

Research on Intergenerational Transmission of Post-95s Generation's View of Marriage from The Perspective of Locus of Control

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Abstract: In today's social background, people are always willing to pursue a better material life. In choice of marriage, parents and children have different ideas and standards in choosing a spouse, which would lead to parents' intervention in the choice of children's spouse. This paper analyzes and demonstrates the current situation of marriage and love among Chinese youth. It first introduces several ways to find a partner in China and expresses Chinese parents' views on mate selection through literature. By means of interviews with young people in marriageable age and their parents and literature analysis, this paper discusses and demonstrates the dominant role of parents in their children's choice of spouses, and puts forward suggestions on how to properly deal with the problem of parental intervention in the process of marriage.

Keywords: Marriage, Blind date, Parents, Mate selection, Intervention.

1. Introduction

In China, parents often say that marriage is an important life event. In the cultural tradition, parents like to treat their children's life events as their own. The family is the basic constituent unit of the society. Forming a family and entering into a marriage are generally regarded as the starting point of a new stage of life and an important sign for people to truly enter the social life. For the public, marriage is one of the basic contents of daily social life, which is closely related to everyone. Therefore, love and marriage are always hot topics in social life. In thousands of years of traditional Chinese culture, marriage is no longer limited to the private sphere of the two parties, but is more regarded as a matter of family reproduction and social stability. The involvement of parents and families has made marriage more than a relationship. As a result, parents are increasingly concerned about their children's marital problems. Therefore, the most simple and rough way is to date and introduction according to their own standards. In this open era, people subconsciously feel that we are free enough to choose our own partners. However, even in a liberal culture, parents can still interfere with their children's spouse choice by agreeing or disagreeing [1]. Although the parents' intentions are good, it is inevitable that the two generations will create barriers, contradictions and differences in concepts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Ways for Chinese Young People to Find a Partner

In China, finding a partner is usually divided into finding one's own (a classmate, friend, or colleague) and going on blind dates. The so-called blind date activities can be roughly divided into four types. The first is private introductions, where parents introduce their children or familiar young people through their parents' friends or friends of their parents' friends. There are two advantages to this approach.

The first one is that parents and their friends generally have the same or similar background. The second one is that people introduced by acquaintances are more reliable. The second is for parents to hold a blind date meeting in the park [2]. This usually happens in big cities like Beijing or Shanghai. Parents hang their children's information (gender, age, job, income, etc.) and their requirements for in-law publicly in the park. Then they would look for information about the son in law or daughter in law that satisfies them, and have in-depth conversations with their parents on the spot. The advantage of this approach is that it is more efficient and has more options. The third way is more entertaining, which is to broadcast blind date programs on television through radio and television stations. Usually, there are around 24 female guests standing on the stage, and then a male guest comes on stage to introduce himself and answer female guests' questions. Female guests express whether they are interested in male guests by choosing whether to turn off the lights. There is also a model of gender swap — a program of 24 male guests and one female guest. This type of program began to rise around 2010 and is very dramatic, but it is unknown whether the content of the program is fraudulent. The last way is popular all over the world, that is, to find friends through APPs or dating sites, such as tinder or Chinese dating APP Tantan. Initially, users decide whether to go deep into friends through photos, swiping left means no interest and sliding right means like. If both parties swipe right, then they can start chatting.

2.2. Criteria of Chinese Parents to Choose a Spouse for Their Children

Gui used two theories to specifically analyze the perspective of Chinese parents, namely filter theory and social exchange theory[2]. The filtering theory is based on homosexual ideology, which means one seeks the common characteristics in oneself and in one's mate. This phenomenon actually exists all over the world, initially manifested as religious belief, race, class status, age, etc. [3]. Nowadays, apart from the above, people still consider many aspects, such

as education, appearance, family environment, assets, income and others. Chinese parents also try to judge the suitability of their children's spouses in these areas, with particular emphasis on money and background. Social exchange theory is a process of mutual complementation. Choosing a mate is like a tangible and intangible transaction. The most important thing is what kind of benefits one can provide the other. It is like a bargaining chip in the hand, with a certain value. In the market of mate selection, the value each person can provide determines what kind of person to trade with. This includes contacts, property, intelligence, appearance and others [2].

3. Interview and Discussion

Parents and children differ in the concept of mate selection, which is specifically embodied in the standards of mate selection and the understanding and views of marriage. However, both theories above are missing an important aspect of marriage, love. This happens to distinguish the concept of marriage between parents and children. To get a better sense of what parents think, the father of interviewee No. 1 was interviewed and said: "I hope my daughter can marry a local person, and she should be closer to her mother and me." He said that when the children live nearby after marriage, they can easily take care of each other more often. He believes that marriage has nothing to do with love, and can be achieved through blind dates, and then two persons can slowly cultivate their feelings. He hopes that the future son-in-law would have a high education background, better family background and great income. However, interviewee No. 1 said that she was not very receptive to blind dates. She thought that feelings and appearance were important as well and hoped that she could find a partner by herself. However, she also had certain requirements for other conditions, including background and income. Apostolou points out that there are three main points causing ambiguity between parents and children in spouse selection, namely appearance, personality and background [4]. From the above interview, it can be seen that for interviewee's parents, wealth and background are more important, and for interviewee herself, feelings and appearance are more important. Children are more likely to value appearance than their parents, and may even lower their background, status and other requirements for good looks [5-6]. On the contrary, because of the spouse's excellent background and status, parents will lower their requirements on appearance. Furthermore, this will indirectly improve the social status of the parents so that their children can get better social resources and better pension security in the future [7]. For some parents in modern China, marriage is a combination of two families. And it is a kind of behaviour that gives children a certain degree of protection in the rest of their lives, so money is the key to a happy marriage. After having a certain material foundation, they can develop the relationship. In the eyes of Chinese parents, the meaning of marriage is to give birth to children for the family, to establish the financial and social relationship between the two parties, and to provide old-age security when they get old [2]. In a word, the two generations differ greatly in their ideas of mate selection, and their requirements and standards for younger spouses are different. In the end, different attitudes can lead parents to manipulate.

The concept of mate choice is also affected by social development. First of all, family values between Chinese and western are different. When Bill Gates was asked what was his greatest achievement in his life, his answer was not

Microsoft, not changing the world, but his wife Melinda. Fei mentioned in the book that in the western family environment, the family is dominated by the wife and the husband, raising the children together [8]. When the children grow up and become adults, they gradually let go. Husbands and wives are the central players in everything, and the strength of their relationship is their emotional attachment [8]. However, in Chinese tradition, the main family relationships are vertical, such as father and son, mother and daughter-in-law. Relationships between parents are less important. Parents will put the children first, give them excessive love, and do not want to let their children go detours. In the end, the relationship between the two generations should be responsibility and obedience. Therefore, when talking about spouse selection, the parents will be dominant and would care less about the children's feelings. Another part of the reason is that in Chinese history, male and female feelings should be reserved and restrained, rather than open and willing to express them as in the west. In the marriage of elders, people rarely expressed affection to each other. "I love you" is an expression that people are too shy to say, even are a little ashamed of. With the development of the Internet and frequent cultural exchanges, young people can have more access to the thoughts of people from all over the world, and their inclusiveness would also increase. Therefore, young people are more willing to express their inner feelings like western culture in order to show that they value their relationships. This eventually leads to ideological estrangement from the elders.

Chinese parents like to get involved in their children's choice of a spouse, and even intervene and take the initiative. When facing a child who already has a boyfriend or girlfriend, Chinese parents subconsciously think that their child's choice is not good enough to meet their requirements. And when facing a child who does not have a partner, Chinese parents will take the initiative to help them find. To this end, the main targets of interviews are children around 25-year-old and their parents. The main question is whether he or she currently has a girlfriend or boyfriend, whether their parents are aware of it, and their parents' attitude towards this. Interviewee No. 2 has a good family background. His parents have stable and high income. He has a girlfriend from the same city and have confessed to his parents that he was serious about this relationship. His parents do not think that the interviewee will have a long-term relationship with his girlfriend, because this is the girlfriend chosen by the interviewee. The parents of interviewee No. 2 think that their son still need to meet a suitable blind date introduced by their relatives to get married. The interviewee No. 2 finally said that he would stick to his choice. This is a typical example of a disagreement between a child and parents over the choice of a spouse. When disagreements arise, parents decide to step in and "make it right". Most parents think that their children are not mature enough even when they have already grown into adults, because they just entered the society and do not understand the society and marriage. Parents believe that children are not mature enough to choose suitable partners all by themselves, and do not have enough insight and knowledge to judge their partners from various aspects such as money, future development and others. This leads them to deny their children's choice in the first place. One of the reasons why parents are so worried about their children is China's one-child policy [9]. Today most of the marriageable young people are the only child. Parents devoted all their love to the

only child. In the article of Short, it is also mentioned that the one-child policy makes it easier for parents to participate in their children's private life [10]. High attention to children leads to more expectations and a strong desire for protection [11]. That's why parents would forcefully intervene and try to dominate.

However, there is an idiom in China called *Mendanghuidui* (door-to-door pairing). *Mendang* is the same as the doorway. When the doorway for making money is equivalent, the two parties can get along with each other or settle in. It means that when both parties have equal social status, economic situation, occupation and others, they are suitable for marriage. Otherwise, the husband and wife will be discordant and the children will suffer [12]. This is also consistent with the filtering theory mentioned in Gui's article [2]. Both Blackwell and Lichter expressed that if both parties have the same characteristics and conditions (background, status, income, etc.), it is easier for them to have a stable relationship [3]. Therefore, the background, income and other conditions that the elders valued are not unreasonable. In the same way, social exchange theory can also be understood as another way of *Mendanghuidui* (door-to-door pairing), that is, mutual benefits can be provided to each other. For example, the one party can provide the other with money and assets, and the other can provide the one party with connections and relationships, which can be understood as an invisible transaction in the marriage market. In short, when everything is equal, a longer-lasting relationship can be guaranteed.

When children become adults, there are two main choices that need to be made relatively independently: employment and marriage. Employment is difficult, but marriage is no easier. In a pluralistic society, there are more job choices and opportunities for everyone. Even if it's not perfect at first, you can still change jobs, but marriage is much more demanding. If it doesn't work out the first time, it's hard to pick a new mate, especially after having children. Many marriages that have survived is only for the sake of children. Divorce, for many Chinese, is not an option because they see it as a stigma, a public admission of failure. If you can't meet the right person, you should rather lack it. Today's pluralistic society absolutely can and should accommodate all forms of existence. Whether married or not, everyone has the right and means to pursue their own happiness, which does not necessarily depend on others. The younger generation should not be too superstitious about the opinions and suggestions of the elders. They can listen, yet they should also have their own independent ideas and judgments

So how to reduce the excessive interference of parents in their children's marriage? First of all, publicity and education should be carried out through public opinion media so that the marriageable people can establish a correct family value and create a warm and harmonious family atmosphere, and learn to skillfully resolve disputes and reconcile conflicts between families. More important, it is not necessary to find someone to get married and have children at a certain age. Secondly, parents should boldly let go of their children, avoiding interfering with children's marriage value under the banner of "care and love", and inadvertently pushing their children's marriage to a dead end. For the right and wrong, people may wish to think differently. Both sides need to make modest concessions, and rationally deal with the friction in the child's life. Third, parents and children should communicate more and respect each other, but respect doesn't mean obedience and substitution. Parents can't make important decisions on

behalf of their children. The fourth one is improving laws and regulations. The Marriage Law in China only prohibits parents from interfering in the freedom of marriage in Article 3, which is too general and non-operational [13]. In real life, there are many forms of parents interfering with their children's marriage. There are no clear rules on which are illegal acts and their consequences. In this regard, the legislative department should make detailed regulations or give judicial interpretations so that the judicial department can operate specifically and reduce the occurrence of such phenomena.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are differences between parents and children in the choice and standards of the spouse, and parents may interfere too much in the name of protection. Parents pay too much attention to their children's love and marriage problems, which often bring burden and pressure to their children. Sometimes parents impose their subjective will and ideas on their children, which leads to frequent friction and collision between the two generations on the issue of love and marriage. As time goes, the criteria for young people to choose a mate are not only economic conditions and appearance, but also internal factors, such as feelings and values. The background, power and assets that parents value are more likely to be regarded as snobbery by their children, or it will even be called "selling daughter" in China. And this level also makes the conflict of love and marriage more and more obvious between the two generations. It is also mentioned that even if the parents indicated that they were only providing help to their children, in fact, many parents would still highly recommend their choice of spouse and persuade their children to meet them. This causes a great deal of distress to the parties involved. If the children do not accept the arrangement of parents, it will often lead to tension between the two, resulting in family problems. But if kids reluctantly accepted the parents frequently arranged blind date, it is likely to cause children's resentment of this way of spouse selection. Regarding the parents' intervention in children's marriage, some people make their children rush to get married without knowing the relationship or feelings of the other party by urging marriage or arrangement. Some parents are dissatisfied with their children's choice of spouse, and persuade their children to break up when making conflicts. The reason why parents intervene in children's marriage is not only the social environment but also the personal quality of parents. Because of China's population policy, each family has only one child, and most families would focus on their only one child. Many children follow the arrangements of their parents from childhood, and parents are also used to impose their will on their children. No matter big or small, parents don't let their children make their own decisions, making their children lack tolerance. In marriage, people cannot tolerate each other and resolve family conflicts. As parents, they should fully understand their children's standards of mate selection and respect their children's willingness to get married. As children, they should also try to understand their parents' efforts to deal with their children's marriage, and actively communicate with their parents. In general, this social phenomenon reflects the confusion and contradiction between the two generations, and also reveals the compromise and reconciliation between the two generations on the dating issue and the differences in their views on love and marriage. Only by establishing effective

communication between parents and children can we avoid bringing more family conflicts.

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