidence interval and a sampling error of 3%, and selected 200 women as the sample.

The data collection, collation and analysis process of this survey was completed on October 18, 2022. The survey is mainly based on open-ended and closed-ended questions, and the main contents are: (1) Basic information confirmation: including age and gender. (2) Frequency of exposure to reports about women. (3) What reports cause women's willingness to have children. This questionnaire consists of 17 questions, including 15 multiple-choice questions, 2 multiple-choice questions, and 2 fill-in-the-blank questions. Adopt a combination of online and offline methods, through WeChat Moments, QQ space, questionnaire star sample bank and offline distribution.

4 Research results and discussion

A total of 220 questionnaires were collected, from the perspective of audience age distribution, 66.36% were women aged 20~24, 5% were women aged 25~30, 8.64% were women aged 31~40, and 20% were women aged 41~50, of which women aged 20~24 accounted for a relatively large proportion. It can be seen that women of marriageable age and women who want to have "second or third children" are showing strong interest in this survey. For the female undergraduate degree participating in the survey, accounting for 68.18% of the total data, which shows that most of the women participating in this questionnaire are well-educated and show an objective attitude towards the concept of fertility. As for the survey on whether it was an only child, the proportion of the two was basically equal. Therefore, whether it is an only child has little effect on the questionnaire survey. In the survey on the degree of liking for children, the proportion of children is relatively large, but up to 80% of women choose not to consider the childbearing intention for the time being. It can be seen that the subjective willingness to like or not children is no longer the main factor affecting the willingness to have children. Among the many reasons that cause the willingness to have children, 64.8% of the surveyed women affect their willingness to have children because it is too expensive to raise children. Economic factors have become the main external factors in this survey. Most of the channels for women to understand fertility policies come from TV news, the Internet, and social media platforms, with 71.36% of women choosing social networking platforms such as Weibo and Douyin, followed by 44.55% of women learning the news from TV news reports.

Through Pearson's correlation analysis, H1 was not established, indicating that frequency had no significant effect on fertility intention ($r=0.065$, $p=0.343$). H2 is established, the higher

the frequency of exposure to women's news reports, the greater the woman's own perception of fertility risk (r=0.194, p=0.004**). H3 is established, the stronger the woman's perception of fertility risk, the lower the willingness to have children (r=-0.320, p=0.000**).

4.1 Women's willingness to have children is generally low

From the analysis of this questionnaire data, it is not difficult to see that women's intention to have children is generally low. 64.8% of people chose "giving birth to a child is too expensive", reflecting that economic reasons are important considerations causing women's willingness to have children, followed by "worry about suffering during pregnancy" and "do not know how to educate". It can be seen that women's willingness to have children is mainly affected by economic factors and their own psychological and health factors.

Economic factors that mainly affect women's willingness to have children. Professor Zhao Huiyao of Peking University once said: "Children are space-intensive consumer goods, they need bedrooms and more space, and the relative fertility rate is higher in places with low housing prices in the world. "The high housing prices reflect that most women will first consider whether they have a house when considering fertility and whether there will be excessive economic pressure to have children." Secondly, once a woman becomes pregnant, it means that she has to pay more than a year of time costs, and many companies have begun to deliberately and unconsciously exclude women in the workplace because of maternity leave and pregnancy leave. Gender discrimination in the workplace has aggravated women's concerns about childbearing. Various economic factors are superimposed, resulting in "having a child is too expensive" becoming the main economic factor.

Secondly, their own psychological factors also have an impact on women's willingness to have children. In clinical practice, it has been found that the incidence of depression in women is twice as high as in men. Important life events such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause experienced by women in their lives will affect women's emotions, such as premenstrual syndrome before menstruation and postpartum depression after childbirth. Therefore, women will reduce their desire to have children out of consideration for their own mental health. In addition, women will cause vaginal laxity after giving birth, and the pelvic floor muscles will relax, which affects women's physical health. The harm of childbirth to women's body and mind makes women have a fear and resistance to childbirth.

4.2 Negative reports affect the willingness to have children significantly

In the Internet era, which is full of liquidity and uncertainty, the coverage of fertility topics not only includes the mainstream media that report them objectively and fairly, but also is full of online media and self-media that earns traffic in pursuit of economic interests. In pursuit of economic interests, they spread rumors that caused women to give birth to panic such as "preparing for pregnancy upside down", "ten major harm that cannot be ignored after

childbirth", and "husbands do not pay attention to the birth of children". Under the push of the algorithm mechanism, these rumors carry out accurate user portraits of women of marriageable and childbearing age, and push such biased fertility reports to women, making the frequency of reporting on women's fertility topics higher and higher, thereby improving women's perception of fertility risks.

Not only that, after women themselves watch negative reports about fertility, they will forward them on WeChat and Moments, and share them with friends in the form of interpersonal transmission or group communication. From the perspective of cognitive balance, women who spread negative reports are friends with the people they are communicating, so the content they spread is trustworthy. The subject of the communication has no ability to distinguish the negative report, and out of trust in the object of the negative report, the subject also believes that the content of the negative report is true. The power of this human-to-human transmission is huge, thus achieving the negative effect of "one transmission ten, ten transmission hundred" virus transmission.

4.3 Reducing risk perception: an effective way to increase women's willingness to have children

The negative reports on the Internet not only affect female family harmony, but also hinder the solution of the problem of the country's aging population. It can be seen that it is necessary to reduce women's risk perception on the Internet and improve women's willingness to have children. The mainstream media should focus on positive reports, connect with the party's heart, and timely report on the state's welfare policies related to childbirth; Connecting with the people, expressing women's real demands for fertility intentions. Give play to its role as the mouthpiece of the party, government and people. In the guidance of public opinion on women's willingness to have children, it is necessary to adhere to the correct political direction, public opinion orientation and value orientation, and constantly enhance the dissemination, guidance, influence and credibility of news and public opinion.

For women themselves, there must be media literacy. From the women of different ages in this questionnaire survey, it can be seen that the undergraduate rate has reached 68.18%. It can be seen that women have the ability to distinguish between "false birth reports" on the Internet. At the same time, UGC and PGC engaged in fertility-related industries on the Internet can give full play to their advantages in the professional field to solve problems related to fertility for women.

In addition, the network platform itself should also do a good job of "autonomy", in the review of the content release of topics related to fertility intentions, the work should not be completely delegated to machine review, but should pay more attention to the special symbol content with the nature of "special reference" into manual review, human-computer collaborative review mode. If self-discipline fails, he will be brought to justice. The government and its relevant departments should promptly introduce relevant laws and policies to prevent the spread

of false rumors.

5 Summary and reflection

This study puts the impact of Internet media reports on women's fertility willingness from the perspective of risk perception through the questionnaire survey, and tries to answer whether Internet media reports have an impact on women's fertility intentions in a risk society.

Through the study, the higher the frequency of exposure to women's news reports, the greater the perception of fertility risk, and the lower the willingness to have children, the progress of communication technology, the wide range of news reports, women's attention to fertility topics and the media's amplification of fertility risk constitutes external factors generated by women's fertility risk stress psychology, while the awakening of individual independence consciousness, the desire for emotional expression, the pursuit of self-identity and social identity are the internal factors generated by women's fertility risk stress psychology.

The psychological mechanism behind the spread of "childphobia" in the social media environment is the stress response of female groups to the issue of fertility risk, which in turn causes the collective risk-avoidance "childphobia" emotional expression in social media platforms, and the transmission behavior of women's "childphobia" in the social media environment to a certain extent leads to excessive prevention of fertility risks, women's social pressure multiplication and emotional release, fertility risk anxiety between groups, and gender antagonism between men and women. Women's willingness to have children can be improved through various aspects, such as individuals improving their own media literacy, media reshaping the trust mechanism of risk communication, strengthening the supervision of online information content, and promoting the construction of male and female fertility culture in the new era.

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