

Research on the Significance and Current Situation of Matchmaking Service Management in Developed Cities in China

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Abstract: As a long-standing service field in China, matchmaking service has become a large-scale, industrialized and widely accepted industry. Due to various factors, there are many problems in the current situation of matchmaking services in big cities. This paper discusses the current situation and the significance of matchmaking service management in developed cities in China.

Keywords: Service management, Matchmaking enterprise, Customer demand

1. Introduction

This study analyzes the current situation and problems faced by the Internet matchmaking service industry in first-tier cities of China. The first part introduces the research background, followed by the problem statement, research purpose, research problems, and research significance.

2. Research Background

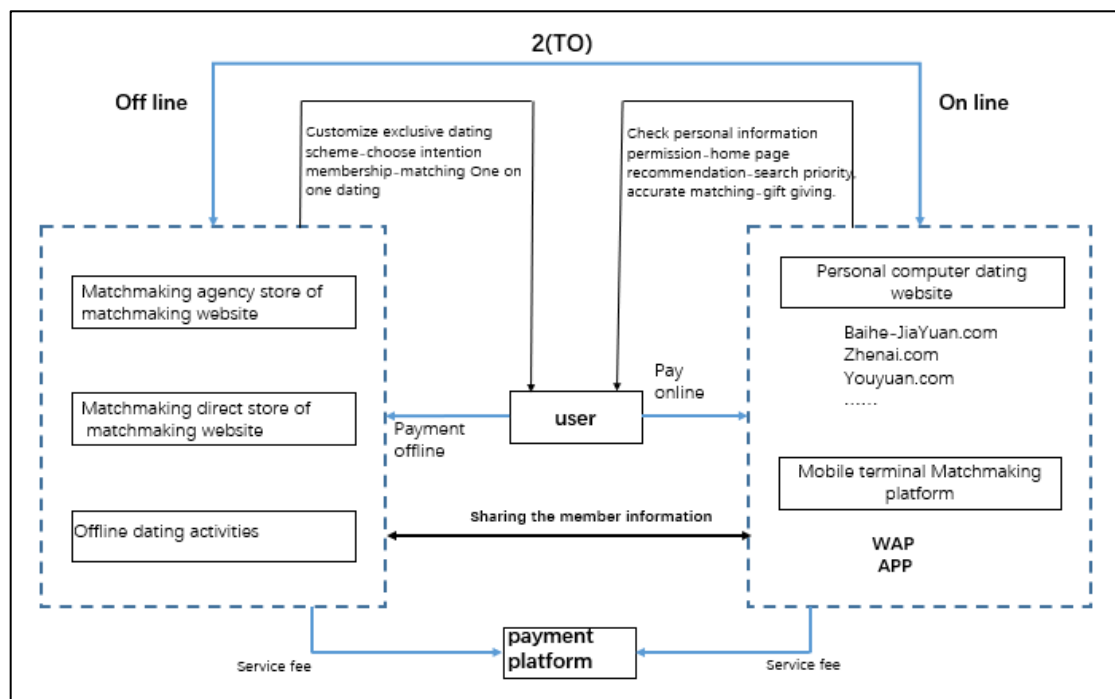
The development degree of the service industry is an important symbol to measure the economic development level of a country or region. With the reform and opening to the outside world in China, from the share of the service industry in the national economy, as well to the scale and speed of development, it is enough to confirm that China has entered the era of the service economy. Driven by Internet technology, the matchmaking service has rapidly developed from traditional private individual behavior to a large-scale and market-oriented new service industry in China.

The growing number of single groups promotes the increasing demand for matchmaking services. According to statistics from China's Ministry of Civil Affairs, the total number of single people in China was about 300 million by 2020, which is in the fourth "single wave". From 2014 to 2019, the number of divorce registrations of mainland Chinese residents increased from 3.64 million to 4.7 million, and the number of marriage registrations decreased from 13.02 million to 9.22 million. (China Civil Affairs statistical yearbook .2020). The continuous growth of the single population has brought a solid user base for the matchmaking industry. In 2021, the Internet platform matchmaking market's economic income reached 7.2 billion (RMB) , a year-on-year increase of 11.6%. It is expected that 2022 will maintain about the growth rate of 2021, and the market economic income will reach 8.05 billion (RMB). In terms of economic scale and income, the demand for matchmaking services is growing.

3. A review of matchmaking services in China

The matchmaking service has experienced a long development process since ancient times. From ancient matchmakers providing matching information, parents helping unmarried adult children choose their mate, to modern free love, newspaper marriage-seeking, marriage agency registration services, to the popularity of online matchmaking services that have flourished all over the world in recent ten years. Matchmaking service has attracted more and more attention and deeply affected people's lives from a folk activity to a commercial activity. As an independent economic individual, matchmaking service has been widely accepted by the public. With the economic development and social changes, the form of matchmaking service, its development mode, service content, and organizational structure are also changing.

The beginning of modern matchmaking industry began in the 1980s. Guang Qing matchmaking agency was established In November 1982 by Guangzhou Editorial Committee Office, Finance Bureau, and Personnel Bureau, which is also the first matchmaking agency in China, (Hu.2011) The marriage matchmaking agency at that time was an agency of the government intervention. With the gradual development of society, the matchmaking agency has gradually separated from the government and become a service industry with its own business characteristics. According to the data provided by Tian Yan Cha, there are more than 20000 matchmaking agencies in China. (Zhao.2021) 13 In 1994, Internet technology entered China. With the great development of computer network technology and communication technology, the Internet has been rapidly integrated into the development of Chinese society. With its huge amount of information and the sharing of information resources, the Internet provides an excellent information platform. The matchmaking industry can break through the original regional restrictions and realize the progress and development of the industry itself by relying on the Internet. Based on the needs of the industry and business purposes, a large number of online dating websites have emerged. From 1998 to 2017, the development of the Chinese online matchmaking industry has experienced four periods: embryonic period, exploration period, growth period, and maturity period. In the embryonic period (1998-2003), the public lacked awareness of the online marriage industry, with a small traffic scale, small investment scale, and small revenue scale. During the exploration period (2004-2008), the online marriage and love industry was well known to the public, the traffic scale gradually expanded, the investment scale increased rapidly, and the revenue scale increased slowly. In the growth period (2008-2015), online marriage and love products are mature, the growth of traffic scale is slow, the growth of investment scale is slow, and the growth of revenue scale is rapid. In the mature period (2015-present), the online marriage and love market has been transformed, the traffic scale has remained stable, the growth of the investment scale has slowed down, and the ways of revenue have been diversified. (Liu.2017)

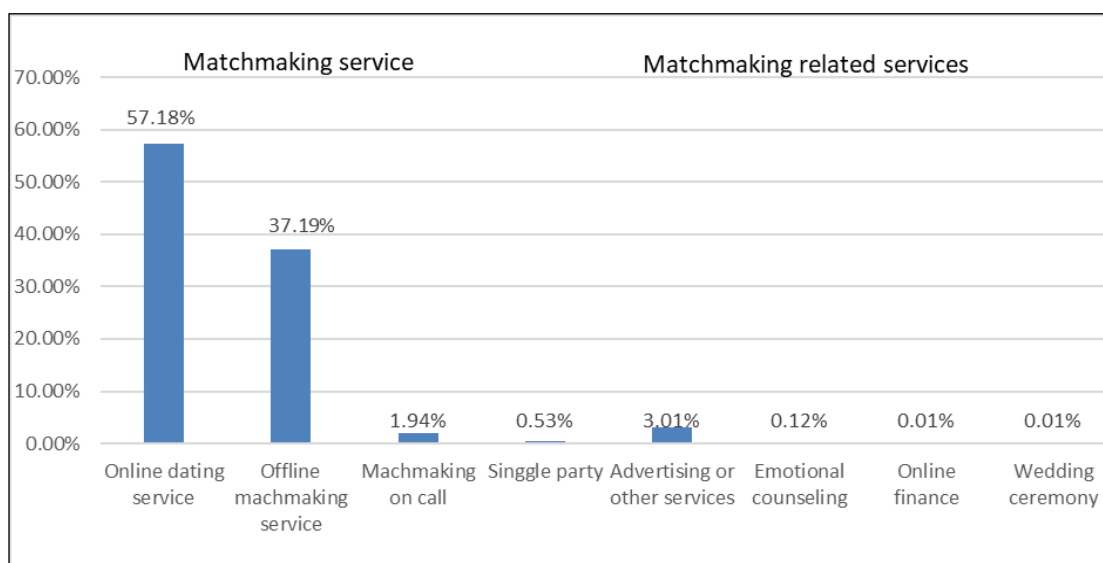


Data source: Special research report on online matchmaking market in China 2015
<https://www.analysys.cn/>

Figure 1: The matchmaking market has formed a stable operation mode - online and offline interaction mode

The service model of big matchmaking companies depending on the Internet, such as BaiHe, Jia yuan.com, Zhenai.com, and Youyuan.com has developed from a single online service to a combination of (as shown in Figure 1) online and offline(O2O) (Figure 1: Total Sample data2000,1600 Actual user who have actually used matchmaking services within half a year; Potential users who have not used Internet dating services 400.) At present, a stable service mode (O2O) has been formed. In addition, because of the establishment of online and offline businesses, matchmaking services extend from related businesses to weddings, wedding photography, emotional counseling, and other businesses. However, in terms of the share of business income, the share of the extended business is very small. (Figure 2, Gray

lines represent information flow, blue lines represent cash flow) This diversified business chain model poses a great challenge to the relevance and contact degree of various industrial links.



Data source: *www.analysys.cn Annual analysis of Internet matchmaking service in China 2017*

Figure 2: Income distribution of matchmaking services in different business segments

4. Current situation of service management in matchmaking industry

4.1. The service management system with customers as the core has not yet been formed

According to the analysis of public opinion hot spots of consumer complaints and consumer rights protection in 2021 released by Jiangsu Consumer Rights Protection Commission, matchmaking service has become one of the hot spots of rights protection. The complaints mainly focus on forcing and inducing consumption, matchmaker's lack of relevant qualifications, incomplete information review, unreasonable service terms, high fees, difficult refund, marketing harassment, false publicity, etc. In September 2021, Jiangsu Consumer Protection Commission conducted a consumption survey on the service status of five matchmaking corporations: JiaYuan.com, Baihe.com, zhenai.com, My Liang yuan.com, and NeteaseHuatian.com. According to the survey report, there are common problems in all matchmaking platforms, such as loopholes in platform information audit, false publicity, unclear refund rules, and infringement of consumers' right to know and fair trading. Obviously, there is a big gap between service quality and customer expectations.

4.2. The customers do not enjoy equivalent services after payment when they use the platform matchmaking services.

Looking up the HeiMao.com complaints and 21CN poly complaints on behalf of Finance and economics, we found that Zhenai.com has become the "hardest hit area" of complaints, and various complaints about induced consumption, false publicity, Overlord terms, and perfunctory services emerge one after another. By May 2020, Zhenai.com had accumulated more than 3000 complaints, mainly asking for a refund, "false publicity" and "inducing consumption". Complaints and investigation reports about matchmaking services emerge one after another, but the themes are relatively consistent: users are guided to buy VIP members by "fancy" before payment, but users do not enjoy equivalent services after payment.

The fierce competition urges matchmaking service enterprises to constantly explore and innovate, trying to improve their own competitiveness. However, as an emerging service industry in the Chinese market, the service management of the matchmaking industry is affected by many factors, which brings many problems. This has seriously damaged the image and reputation of the enterprise., and even brought problems such as the trust crisis in the industry (Hu, 2016)).

As the research about the matchmaking industry is in its infancy, there is little research on service management in this industry. However, the demand for a huge single group for matchmaking services is expanding the matchmaking service market. Therefore, the study of matchmaking service management

has the following important significance.

5. Research Significance

This study has great practical significance for the development of the matchmaking service industry. After more than ten years of development, the matchmaking service in China has entered a mature period, and the limitations of the industry have become prominent. At present, the competition and challenges faced by the matchmaking market have become the necessary requirements for the reform and innovation of the industry. This study has the following practical significance:

5.1. Practical significance

From the analysis of the macroeconomic environment, the Chinese economy is entering the era of "service economy" and "service competition". (Teng,2018) Improving the level of the service management and innovation of the tertiary industry is not only complies with the requirements of the development of the new science and technology era but also the guarantee the healthy development of the Chinese service industry, which is conducive to the construction of a harmonious society in China.

From the perspective of microeconomics, the service management level of an enterprise determines its competitiveness. The service management of the matchmaking service industry lags far behind the progress of technological innovation in China. Therefore, improving the level of service management and carrying out service innovation is an important way to enhance market competitiveness. (Haksever,2016) In addition, optimizing service quality, improving service efficiency, improving the service management system, systematizing the management structure of matchmaking service, and refining the service objects and service functions are also the methods to realize the value creation and value-added of service management in the enterprise. (Bruhn,2012) Finally, it effectively improves the difficulties of the matchmaking market. Due to the fast pace of modern life, high population mobility, and limited opportunities for single groups to find partners, singles have a stronger demand for matchmaking services. However, there are still some problems in matchmaking service, such as lack of management, integrity crisis, confusion of values, non-standard service, and low recognition. Improving the quality of matchmaking services and implementing the optimization and innovation of service management are effective ways to alleviate these phenomena.

The improvement of the quality and efficiency of matchmaking services can effectively alleviate the pressure on how to meet the ideal mate for single people in China. The quality and efficiency of matchmaking services can effectively increase the marriage rate and take a positive function on the low fertility rate. (Xie,20) At present, China has 300 million single people. In 2021, the data of the Seventh National Census show that the current total fertility rate (TFR) is lower than 1.5, and the ultra-low fertility rate will be the biggest population risk faced by China in the future. As a part of social and economic entities, the improvement of service quality of matchmaking services can effectively alleviate the pressure of mate selection, reduce the number of single people, then take a positive role in promoting the population fertility rate. It has contributed to alleviating the aging crisis.

5.2. Theoretical significance

The establishment of a matchmaking service value chain will further promote the study and application of service management theory and fill the gap in the application of service value chain theory in the Chinese matchmaking industry. In addition, it provides a reference for the exploration of service management in relevant service industries. The innovation of service mode and the optimization of service quality will further promote the research and application of service management theory.

The research on foreign matchmaking services has been studied and developed to varying degrees. By contrast, we are behind. At present, there are few discussions on the management of matchmaking services in China. I hope this study can make a modest contribution to the innovation and management practice of matchmaking services in China, and play its due role in the construction of the localization of value chain management in Chinese matchmaking services.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, the exploration of the theory and practice of service management in this industry has

become an important research topic at present. Based on the current situation of the above matchmaking service industry, I combed some related problems affecting the service management level of the industry for your reference.

(1) There is a big gap between the matching degree of the blind date market and the traditional marriage matching view in the developed cities in China.

(2) The demand for spouse selection of single customer groups paying fees is not equal to the market supply.

(3) The quality resources that the dating website can provide are limited and difficult to obtain.

(4) The relevant norms and systems of the matchmaking industry are not perfect, which makes it difficult for the company to manage the competition in the industry.

(5) Low matching success rate and low industry credibility have a great impact on the long-term sustainable development of the company.

(6) Single profit model, unstable profit evaluation, lack of business innovation and strategic planning.

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