

The Impact of Some Highly Educated Female Bloggers on Female College Students from a Feminist Perspective

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Abstract: In the era of new media, gender issues frequently appear in the public eye, and some highly educated female bloggers on social media platforms promote feminist education, while others still adhere to traditional gender norms. These female bloggers, who should symbolize independent women, are often conflicted and contradictory. This article aims to explore the causes of the psychological conflict of these highly educated female bloggers and to investigate the degree of attention and influence of female college students on them in contemporary society, in order to provide strategies for the development of feminism in new media era China. The study conducted a survey of female college students, focusing mainly on their degree of attention to gender issues and various female bloggers, their susceptibility to influence, and their gender concepts and perceptions of feminism. The study found that 52% of female college students follow both emotional bloggers and feminist bloggers. They learn about feminism while seeking advice from emotional bloggers, which also shows a sense of contradiction. The contradiction between highly educated women and female college students stems from a patriarchal society, in which women are in a disadvantaged position in social competition. Therefore, realizing true gender equality requires joint efforts from society, the media, and women themselves.

Keywords: Mass Communication, Feminism, Social media

1. Introduction

In China, with the rise of social media platforms such as TikTok, Weibo, Bilibili, and Xiaohongshu, anyone can be a self-media person, and women's channels for expressing their voices have increased. Many highly educated female bloggers, such as Quan XiXi and Qu Qu, who are opinion leaders, are active on social media platforms. Gender issues have become a hot topic on the internet and often climb to the top of Weibo's trending topics. For example, the term "Beijing University Quan Xixi, Tsinghua Zhang Xiaonian" has become a discussion and criticism topic among netizens about the two highly educated women. The content disseminated by these highly educated female bloggers, feminist educators, and emotional bloggers, in some ways, reflects their own gender concepts and may also have a subtle influence on their audience [1]. For instance, it can change the audience's gender concepts, and encourage the audience to spontaneously learn about feminism. Some female bloggers are highly knowledgeable, but still adhere to traditional gender norms, which may give people a sense of contradiction.

This article aims to explore the reasons why some highly educated female bloggers in China still adhere to traditional gender norms and contradict the image of independent women, despite their high levels of education. By analyzing recent female hot topics in China and using first-hand data obtained from surveys, this paper examines the impact of these bloggers on contemporary female college students and provide strategies for the future development of feminism in China's new media era.

2. Content dissemination and online evaluation of some highly educated women

2.1. Highly educated female bloggers: Quan Xixi and Zhang Xiaonian

Quan Xixi graduated from Peking University and gained popularity on various social media platforms for her interview video with Japanese feminist scholar Ueno Chizuko. However, she also received criticism for it. During her conversation with Ueno Chizuko and in previous videos, Quan Xixi expressed the following values: She simplistically attributed others' reluctance to get married to being hurt by men or being influenced by their upbringing. She also stated that she cannot accept the societal pressure to get married and that feminists who choose not to get married may have a higher social status. The reason why she originally decided to DINK but ended up having a child was because she was afraid that her husband would go out and go whoring, and she was afraid that their marriage would break up.

Most netizens hold a critical attitude towards her and believe that she is very rigid and an embarrassment to highly educated women, as well as a wife serving the patriarchy while pretending to be a feminist. Some netizens, however, think that there is nothing to criticize, as she is just a partial representation of modern women. Within the patriarchal framework, highly educated women like her want to fight for their own interests and achieve freedom, equality, and independence, while also being indoctrinated by society to embody the traditional values of a good wife and loving mother.

Zhang Xiaonian graduated from Tsinghua University. Not long after the Quan Xixi and Ueno Chizuko conversation video, Zhang Xiaonian posted a video with the theme of "donating sperm", in which she claimed that her boyfriend's sperm donation gave independent women the right to choose, and that he was a flawless feminist. Her comments were criticized by netizens across the internet, and even resulted in "Beijing University Quan Xixi, Tsinghua Zhang Xiaonian" becoming a trending topic on Weibo.

The reason why these two highly educated female bloggers were criticized may be due to the fact that anti-pornography feminism views are subtly dominant in China. According to Professor Huang Yingying, some anti-pornography feminists believe that when a woman gets married, she becomes an appendage of the family and a man's free babysitter. They also believe that a woman giving birth is seen as a fertility tool by a patriarchal society, as both genders are inherently unequal [2].

2.2. Emotional bloggers: Aunt Gou with wealth and Qu Qu

Aunt Gou with wealth is an emotional blogger who holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Fudan University, and is a top 10 overseas returnee. The main content of her videos includes topics such as "What is high-level emotional value", "The secret of selecting a higher level partner", and "What is the most important thing to control high-quality men".

Qu Qu primarily answers women's emotional problems through live streaming. Her famous theories include: if a woman wants to succeed, either she should take the "female competition" route while she's young, or the "male competition" route. Women who choose the female competition route should make their rich or powerful partners happy, in order to gain wealth or status. Women who choose the male competition route should focus on building their careers and making money, and then choose a partner who makes them happy, even if they are not well-off.

There are three main opinions among netizens regarding these emotional bloggers. The first one believes that they are teaching girls to become “gold diggers”, objectifying women and corrupting social morals. The second opinion is that their theories are in a stage from 100 years ago in terms of feminism, with rigid gender stereotypes of masculine and feminine traits, acknowledging that women can fight like men in a patriarchal society. The third opinion sees them as not social reformers, but practical profit makers who adapt rather than change society. While this may not be conducive to the long-term development of feminism, at least some women are awakening and freeing themselves from draining relationships.

3. Methodology

This study suggests that gender attitudes may differ between women of different ages [3]. A questionnaire survey was conducted, with 333 valid samples collected from female college students aged 18-28, via the platform of a questionnaire star. The questionnaire mainly investigated the attitudes of this group towards hot women’s issues, various types of highly educated female bloggers and the extent to which they are influenced by them. In addition, subjective opinions on gender issues were also collected, such as their gender concepts and what they think are the reasons behind the conflicting mentality of highly educated female bloggers. Furthermore, their perceptions of feminism were also explored.

Frequency analysis is used to analyze the data on the attitudes of the female college students towards hot women’s issues, various types of highly educated female bloggers, and the extent to which they are influenced by them.

Table 1: Frequency analysis results (n=333)

Question	Choice	Frequency	Percentage%
Do you know about the Beijing University Quianxixi Tsinghua Zhang Xiaonian incident	Only know Quianxixi	128	38.438
	Yes	100	30.03
	Only know Zhang Xiaonian	72	21.622
	No	33	9.91
Do you follow emotional bloggers, such as Qu Qu and Aunt Gou, etc	Yes	217	65.165
	No	116	34.835
Do you think your gender and marriage views will be influenced by the content spread by emotional bloggers, such as becoming a delicate woman who only wants to make money from men or is dependent on them	Has a certain impact	149	44.745
	Completely unaffected	110	33.033
	Has a significant impact and will actively practice	74	22.222
Do you follow bloggers who promote feminism in science	Yes	244	73.273
	No	89	26.727
Do you spontaneously learn feminist theories due to the popular science of feminist bloggers, such as reading relevant books	Yes	227	68.168
	No	106	31.832

From the results of Table 1, it can be seen that almost half of the female students pay attention to women’s hot issues, around 70% of them follow emotional bloggers, and around 70% of the female

students also follow feminist science popularization bloggers. It is worth noting that 52% of female college students follow both emotional and feminist bloggers. They are learning about feminism while listening to the advice of emotional bloggers, thereby leaving themselves with an avenue for future material development while paying attention to female liberation and arming themselves with theory. This demonstrates a sense of inner conflict felt by girls who grew up in a patriarchal society. Moreover, these bloggers have a certain degree of influence on their gender attitudes, indicating that the impact of self-media on the future development of feminism should not be underestimated.

In terms of the subjective opinions of female college students, the data for each option regarding their gender concepts are evenly distributed, indicating that some women still hold traditional gender beliefs such as “men work outside, women work inside” and “marrying well is better than doing well” [4]. In addition, the vast majority of them believe that some female bloggers, who are obviously highly educated, still transmit traditional values due to their thinking being restricted by the patriarchal framework, and that women have more difficulty earning money than men due to physiological reasons. Furthermore, each female college student has her own concept of feminism. The distribution for the three options that “men and women are completely equal, and women can do anything men can do”, “even if women are weaker, they should still be respected due to inherent physiological differences”, and “as long as we can live freely, anything is acceptable” is very evenly distributed. This also corresponds to the fact that feminism has many branches, such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, and structural feminism.

4. Analysis from a feminist perspective

4.1. Analysis of the Causes of Women’s Long Term Oppression

The initial gender inequality evolved from different physiological characteristics. Women gradually became bound to the family because of breastfeeding and caring for children, while men’s strong physique greatly elevated their status. Subsequently, men used their dominant position to design and create various systems and constructs social cognition to maintain their own ruling interests, thus fixing this unequal relationship. This is the patriarchal society that has existed since ancient times. In Simone de Beauvoir’s classic work, “The Second Sex”, she points out that women are the second sex, subservient to men and treated as property [5].

4.2. The Rise of Liberal Feminism

In the 18th century, France’s Declaration of Human Rights advocated freedom and equality, while the United States’ Declaration of Independence advocated that all men are created equal. The concepts of freedom, equality, and independence have gradually penetrated into people’s hearts. However, some scholars believe that human rights at that time were only the rights of men and did not include women. Ueno Chiako pointed out in his book “Thoughts for Survival” that due to the French term “homme” referring to both “people” and “men”, the accurate translation of the Declaration of Human Rights should be “the rights of men and citizens”. Shortly after the promulgation of the Declaration of Human Rights, Orlando de Gucci issued the Declaration on Women’s Rights, making the male chauvinism of the Declaration self-evident [6].

Since everyone is a free, equal, and independent individual, women should not be “second-class citizens” and oppressed. Therefore, in the 18th century, liberal feminism emerged, believing that society could not tolerate the deprivation of women’s equal rights. Women, whether as a group or as an individual, should enjoy equal rights with men. It advocates expanding the values related to personal freedom and social equality that were mostly associated with men in the past to women.

4.3. The Current Situation of Chinese Women

Since ancient times, the traditional patriarchal ideology of male superiority and female inferiority in China has been deeply rooted in people's hearts. Although Article 48 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulates that women have equal rights with men and implement equal pay for equal work, women in today's society are only oppressed in a more hidden way. China's current market-oriented reform has been increasingly deepening. In the redistributive economic system, women are more likely to maintain their social status due to the protection of the state. The principles of free competition and survival of the fittest advocated by the market make women more susceptible to being eliminated by market competition [7]. Ueno Qianhezi also mentioned in the book that in this competition, women are destined to fail because the competition rules are all set by men [8]. And the patriarchal culture strengthens young people's identification with traditional gender roles and family values through marriage and family models and family work pressure [9].

Under the influence of traditional cultural ideas and patriarchal social policies, it is difficult for Chinese women to balance work and family, so some highly educated women's ideas will return to tradition.

4.4. The Development Path of Feminism in the New Media Era

If feminism in the new media era wants to develop, it must compete for women's discourse power. Michel Foucault wrote in "A History of Sexual Experience" that the discourse power of women is a comprehensive reflection of the interests, propositions, qualifications, and freedom of the female population. It not only includes a hidden identification of the status and power of women's speech and its claims, but also depends on a social environment, expression mechanism, and subject qualification for effective discourse. It also directly reflects women's grasp of their own reality and the exposure of their corresponding subjective mentality [10].

As an externalization of traditional culture, online media itself inevitably follows the gender order and discourse logic dominated by men. Despite expanding the discourse space for women, issues such as marginalization and lack of discourse have not been fundamentally improved [11]. Therefore, educated women should become female spokespersons and opinion leaders, and have more opportunities to speak out in public affairs. In the era of self-media, every woman should bravely stand up and speak up for women.

In addition, social policies should also make corresponding changes. For example, maternity leave should also be taken by both men and women, rather than simply extending female maternity leave. The state should bear the cost of female childbirth, which can help women survive better in the workplace.

In short, to achieve true gender equality and ensure that the construction of female images is in the hands of women, it requires the joint efforts of society, the media, and women themselves [12].

5. Conclusion

Since ancient times, the patriarchal society has deeply rooted traditional patriarchal ideas, and various competition regulations are formulated by men. Women are oppressed and belong to the second sex. Under the same conditions, if women want to achieve something, they must put in more effort than men. In the era of new media, women's issues frequently make headlines, and there are more and more bloggers who promote feminism in science. Emotional bloggers are also highly sought after. From the results of the questionnaire in this article, it can be seen that their communication content can to some extent encourage the audience to spontaneously learn feminism or focus on self-improvement, whether it is material or spiritual. This can all indicate that women are making progress, and their channels of voice have increased. However, the patriarchal framework of society has not

changed. Therefore, women, even those with high knowledge, may struggle and contradict themselves. However, society progresses and develops in contradictions. According to the cultivation theory in communication studies, the impact of communication content on the audience is long-term and subtle. As long as more and more women speak up for women, the power of women's discourse and the influence of feminist communication will expand. Therefore, future women can gradually emerge from contradictions and arm themselves with theory, There are also more abilities and opportunities to enter the high-level decision-making circle and change the world.

The research in this article is currently somewhat immature and has some shortcomings. For example, the questionnaire only focuses on female college students and lacks comparison with data from other age groups; the collection of foreign literature is slightly insufficient. In the future, the author believes that research on feminism can continue to closely follow social hotspots, such as the boundaries of freedom of dress. At the same time, we should also focus on the world and pay attention to international feminist research, such as research on KPOP women's groups and women in the Middle East.

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