

Analysis of the psychological factors of contemporary youth's fear of marriage in China

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Abstract: *The desire for a happy marriage and family is an eternal human goal, but in China, young people's traditional views of love, marriage, family, and society are facing significant obstacles due to the effects of reform and opening up policy, the market economy's competitive pressure, and significant social changes. Marriage was always a joyful moment in life, but surveys suggest that an increasing number of young people are expressing fear about marriage. In this study, the psychological features of modern youths' dread of marriage were specifically investigated and researched using the interview method. The results revealed four key psychological aspects of modern youths' fear of marriage. Since there are relatively few scholars studying the psychological factors of fear of marriage, we hope that this study will provide some help to scholars studying the psychological factors of fear of marriage.*

Keywords: *contemporary youth; fear of marriage; psychological factors*

1. Introduction

Recently, domestic scholars have defined the phenomenon of delayed marriage, including late marriage, fear of marriage, and temporary celibacy, as "non-marriage". With the economic and social transformation, the marital situation in China is changing under the impact of industrialization and modernization, and some new trends and characteristics have emerged, one of which is the postponement of marriage. Among the young population, the proportion of unmarried people is gradually increasing, the group of older unmarried people is also expanding, and the number of people who are afraid of marriage is rising [1]. In a study on the current situation of marriage fear among rural male youths, Qiying Liu, a domestic scholar, points out that rural male youths are currently facing a marriage squeeze. There are many men and few women, and the sudden increase in marriage payments has led to a large number of unmarried rural youths developing a fear of marriage. At the same time, some rural youths have low self-esteem and anxiety, and their parents' anxiety also exerts pressure on youths of marriageable age, leading some of them to develop a rebellious or even marriage avoidance state of mind.

Foreign scholars have shown that 70% of people believe that the high divorce rate is the direct cause of their fear of marriage, 65% are not adequately prepared for the responsibilities of marriage, 44% believe that they are not psychologically mature enough to trust themselves or their partner, and 32% believe that the financial cost of marriage is too high for them too. They also felt that the financial cost of marriage was too high for them to bear[2]. It suggests that the social reality of the difficulty of choosing a spouse in a changing society has contributed to the fear of marriage and even non-marriage among most urban youth, especially among women[3].

Based on a review of relevant literature, this study explored the relationship between the causes of contemporary youth's fear of marriage and youth's psychological factors, mainly using the interview method.

2. Research Methodology

The study used a snowball sampling technique to conduct semi-structured interviews with six young, marriage-phobic men and women, including three boys and three girls, in three locations in City A: an office building, a pedestrian street, and a community, in order to make the survey respondents more realistic and to reflect the situation of the issues under investigation in a scientific way.

All of the interviews ranged in age from 20 to 30. The respondents' ages were restricted by the author to 20 to 30 for the following reasons: First, impartiality. Women must be 20 years old to be married legally in China, thus that is the minimum age of the interviewees for this study. Also, it is grounded on reality. The subject of marriage has emerged as a big problem that young people of this age need to address quickly because they are at the marriageable period and are currently confronting or experiencing the major life issue of getting married and establishing a family. It is universal, which brings us to our third point. They are born during a time of continuous social advancement and quick economic development, influenced by the urbanization process. People's consciousness and self-thought have dramatically expanded due to the fact that the economic foundation controls the superstructure. As a result, dread of marriage and the phenomenon of fear of marriage are more prevalent and typical among young people in this age group. Finally, it is significant. Young people at this point will form the core of future social innovation and development as the city's new blood and new strength, therefore research into their marriage problems is crucial. Fifthly, practicality. The age restriction was set at 20 to 30 years old to make the interview operation feasible and convenient as well as to make the interview and observation of the interviewees easier in terms of time and space. These young individuals have concentrated populations, relatively stable places of study, jobs, and residences, and a strong comprehension of the interview procedure, making it simple to gather research data. The data of this interviewer is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Information about respondents.

No.	Gender	age	degree	Career	Place	Duration	Date
A	man	23	junior college education	Administration	Office Building	1h	2022.7.2
B	Female	30	Master	HR	Office Building	1h	2022.7.2
C	man	25	Undergraduate	Engineer	Pedestrian Street	3h	2022.7.27
D	Female	25	Undergraduate	student	Community	2h	2022.7.26
E	Female	25	Master	student	Community	4h	2022.7.5
F	man	25	Master	student	Pedestrian Street	2h	2022.7.5

3. Results and Discussion

In an era of rapid social change, marriage phobia is prevalent among young men and women, spreading rapidly like an epidemic. Marriageable young people at the best time of their lives are averse, repulsed and resistant to marriage, and when it comes to marriage, they unconsciously run away from it, fearing and dreading it. The fear of marriage is an undesirable psychological state, known as a modern social psychological disease, which manifests itself as a psychological disorder of marriage. Many difficulties plague the young generation on the road to marriage and family, causing them to have negative thoughts about marriage, which in turn hinders their willingness to marry and delays the process of marriage and childbirth. The differences in life circumstances and individual differences between marriageable young people before moving on to marriage and family have led to a wide range of different fears of marriage. After talking to several young people who are afraid of marriage, the author summarised the following psychological factors that lead young people to be afraid of marriage:

3.1. Fear of losing job promotion opportunities

In the context of rapidly changing times, people can only cope with the changes of the times by constantly updating their knowledge and acquiring new skills. This is why marriage, which requires a lot of time and energy, has become the most unstable factor in the lives of young men and women. They both fear that their marriage will affect the stability and development of their careers. As young people case A and case B in the interviews:

Case A, a recent college graduate, was given the opportunity to continue working for a state-owned company due to his outstanding performance there. He values his well-earned employment and is not currently thinking about getting married because he is concerned that it will take some of his time and energy away from his commitment to his job. He said in the interview that he had just worked with the company for three months and had recently graduated, adding, "I have initially adapted to the company's environment and work tempo, and I have "mingled" with my coworkers. I want to cherish this job, learn and work hard, make some achievements at work as soon as possible, and not let the leaders down. I have just graduated and I need to make ends meet. Now is the best time for me to work hard and strive

for success. --Case Youth A, 2022.7.2

Case B, a capable professional, is dedicated to her work and gives it everything she has. She is keen to increase her social standing and personal worth by performing well at work. She avoids getting married out of concern that it will take up her time, preventing her from finishing her work on time and losing out on prospects for a job promotion and pay raise. She stated in the interview, "I am 30 years old, have been employed for five years, have moved up and down the corporate ladder, and am now a supervisor. I've been at my job for five years, climbing the corporate ladder, and I'm now a supervisor. Based on my prior performance, I'm hoping to be promoted to manager at the end of the year. Marriage is just a delusion; I don't even have time to fall in love, much less be married. Additionally, the bosses won't even consider my advancement if I get married now since they would assume that I am pregnant and will give birth to a child soon, delaying the work process. I can't pass up this hard-earned opportunity because it's too difficult to go all the way. --Case Youth B, 2022.7.2

3.2. Fear of betrayal or infidelity

When assessing the security of a relationship, it's crucial to consider how well-established a trust connection might be between two individuals who are in an intimate relationship. If you are not able to find common ground while conserving differences when partners have many diverse values and outlooks on life in their interactions and relationships, you may have a great sense of insecurity. Because you are unfamiliar with many of the other person's perspectives and coping mechanisms, this might leave you feeling very insecure. You may safely let yourself explore a lot of uncharted territory if communication is easy and your spouse can show you more unconditional acceptance; When your partner's numerous differences make you more anxious and you are unable to confront and resolve them, you will grow more insecure. If this insecurity interferes with your ability to live comfortably, it will eventually turn into marriage-phobia. during the interview, as Case Youth C.

Case C, a sensitive and deeply rooted young man, maintained a distant relationship while attending college. His discovery of his ex-infidelity girlfriend's conversations through his mobile phone chat logs during their relationship left him feeling incredibly upset, and the terrible memories of that time in his life have weighed down his ambitions of getting married. "I ended my previous relationship because my ex-girlfriend fell in love with someone else while we were still together, and I couldn't tolerate such conduct as infidelity," the interviewer claims. I couldn't envision that scenario—I wouldn't be able to bear it, and I have no idea what horrific things I would do—if I got married and then learned that my other half had cheated on me. I don't want to get married because I don't want to deal with that circumstance or that issue." --Case Youth C, 2022.7.27

3.3. Fear of repeating my parents' marriage

The impact of one's family of origin on their personality and psychology is significant. A person will view marriage as unpleasant, miserable, and uncomfortable if they have parental divorce, marital strife, fights, domestic violence, etc. as children. This is because the majority of his cognitive experiences—which are mostly negative—come from the interactions between his parents during their marriage. Therefore, the marriage is seen as unpleasant and sad subliminally. A shadow from his early years has sowed the bitterness of his fear of marriage, and he is also afraid internally that if he gets married, he would have to live the same life as his parents. during the interview, as Case Youth D.

Case D, her parents' marriage was not happy, her father was constantly gone, her mother, brother, and the interviewer relied on and supported one another, and they lived and went to school only on her mother's sorbet farming, which made life challenging. She has a grudge towards her father, and she has dark, unhappy memories of growing up in the marital home, which has made her strongly disapprove of marriage. She claims in the interview, "When I got married and had kids, then I was like my parents, fighting every day, no matter what, large or tiny, always starting to fight when I said a few things. They even got into fights when I was a kid. Is it enjoyable to live like way every day? If it weren't for you and your brother, I would have been divorced a long time ago, is my mother's go-to line. There were times when I felt unneeded and contemplated leaving the house. I even considered killing myself, but what would happen to my brother if I did? I felt comfortable living alone. --Case Youth D, 2022.7.26

3.4. Fear of unfulfilled marital expectations

Young people's perspectives on marriage have a big impact on the type of marriage they choose.

Some young people in society are influenced by the desire for a perfect marriage and the desire to have a tale like that of a prince and a princess; as a result, they select marriage cautiously out of fear that their aspirations for a successful marriage may be dashed. Other young people don't necessarily reject marriage, but they are afraid of it because they have high expectations for it as a tool to bring about social change and worry that making the incorrect choice in a spouse may result in disappointment. like in the talks with Young Case E and Case F.

Case E has a teenage heart and an idealized, lovely vision of marriage and family. She is your typical ivory tower girl. She views the marriage she envisions in her head as a fairytale because she fears that if she encounters a real marriage, it will ruin her idyllic ideas about it. As a result, she resists getting married. She stated in the interview, "I have high hopes and lovely images of love and marriage. I hope my other partner is someone I can look up to, who is more attractive, more intelligent, and has a better job than I do, comes from a good family, and always loves and protects me. I look forward to fairy-tale love. I would much prefer be "better off" than not till my prince comes. I don't want to get married at such a young age, much less simply wed and lead a wretched existence.--Case Youth E, 2022.7.5

Case F, a student at a rural institution, is pragmatic in his goals, practical in his thinking, and eager to improve the status quo. He hopes to change his life for the better through marriage, but he has put off getting married because he is worried about making the wrong decision and having his plans fail. "I have a friend whose family is also from the country, but he has a good degree and has joined a huge factory after graduation," he stated in the interview. He was a handsome man, driven by his work, liked by the leader of his team, who later presented him to his daughter. He eventually wed a "wealthy white woman," whose family gifted him a home and a high-end automobile, and he now has a wife and children, a home and a car, as well as a reliable job. I would have everything, have fewer years of effort, and be in control of my life if I had such wonderful fortune and met a "nice daughter-in-law." So I shouldn't get married quickly, I should be careful, and I should pick the "ideal woman". – Case Youth F, 2022.7.5

4. Conclusion

After the interview method, this study has come to the following conclusions: the causes of contemporary youth's fear of marriage and the youth's psychological factors are significantly positively correlated, and there are four main psychological factors of contemporary youth's fear of marriage. Fear of marriage 1: Fear of losing the opportunity to be promoted in the workplace. fear of marriage; fear of marriage 3: fear of repeating their parents' marriage, because of the influence of their families of origin, most of these types of young people show a sense of distrust of marriage, that marriage is unfortunate; fear of marriage 4: fear of marriage expectations failed, these types of young people often have the most perfect fantasy, the other half has is very high requirements, they are afraid of the wrong choice of marriage, so once with the imaginary, The perfect marriage does not match, will begin to retreat, it is difficult to step into the hall of marriage.

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