

The Influence and Significance of Different Social Media on the Development of the Feminism in China

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Abstract: With the development and widespread application of Internet technology, women have gained more “discourse power” in social media platforms. The traditional stereotype of women has undergone a subversive change, and more and more women have awakened their consciousness to understand the significance and spiritual connotation of feminism. Recently, a video entitled “Peking University Dormitory and Ueno Qianhezi Chat” has spread rapidly on the Internet. In the video, three women who graduated from Peking University and are now in their 30s and a famous feminist scholar from Japan, Akiko Ueno, have their own understanding and discussion on “feminism.” In social media, netizens expressed different views and opinions on the “feminism” discussed in the video. This article explores the impact and significance of the views of netizens in different social media on the development of feminism in China. The research crawls the public opinion arguments of netizens on the Internet about this event for nearly half a month and analyzes its communication trend, keywords in different social media, and the emotional distribution of netizens’ hot words cloud. The effect of the experiment is relatively clear. It can be seen that “feminism” in China has caused fierce discussion among netizens on social networks today. Social media platforms are dominated by short video platforms, and their spread on other new media platforms is far greater than that of traditional media platforms. Through the continuous discussion of netizens on the Internet, women’s issues have received greater attention than originally, and more people have begun to awaken their gender awareness.

Keywords: feminism, social media, public opinion analysis, network case, communication science

1. Introduction

In China, the origin and development of women’s ideological emancipation differ from those of the Western feminist movement. Chinese society enjoys a long pre-modern history. For more than 2000 years, patriarchal relationships have been untouchable and unchallenged. In recent years, with the vigorous development of the Internet, there are more and more channels for women to speak for themselves. Women’s status in the family and society has gradually improved. Recently, a video entitled “Women from Graduated Peking University and Chizuko Ueno’s Dormitory Chat” became popular online. Chizuko Ueno, the most famous feminist scholar in Japan, has continuously criticized Japan’s patriarchal structure since her youth. In the video, three married women in their 30s who graduated from Peking University and have given birth to children and the non-pregnant Chizuko

Ueno teacher talked about feminism and explained their views. However, many netizens think that in the video, the questions raised by the three women about their views on feminism to the teacher are too superficial, as they do not understand the meaning of “feminism,” thus causing a heated discussion on the Internet.

From the perspective of the types of social software, this paper analyze the differences in the thinking angles and attitudes of users in different types of software towards the same problem. With the popularity and development of social media on the Internet, the era of “integrated media,” which integrates traditional media and emerging media, media, and audience interaction, has rapidly arrived [1].

In this era of integrated media, the value of this study on the differences in attitudes held by users in different social media is to analyze the differences and similarities between different social software, why such differences occur, and what factors lead to these differences. Communication in the era of integrated media is integrating and utilizing the advantages of radio, television, and the Internet, to improve their functions, means, and values comprehensively. People’s work, study, and life are always based on integrated media in daily life. Due to the development and transformation of the media era, many users using traditional media (such as radio, television, and newspapers.) have gradually begun to contact emerging media. The age difference and the different perspectives and views of netizens on issues will also lead to certain differences between the opinions expressed [2].

This paper selects two different social software, taking “Weibo” and “Zhihu” as examples. “Weibo” is a popular social software where netizens can often know what they want at first time. For the same event, different netizens can publish their posts or comments; “Zhihu” is a kind of software with a certain nature of popular science. When using it, netizens often seek answers or provide answers to others who ask questions. Now, netizens will take a more rigorous and rational perspective when publishing their posts or comments.

Besides, this paper can better help people analyze the current society. When “Cyberfeminism” appears in people’s vision, how should Internet users analyze and discuss it and play a more rational role in communication on social media [3]. The media characteristics of social media have fostered the discourse of “feminism,” and its core issues reflect its concern for society. On the one hand, the anonymity of social media makes it possible to use the “violence” form in online comments to strengthen the discourse power to produce a normal situation and aggregate the group polarization of furniture [4]. On the other hand, its attitude on the core issues is rooted in the perception of social reality, especially the “pseudo environment.” People often do not experience the differences brought by “feminism” in their daily life but judge them according to the content conveyed by the information media they are exposed to, which leads to the devaluation of men and the attack on marriage [5].

Furthermore, from the perspective of the spiritual impact on women, this study can help people understand the status and role of women in the workplace and society and help more women to have a deeper understanding of “feminism.” Feminism originated from the women’s liberation movement in the West. As a progressive voice and power, as a trend of women’s conscious research on their emancipation, it gradually developed into a worldwide movement. It made an indelible contribution to women’s liberation worldwide [6]. Furthermore, feminism, as a product of the combination of theory and practice, as a new spiritual position, has penetrated the political, economic, and cultural life of the whole society, affecting women’s consciousness and social development at different levels and promoting the development and progress of human society.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 overviews the proposed methods, including analyzing the crawled data overall. The first part is the communication trend in social media, and the second part is netizens’ critical content and dynamic analysis. Section 3 shows the experimental results and analyzes the emotional distribution of users in “Zhihu” and “Weibo.” The final results showed that netizens reacted strongly to the feminist discussion in the video, with different views on

the “feminism” discussed in the video. Moreover, the public’s negative evaluation of the incident is greater than the positive evaluation of public opinion, indicating that netizens still have a stereotype of their understanding of feminism.

2. Methods

This paper finds the content and data of “Women from Graduated Peking University and Chizuko Ueno’s Dormitory Chat” from the Internet, including the use of a broken line chart to show the communication trend in social media and the use of positive and negative word clouds to show the Internet users’ focus on content, emotional distribution, to analyze their views and attitudes on this matter and feminism. The result shows that the negative public opinion of this event is greater than the positive public opinion, indicating that netizens’ response to the discussion of feminism in this video is still fierce, as shown in Figure 1.

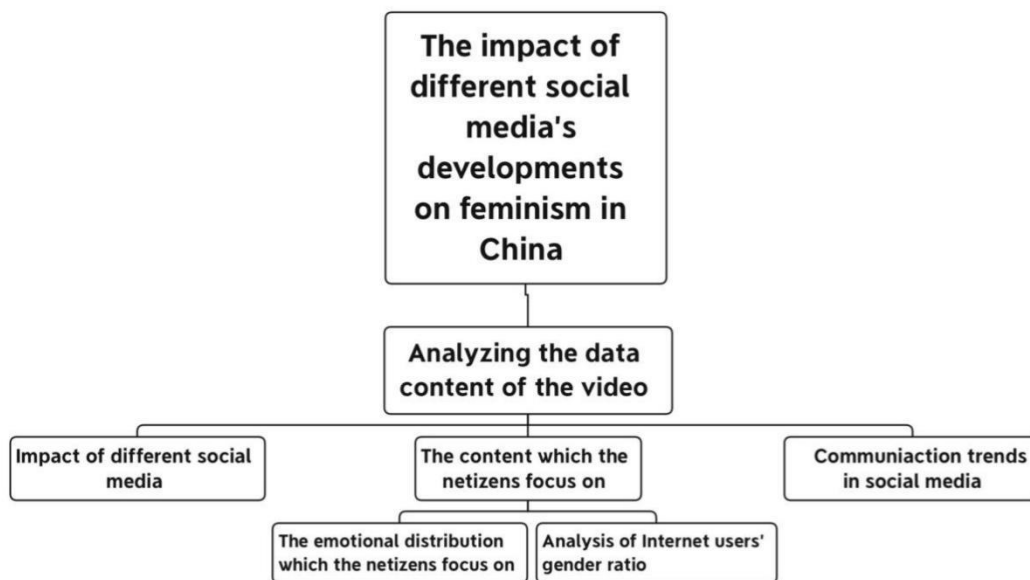


Figure 1: Overall flow diagram.

2.1. Communication Trends in Social Medias

This paper first analyzes the data from nearly half a month of crawling. A total of 12207 relevant public opinions have been monitored on the Internet. The volume of the short video is the largest, with 6961, followed by 2570 forums. The negative public opinion of the event accounted for 6.72%, and the positive public opinion accounted for 1.02%. The data relating to the event was first mentioned to be released on the bilibili on February 17, 2023. The peak voice volume of the whole network appeared on February 23, 2023. The volume of short video transmission data was as high as 1802. A total of 2117 related messages were generated on other platforms, causing many netizens’ attention. Follow-up reports mainly come from Tiktok, Zhihu (It is a high-quality Chinese Internet Q&A community and an original content platform gathered by creators, similar to Quora from abroad), Bilibili (It is a well-known video screen website in China, a cultural community and video platform with a high concentration of young generations in China, similar to YouTube abroad), Today’s Headlines, Sina News and other websites, as shown in Figure 2.

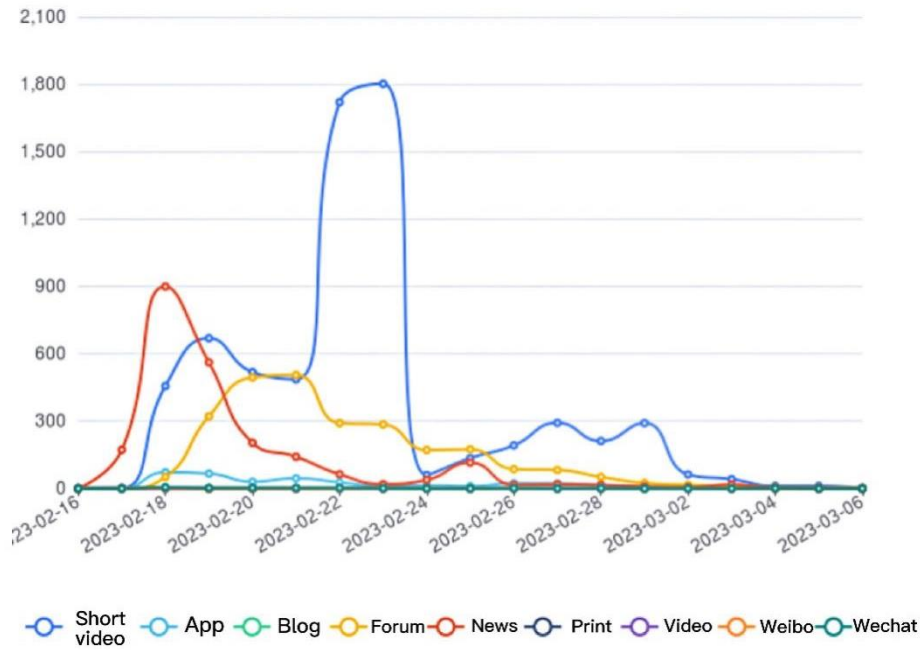


Figure 2: Event propagation trend.

2.2. Impact of Different Social Media

With the rapid development of online information, new media has gradually affected the status of traditional media in people's lives. People no longer obtain information through paper media, radio, and television media like before. The fusion media formed by the fusion of traditional and emerging media has become the main channel for people to obtain information. This section will analyze different social media platforms based on the data obtained from section 2.1 based on the dissemination trend of the event to see which type of communication media has a greater impact on people today. Therefore, the data scale chart shown in Figure 3 (the same as the data set analyzed in Figure 2) obtained on this basis shows that the first three media platforms that had a great impact on this time are: short videos (mainly including Kwai, Tiktok, Little Red Book.), forums (mainly including Zhihu, Tianya, Baidu Q&A.), and news (mainly including People's Daily Online, Pengpai News, Xinhua). Therefore, short videos have also replaced the influence of long videos or texts, becoming the most influential communication media in real life [7].

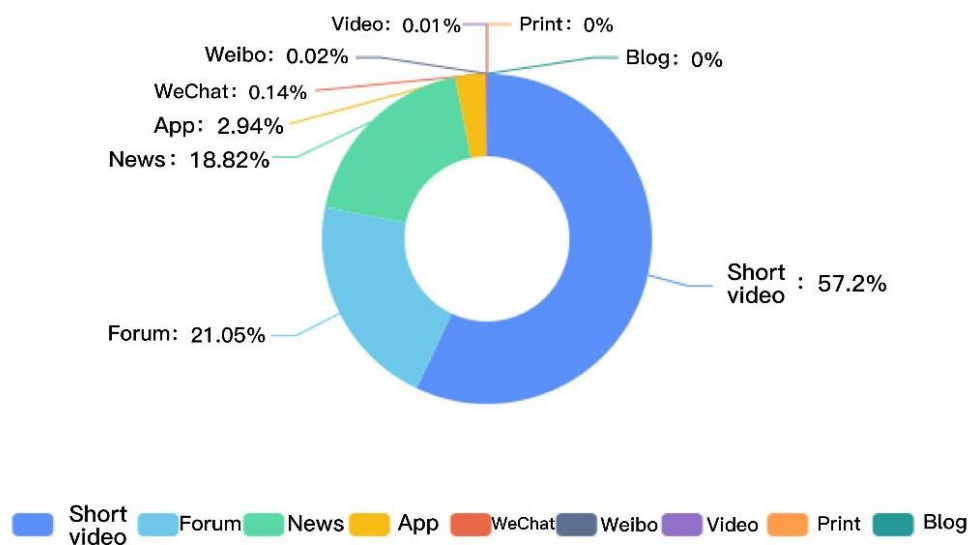


Figure 3: Distribution of media.

2.3. The Content Which the Netizens Focus on

This section quantitatively analyzes the keywords posted by users on social media from the dataset, as shown in Table 1. The analysis results are shown in the table below, indicating that the participation of netizens in this event is high, with “Ueno” appearing the most frequently, followed by keywords such as “Hezi,” “Peking University,” “dormitory,” and “feminism.”

Table 1: Word frequency count.

Positive		Neutral		Negative	
Words	Quantity	Words	Quantity	Words	Quantity
Ueno	77	Ueno	2515	Ueno	342
Chizuko	67	Chizuko	2055	Chizuko	284
PKU	42	PKU	1740	PKU	208
Dormitory	29	Dormitory	1071	Feminist	163
Chat	19	Feminist	800	Dormitory	102

2.4. The Emotional Distribution Which the Netizens Focus on

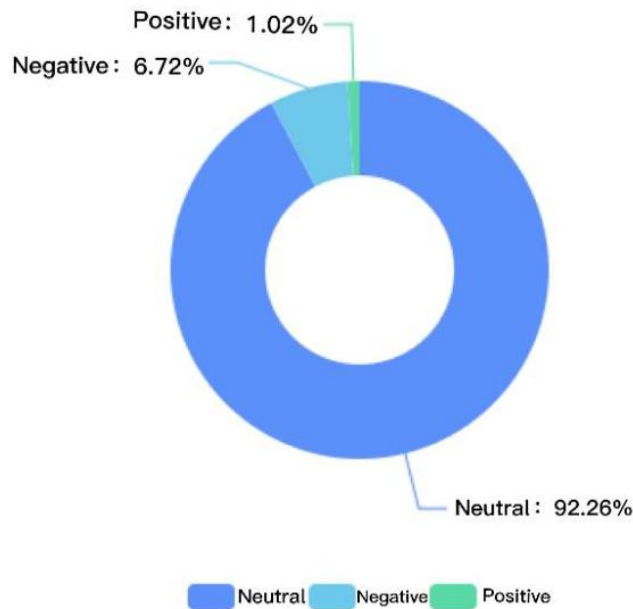


Figure 4: Distribution of public sentiment.

As shown in Figure 4, according to the analysis of public opinion and attitude based on the comments posted by netizens, most netizens have a more rational discussion about this event. Due to the accessibility and analyzability of data, the following will take two social media platforms - “Sina Weibo” and “Zhihu” as examples to explore the public opinion attitudes of netizens towards this matter.

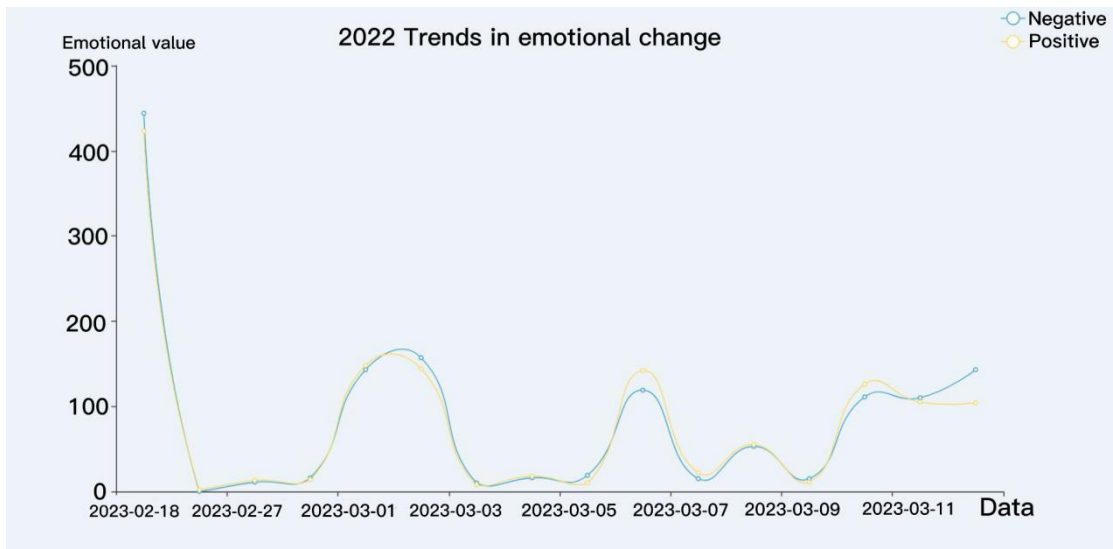


Figure 5: Trends in emotional change.

Sina Weibo is an interactive community based on internet technology, belonging to comprehensive social media. Its simple operation, low registration threshold, and timely dissemination of information

have attracted many users, making it one of the largest social media in China. Unlike WeChat, which has a vital privacy attribute, Weibo is one of China’s few social media platforms with a “square” nature. It is a virtual community formed by social media generated based on technology. This event sparked a high level of discussion on Weibo, and from trend Figure 5, it can be seen that February 18th was the peak of discussion heat. By analyzing the public opinion expressed by users, it can be seen that negative emotions outweigh positive emotions, and it can be analyzed that the negative emotions generated by this event are relatively high among netizens.

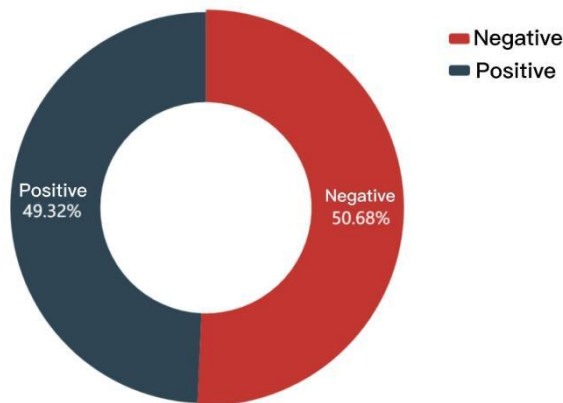


Figure 6: Emotional Analysis of netizens in Weibo.

As shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7, unlike Sina Weibo, Zhihu is a Chinese internet Q&A community and an original content platform where creators gather. The comments on this event are no longer just positive or negative, but more neutral articles and comments. On this platform, the public opinion impact of this event is still greater regarding negative emotions than positive ones. However, due to the platform’s ability for users to choose to post and comment anonymously and the presence of “water army” or gender ambiguity in the collected data, there are corresponding biases in the emotional analysis results of the data [8].

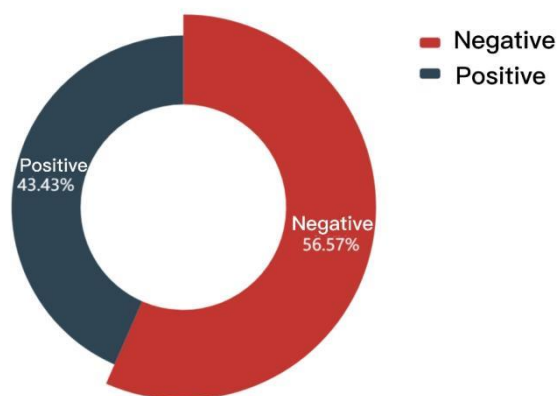


Figure 7: Emotional Analysis of netizens in Zhihu.

2.5. Analysis of Internet Users’ Gender Ratio

This section continues to use “Sina Weibo” and “Zhihu” as examples to analyze the views and discussions of users of different genders on this event.

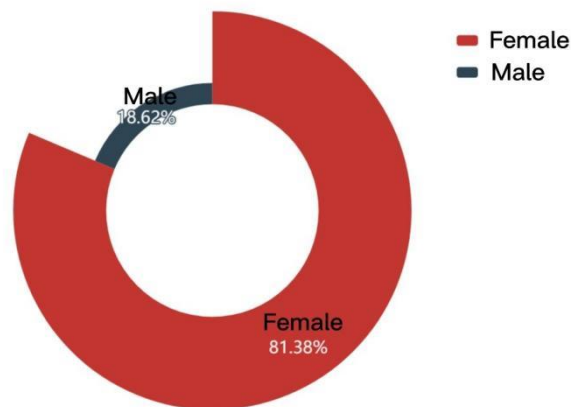


Figure 8: Analysis of user gender ratio in Sina Weibo.

From the analysis of user proportions on Sina Weibo (Figure 8), it can be seen that female users publish the majority of comments, and there is a significant difference in the proportion of comments published by male and female users; On the contrary, due to the platform's ability for users to freely choose to post and comment anonymously, there are anonymous users. Excluding anonymous users, it was found in the user analysis of the platform that the gender ratio difference is relatively small (Figure 9).

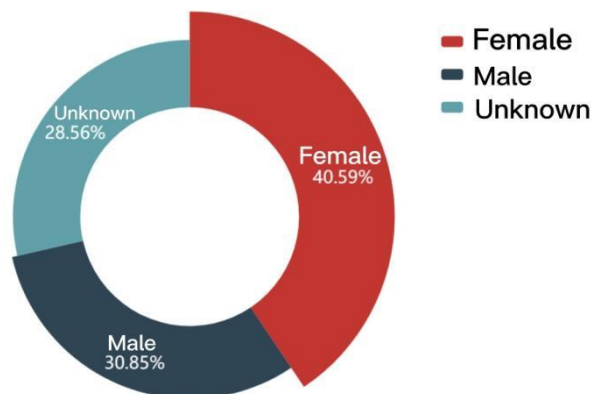


Figure 9: Analysis of user gender ratio in Zhihu.

There are still differences between male and female users on the topic of “feminism.” How to eliminate these differences is a topic that needs to be carefully studied and explored in both the field of gender studies and communication studies in the future.

3. Discussion

This paper takes “Peking University Dormitory and Ono Qianhezi Chat” as the starting point to analyze people's views and discourse patterns on “feminism” in different social media. However, the current online new media social environment and related software are still unable to break free from the constraints and control of traditional ideologies, and information exchange still needs to rely on the resources and information reprocessing of mass media. The survival and development of women in our country are still tricky. If we do not want to fall into a society of gender inequality, social media, and mass media should actively promote and establish awareness of gender equality. The construction

of women's self-awareness and reducing their objectification and consumption are indispensable parts of gender and media studies. It is a long and arduous task to make more and more people realize the importance of "gender equality." In future research, the author will analyze from multiple perspectives and deeper levels, such as obtaining more information on the impact of other types of social media on feminism; Alternatively, the author will further analyze the impact and significance of certain types of social media on the future development of feminism [9,10].

4. Conclusion

The key finding of this paper is that in the era of integrating media into mainstream development, the content of social media has a significant impact on people's thinking. Social media is not only an opportunity for the development of feminism but also a challenge. On the topic of "feminism," compared with other social media, the spread of new media based on short videos in the network is far from that of other types of social media. The significance of this study is also to find that netizens have different attitudes to the same topic in different social media. Consistent with McLuhan's view of media and information, media characteristics affect the content and form of discourse interaction. Because of the existence of the "silent spiral" theory in the mass media, netizens will change their views according to the attitudes they agree with on the Internet at the present stage to gain the support of others. The media characteristics of social media foster the discourse form of "feminism," and the core issues also reflect the attention to social reality. At this stage, most netizens' understanding of "feminism" is still narrow feminism, and many people's comments are closer to the emotional product of venting the dissatisfaction and anxiety expressed by society. At the same time as awakening gender awareness, people should also understand what is true "feminism".

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