

# The Influence of The Concept of Gender Equality on The Concept of Marriage Among Contemporary Young People in China

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**Abstract.** In recent years, China's marriage rate and fertility rate have declined year by year, which has become a serious social problem. The marriage rate is greatly influenced by young people's views on marriage. This paper uses the literature analysis method to analyze the relationship between the four core journals and the articles on the theme of gender equality and marriage as samples. The study found that the number of papers on the influencing factors of the concept of marriage was relatively small, the research factors were relatively simple, and the influence of gender perception on it was not yet addressed. In the context of the times, this paper argues that the low marriage rate is a real and serious social problem, and it is urgent to solve it. As a major trend of historical development, gender equality has an impact on the current young people's willingness to marry. Therefore, how to rationally apply the concept of gender equality and how to promote the establishment of a guarantee system is urgent.

**Keywords:** Contemporary young people; gender equality concept; marriage concept.

## 1. Introduction

According to data released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the marriage rate in our country has been declining for 9 consecutive years since 2013. The marriage rate in 2022 is 4.8 per thousand, down 0.6 per thousand from the previous year and the lowest since 2013. The marriage rate is closely related to the birth rate of newborns. The declining marriage rate has affected the decline in the birth rate to a certain extent. The decline in the birth rate has led to an inverse increase in the population, and China's population is aging more and more. The state has put forward a three-child policy to promote fertility. In response to a reporter's question, the person in charge of the National Health Commission proposed that marriage, childbirth, parenting, and education should be considered as a whole, and the education and guidance of marriageable young people's views on marriage and love and family should be strengthened, and unhealthy social practices such as bad habits of marriage and sky-high bride prices should be controlled, and the level of eugenics and childcare services should be improved, and an inclusive childcare service system should be developed. In the process of doing my background research, many female college students came up with the concept of "gender equality". At the international level, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948, making gender equality part of international human rights law. In recent years, China has placed gender equality in a very important position, not only including gender equality in its basic national policies, but also issuing a white paper such as "Gender Equality and Women's Development in China", introducing an anti-domestic violence law in 2015 and amending the rural land contract law in 2017 to further protect women's rights. But during the period when women's power was consolidated, the marriage rate was declining. Whether there is a certain connection during the period. Previous studies on the influencing factors of marriage and love are more likely to include personal background, class identity, family interaction pattern and marriage system. However, the research on the influence of gender equality on the willingness and outlook of contemporary young people to marry and love is not mentioned and is necessary.

## 2. Literature Review

Contemporary young people's views on marriage are diverse. Some scholars have proposed that contemporary young people's outlook on marriage and love focuses on external factors such as economy and family background. Lu Zheng and Liu Mengqin proposed that the economic orientation of young people still exists when choosing a mate [1]. Luo Yuchuan and Zhang Jinfu also believe that the importance of economic status in mate selection has gradually risen, and the level of people's social status is more and more reflected in their economic status, so there has been a corresponding change in the criteria of young people [2]. Qin Chen also pointed out that after the reform and opening up, the gap between economic income and income widened first, and then the further differentiation of various social strata in China, and even the structural factors of the class became the modern soil for the "door-to-door" mate selection criteria in traditional societies [3]. Some scholars have proposed that contemporary young people's view of marriage and love pays more attention to internal factors such as personality and emotion. Wang Meiping obtained from her self-compiled "Questionnaire on College Students' Views on Marriage and Love" that among the most important conditions for choosing a mate, the top three are "personality and temperament", "morality" and "feelings". From the perspective of gender, male and female college students pay great attention to each other's personality and temperament, as well as the emotional status of both parties, and do not pay attention to external factors such as each other's education, occupation and family background [4]. Wang Fei also found from his survey that more than 93% of the respondents took personality as the main consideration in choosing a romantic partner [5]. As for contemporary young people's view of marriage and love, it is affected by many factors.

### 2.1. The Influence of Personal Background on Contemporary Young People's View of Marriage

According to Wang Fei's investigation, there are four main factors affecting the concept of marriage and love, age, work and occupation status, gender and hometown regional differences. Among them, the age and gender of individuals have a greater impact on their views on marriage and love, while the impact of whether they work or not and the regional differences between urban and rural areas are less [5]. Cao Rui also believes that in addition to personal conditions such as age, education level, marital status, occupation, and income that have a certain impact on contemporary young people's views on marriage and love, gender is also a major influencing factor, which is a reflection of the double standards of both sexes in marriage in traditional culture for many years [6]. Cao Rui pointed out that with the development of the movement for equal rights between men and women, more women have entered the public sphere and demonstrated their abilities in their work and gained a certain status. However, in the private sphere such as marriage and family, although their own conditions, including education, occupation and income, add some halo to women's marriage and love, these capital advantages must be based on age and marital experience. Otherwise, as they get older and enter marriage, women themselves have to lower the standard of marriage and love.

### 2.2. The Influence of Class Identity on Contemporary Young People's View of Marriage

Cao Rui proposed that class identity includes personal class identity and family class identity. By establishing a multiple regression model, he found that variables such as personal class identity and family class identity were statistically significant for the three models, which verified their hypothesis that the concept of marriage and love was affected by class identity [6].

### 2.3. The Influence of Family Interaction Patterns on Contemporary Young People's View of Marriage

Some scholars have constructed four ideal types of family interaction patterns from the two dimensions of communication and decision-making by referring to the family ring model and based

on the family power system theory, and using in-depth interviews combining online and offline, they have concluded that young people's view of marriage is affected by family interaction patterns. For example, the authority-oriented family interaction model is often more likely to shape children's positive view of marriage and love, while the disorderly family type leads to children's lack of confidence in interpersonal communication and marriage due to the lack of family authority orientation. The interaction mode of family authoritarianism, family equality and family disorder not only fail to provide children with sufficient emotional needs, but also shapes a negative view of marriage and love and blocks the possibility of establishing a connection with society [7].

#### **2.4. The Influence of the Institution of Marriage on Contemporary Young People's View of Marriage**

Hao Shiming conducted research from the theoretical perspective of "marriage threshold friction" and the quantitative method of causal inference and proposed that the marriage system has a profound impact on the marriage concept of contemporary young people. Through the comparison of the changes in the marriage law and the behavior of marriage and love, he found that the current marriage system implements a relatively weak husband and wife personal system and a relatively clear distinction between the marital property system, which eventually leads to a decline in the number of marriages and an increase in the number of divorces [8]. He pointed out that the current marriage law deviates from the optimal system design method, which makes the overall stability of marriage in society decline, and the imbalance of marriage threshold friction leads to a decline in the number of marriages and an increase in the number of divorces. From the perspective of the supply of the formal marriage system, he discussed the mechanism and influence process of the change of marriage law on people's marriage and love behavior.

To sum up, contemporary young people's view of marriage and love is affected by many factors. However, there may be other factors, such as the impact of the implementation of the gender equality policy on the contemporary young people's view of marriage and love, which has not been studied in the literature. Therefore, this paper studies the impact of gender equality on the marriage concept of contemporary young people aged 25-29 to fill the gap.

### **3. Research Findings**

#### **3.1. The Willingness of Today's Young People to Get Married**

Research by Guangming Daily shows that women's willingness to marry is significantly lower than that of men. 43.92% of women said they would not get married, 19.29% more than men. Women show greater hesitancy about marriage. In the survey of attitudes towards love, no such gender differences were found. This shows that women are more cautious when it comes to marriage. The survey found that the primary reason why women do not want to get married is "not wanting to have children" (accounting for 68.83%), and the hesitation of childbearing has become an objective obstacle for women not to get married. In today's society, where "motherhood culture" is widespread, gender discrimination in occupation is caused by the imperfection of the birth system itself, which has a great impact on today's young people's concept of marriage and childbearing. 14.4 percent of young people in economically developed areas chose not to get married, 7.7 percentage points higher than that of young people in small cities. This shows that the more developed the economy, the more people actively choose to be single. The willingness of "Generation Z" young people to get married is on the decline. The world marriage data released by the United Nations Population Division predicts that by 2030, the proportion of people aged 20~29 in marriage in China will be 69.2%, which will be 8 percentage points lower than in 2013 [9].

#### **3.2. Gender Equality Concept**

The world's first feminist was the French writer Christine de Pisan in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, who wrote the women's literary work "La la Femina". She argues against the idea of

women's "natural" inferiority and discusses the "natural" superiority of women who are outstanding as recorded in history and mythology. In 1791, Olympe de Guge, the women's leader of the French Revolution, issued the Declaration of Feminism and the Rights of Women Citizens. The feminist movement has been around since the publication of the Declaration on Women's Rights and the Rights of Women and Citizenship. Some scholars have pointed out that the concept of gender equality is influenced by the individual's position in the social structure, the position of the social structure, and the pattern of gender asymmetry within the family. Among them, there is a positive correlation between education level, income, status, occupational group and group gender role perception. With the improvement of education level and income, women have a relatively strong voice and a higher degree of recognition of the concept of gender equality [10].

### 3.3. The Impact of Gender Equality on Young People's Views on Marriage and Love

Some scholars believe that the concept of gender equality is reflected in the concept of marriage, that is, women are no longer limited to marriage and family, but tend to be celibate for their own social status and career development, or to realize their own values. With the progress of the times and the enlightenment of thought, women's improvement of their own positioning has made women break through the traditional concept of husband and child, husband and wife, and pay more attention to the freedom of marriage and love. From 1995 to 2020, the human development index of Chinese women increased from 0.522 to 0.744, and the gender development index (GDI) increased from 0.912 to 0.957. These data show that the gender gap in education, health care, and economic resources is gradually narrowing [11]. China has greatly promoted the popularization of the concept of gender equality in legislation, policy promulgation, education and publicity, and imperceptibly implemented it in daily life. As a signatory to the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, China has enacted a series of measures to improve the status of women in society and promote equal rights and opportunities for women. In 1995, the Chinese Government promulgated the first periodic programme for the development of women, which clearly defined the national strategy and action plan to enhance women's rights and interests in economic affairs, decision-making and management, education, medical services and legislation.

In addition, the popularity of some avant-garde marriage and love culture at home and abroad has also directly affected women's perception of marriage. In a speech by Jung Sook-yeon, one of the Korean women's rights advocates, said, "I can't have a crotch that discriminates against my gender, and my flesh can't be turned into a sharp knife to stab me." These avant-garde ideas have greatly affected the marriage rate and fertility rate in South Korea. In the midst of unequal family status and seeking a balanced family-career relationship, Korean women decided to seek relative equality by "not having children". The continuous popularization of the concept of gender equality and the continuous improvement of women's status have led contemporary young people to pay more attention to the protection of marital autonomy and their own rights. However, the corresponding regulations and policies are not guaranteed, for example, because labor discrimination still occurs because women marry and have children. Therefore, this viciousness has led to a decline in young people's willingness to marry and love.

## 4. Conclusion

The decline of marriage rate in our country is a social problem, which leads to the decline of birth rate, aging population and other social problems. Based on the existing problems, here are six suggestions. The State continues to promote the popularization of the concept of gender equality and ensure the protection of women's basic rights and interests. (2) Extend marriage leave and encourage marriage so that young people can better adjust their mindset so that they can be fully prepared for their future married life. (3) Policy subsidies, such as housing subsidies, to reduce the financial burden of young people. Special newlywed loans can be provided to reduce the pressure on newlyweds on houses and cars. Improve the employment environment, create more job opportunities, and raise the

income level of young people. (4) Implement fertility incentive policies. Improve and improve maternity welfare policies, protect the basic rights and interests of young women after childbirth, such as labor protection, and reduce their economic pressure on childbirth. (5) Strengthen marriage and love services. Establish and improve a complete marriage and love service system to provide more and better choices for young people. Crack down on marriage trusts and fraud. (6) Publicity and education, through schools, the media, and other means, to advocate the correct concept of marriage and love, and encourage young people to view marriage rationally.

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