Causes and Analysis of Sex Discrimination in Price Discrimination

Zhuoran Liu

The University of Manchester, Oxford Rd, Manchester, M13 9PL, The United Kingdom

* Corresponding author: zhuoran.liu-3@student.manchester.ac.uk

Abstract. Price discrimination in marriage and gender discrimination in the labor market are common problems in Chinese society. By exploring the pressure and impact of these issues on men and women, this article analyzes the excessive financial pressure that men bear in marriage and the various unfair treatments that women encounter in the labor market. In response to price discrimination against women in the labor market, this article puts forward a series of policy recommendations, including improving relevant laws and regulations to protect women's legitimate rights and interests, increasing penalties for gender discrimination by employers, and improving social concepts to promote gender equality. By releasing women's productivity and enabling women to earn income independently to support their families, it can reduce men's financial pressure in marriage and achieve the best of both worlds for social development goals. The innovation of this article is that it deeply explores gender issues in marriage and the labor market in Chinese society and puts forward feasible policy suggestions for these issues. Through the research of this article, People can deepen people's understanding of gender discrimination, promote the change of social concepts, create a more equal and just social environment, and achieve sustained social stability and sustainable development.

Keywords: Price Discrimination, Gender Roles, Social Concepts, Marriage Customs, Labor Market.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In the context of Chinese society and culture, the traditional concept of gender role division has deeply affected the phenomenon of price discrimination in modern society. This traditional concept makes men by default the main bearers of family financial responsibilities in family life, while women are expected to take on non-material responsibilities such as housework and children's education. This cultural tradition has led to the emergence of price discrimination in some specific scenarios, especially when it comes to property purchases, family expenses, and children's education. For example, in China's traditional cultural concepts, men are regarded as the breadwinners of the family and often bear the financial pressure of house purchase, post-marital living expenses, and children's education. This forces men to have to assume more financial responsibilities and even be in a passive position in the family economy, making it difficult to pursue their career development or life goals and focusing most of their energy on fulfilling financial responsibilities.

At the same time, women are often regarded as a vulnerable group and need to take on more non-financial responsibilities in the family, such as taking care of the family and taking care of children. This division of roles not only limits women's development space in society, but also limits their economic independence and autonomy. This makes women often unable to release their own productivity and realize their own life value, forming a state of "captivity" and unable to actively participate in social and economic activities.

With the rapid development of modern society and changes in ideas, this traditional concept has gradually evolved into a contradiction between men's rights and women's rights, causing antagonism and contradictions in family life. This contradiction not only affects family harmony, but also limits effective cooperation between men and women, especially in areas such as children's education and family economic decision-making. The accumulation of these problems has gradually led to China's declining fertility rate, posing a huge challenge to the future stability and sustainable development of
society. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to conduct an in-depth study of the gender discrimination issue in price discrimination and put forward relevant policy recommendations.

1.2. Research Purposes

This article aims to deeply explore the changes in the value of women in the labor market after marriage and childbirth and analyze the prevalence of this problem in society. At the same time, the study aims to explore how much women's physical functions are affected after they engage in reproductive activities, and whether the traditional bride price given to women by men after marriage and the responsibility of raising families in the family can compensate for this impact. This article will explore the benefits that both men and women gain after giving birth in the context of modern China, especially in the context of rapid changes in social concepts, and whether there is a phenomenon in which women suffer losses and men gain benefits in traditional concepts. The study will also explore whether long-term male-to-female compensation for fertility issues is necessary.

Through in-depth research on these issues, this article aims to put forward some realistic and feasible policy suggestions to promote equality of gender roles in society and promote the balanced development of men and women in family life and social life. At the same time, this article will also warn against the widespread gender discrimination in current society, emphasize the importance of promoting gender equality, and provide theoretical and practical reference for the sustainable development of society.

2. Gender Discrimination in China’s Marriage Market

2.1. Basic Objective Facts

Betrothal gift is an ancient wedding custom in traditional Chinese marriage culture. It is a certain amount of property or gift money given by the groom or his family to the bride or the bride's family when the bride gets married. Betrothal gifts have existed in ancient China, and their form and content have changed with the changes of the times. However, as part of marriage customs, they have always occupied an important position in social life.

In traditional Chinese concepts, the bride price represents the man's respect for the woman and his responsibility for the marriage and family. Usually, betrothal gifts include gold and silver jewelry, red envelopes, furniture, home appliances and other daily necessities. Their specific content and value vary depending on region, social class, economic level, etc. In rural areas, betrothal gifts often exist in the form of physical objects, such as grain, livestock, etc.; while in urban areas, betrothal gifts often exist in the form of tangible property such as cash, gold and silver jewelry, and real estate.

Although bride price is regarded as a traditional custom and social custom in traditional culture, in recent years, with the changes in social concepts, the view on bride price has also changed. On the one hand, some people believe that excessive betrothal gifts will increase the financial burden on the family, and even lead to over-commercialization in some areas; on the other hand, some people also believe that the betrothal gift system has potential gender discrimination and believe that it is a violation of women's value. The objectification and pricing of sex is an unfair reflection of women’s status in marriage.

In modern society, with the continuous improvement of laws and regulations and the advancement of social concepts, some places have begun to call for limiting the scale of betrothal gifts. Some places have even introduced relevant laws and regulations to regulate the behavior of betrothal gifts in order to promote social gender equality and eliminate unfair practices. Sound marriage customs.

As a part of traditional Chinese marriage customs, bride price often involves gender discrimination in price discrimination. This price difference in wedding customs often manifests itself in the male party paying a certain amount of property or gifts to the female party as the "cost" of the marriage. There are many aspects of gender discrimination in this phenomenon:
(1) Inequality in value positioning: Betrothal gifts often mean that men “price” women, treating women as objects that can be measured with money, thus equating women’s value with money, which in turn leads to inequality in the status of men and women in marriage.

(2) Unequal sharing of economic pressure: In the traditional concept, men bear the main financial responsibility in marriage and "buy" marriage by paying bride price. This makes men bear greater economic responsibilities while women are economically passive, exacerbating economic inequality between genders [1].

(3) Restrictions on women’s autonomy: The payment of bride price often limits women’s autonomy and right to choose, leaving women in a passive position in marriage and making it difficult for them to independently decide on their own marriage and life.

(4) Inequality in social roles: As a traditional custom, bride price strengthens society’s stereotypes about the different roles of men and women, treating men as the breadwinner and women as economic dependents, deepening the inequality in the division of gender roles.

Therefore, as a marriage custom, bride price embodies the issues of gender discrimination and price discrimination to a certain extent. It is necessary to further pay attention and think about promoting gender equality and eliminating gender discrimination in society. Strengthening the constraints of laws and regulations and promoting changes in social concepts to achieve the goals of gender equality and marriage equality are important issues that the current society needs to work hard to solve [1].

2.2. The Causes of Marriage with High Betrothal Gifts

2.2.1. Causes

(1) Regardless of whether it is "parental arrangement" or "free love", the man must give a bride price to the woman before marriage [2];

(2) The woman’s family will only marry their daughter to a man whose personal conditions are no worse than the average, but the man does not have many requirements for women [3];

(3) Both men and women can accurately judge the pros and cons of a man’s personal conditions [4];

(4) The man hopes to get married with as little betrothal gift as possible, and the woman can only ask for the maximum betrothal gift the man is willing to provide, that is, the marriage gift is determined by the man’s supply [5];

(5) Each region has an average (ceremonial nature) bride price in each era [6];

(6) A higher-than-average betrothal gift is a high betrothal gift [7].

Whether a man can get married depends on his personal conditions. When his conditions are worse than the average conditions of men of the same age around him, the woman's family will not be willing to marry their daughter to him; on the contrary, when his conditions are not inferior to the average conditions, as long as the opportunity is ripe, the woman's family will not object to the marriage.

2.2.2. Economic Results

(1) High betrothal gifts reduce various investments in society. Since the boy's marriage comes first, no one dares to risk investing before the bride price is collected; the man borrows money to prepare the bride price, and the repayment risk is extremely high, which causes the real interest rate to rise, thereby driving up the overall interest rate in society; high bride prices are often impulsive Land is squandered and difficult to convert into capital [8].

(2) In order to avoid losing both man and money, men overly favor their new wives, which results in young women being idle at home within a few years of their marriage, reducing the number of effective agricultural labor forces [9].

(3) It is expected that girls can be exchanged for high betrothal gifts in the future. Couples who prefer boys no longer worry about raising girls and evading the high cost of family planning, so they continue to have more children until they give birth to a boy.[4] In order to obtain the much-needed
large amount of funds, the girl's family will give birth to their daughter. Early marriage leads to early childbirth, thereby creating potential population growth pressure [10].

(4) In view of the huge amount of bride price, in order to save transaction costs and contain the other party, some poorer groups are forced to choose the distorted marriage method of "swapping heads" [11].

(5) If the funds of a family with many children are only enough for one son’s betrothal gift, the conflicts between father, son, and brother will escalate; parents will marry off their daughters only for the high betrothal gift, leading to the deterioration of the relationship between father and daughter, and mother and daughter [12]; high betrothal gifts without emotional foundation Marriage can also easily lead to discord between husband and wife, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law [13].

(6) Cause a large number of civil disputes. High betrothal gifts induce criminals to take risks and traffic in women [14].

High betrothal gifts not only hinder the development of rural production, but also worsen rural customs, thus posing severe challenges to the overall social construction.

Research on marriage payment in anthropology mainly focuses on two aspects: first, the relationship between marriage payment and social group structure, identity establishment, and transfer of rights; second, marriage payment Functional relationship between negotiating with in-laws. In other words, anthropologists view marriage payments as a strategy adopted by the husband's and natal families. In traditional society, marriage is not a private matter between individuals, but a matter between two kinship groups (kinship or family). They constitute a public event in a community [15].

2.3. How to Optimize: Policy Suggestions

In response to the growing trend of betrothal gifts, on July 29, 2016, 11 ministries and commissions including the National Health and Family Planning Commission, the Central Propaganda Department, and the Central Civilization Office issued the "On Further Promoting New Trends in Marriage and Childbirth During the 13th Five-Year Plan" period. "Opinions on Entering Thousands of Homes" emphasizes that during the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, Chinese governments at all levels will strengthen guidance, advocate simple marriages, and oppose arranged marriages, illegal early marriages, extravagant marriages, and extortion of property through marriages. The "Opinions" also put forward requirements for protecting women's legitimate rights and interests, continuously improving social awareness of gender equality, and promoting the natural balance of the gender structure of the birth population [16].

On November 28, 2016, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Central Civilization Office held a video and telephone conference on "Advocating the Change of Customs and Promoting Rural Civilization". The phenomenon of "exorbitant betrothal gifts", arrogance, blind comparison and other phenomena were named and criticized. So, how to eradicate the soil of "exorbitant betrothal gifts" by changing customs? "This requires comprehensive policies, and it is difficult to rely solely on simple guidance and publicity to be effective." Zhu Xinkai, a professor at the School of Agriculture and Rural Development of Renmin University of China, believes that the "exorbitant price of betrothal gifts" is caused by subjective reasons such as fertility concepts, value orientations, and face psychology, as well as by men and women. Objective reasons such as gender imbalance, rising cost of living, and imperfect living security systems. The complexity and stubbornness of the problem require governments at all levels to work more on root causes [16].

3. Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market

3.1. Basic Objective Facts

Employment gender dilemma refers to a series of unfair treatment that women face in the employment process. This dilemma manifests itself in many forms in real life, such as unequal
employment opportunities, unequal pay for men and women for equal work, unequal employment treatment, and restrictions on career advancement [17]. First of all, unequal employment opportunities are reflected in the fact that employers clearly state that they will not recruit female job applicants or set unreasonable restrictions on women during the interview process, thereby limiting women's job search space. Secondly, during the recruitment and employment process, employers often raise recruitment standards based on women's gender, causing women to face hidden employment barriers during the job search process. In addition, the issue of unequal pay between men and women for equal work also makes it difficult for women to obtain equal pay as men in the workplace. Even for the same work, women often need to put in more effort. Inequality in employment treatment is especially prominent in career promotion. Some companies will give priority to male candidates and limit women's promotion space, causing women to encounter many challenges on their career development path [17].

3.2. Why Gender Discrimination Exists in the Labor Market

The main manifestations of the current difficulties faced by female job seekers in our country during the employment process are:

Inequality in employment opportunities is primarily evident in two key aspects. Firstly, some employers explicitly declare their non-recruitment of female applicants for specific positions in their job listings. Alternatively, even when they don't expressly mention their refusal of female candidates, they resort to various unjustifiable and unrelated rationales during the actual interview process [18]. Eliminate female job applicants. On the other hand, the recruitment and employment standards are unequal, and the standards for female interviewers are unilaterally raised, artificial restrictions are set, and female job applicants are eliminated. Some employers will arbitrarily raise the standards for recruiting talents in the same job position and the same working environment just because of the gender difference of workers, which will create a hidden effect on some female job seekers with strong business capabilities and high work skills. Ground suppression [19].

Based on available data, many employers now impose additional conditions when hiring female job applicants, such as height, marital status, family situation, and childbearing status, among others. What's even more concerning is that some employers expect female employees to delay having children during their initial employment years. They often justify this by expressing concerns about potential talent loss, educational impact, and the effects on children, claiming that it could negatively affect business operations, reduce production efficiency, and increase the employer's human resource costs [20].

Unequal pay for equal work between men and women persists in our country. Despite significant improvements in women's economic income compared to the past, higher-income positions are still predominantly occupied by men. In the workplace, women often aspire to receive equal compensation to men [21], which often requires them to put in twice the effort. Many organizations in our country hire female employees under social or legal pressure, but in practice, they may differentiate based on gender, resulting in lower wages for female employees performing the same work as their male counterparts.

Unequal employment treatment (especially in the aspect of restricted career advancement). In many companies, there are such "hidden rules". If a certain position is vacant, there are two employees in the company (one is male, and the other is male). The other is a woman) is eligible to compete, but in the actual selection process, if the two have similar abilities, company executives will often give priority to male candidates, unless the female candidate's ability far exceeds that of the male candidate [22]. Only then can women have the possibility to participate in “competition on the same stage”. Even if this possibility is achieved, the promotion space for women is far less than that for men, and it is easy to reach the so-called career "ceiling". Women's career development path faces great challenges [23].

The gender dilemma in employment faced by job seekers in my country is never a unilateral factor. It is closely related to social concepts, corporate tendencies, national policies, human nature, and
other factors. At this point, people cannot deny the difference between male and female job seekers in physical strength, fertility and other objective physiological conditions. It is undeniable that most women are indeed inferior to men in terms of physical strength, so they are not qualified for certain jobs, such as those that require strong strength or many female job seekers are unable to complete physically demanding jobs, which has compressed the job search space for women to a great extent. Women have to compete with male job seekers in a relatively narrow field, but the reality is that most jobs have the corresponding requirements on physical strength and other abilities have invisibly increased competition, making women's employment fall into an "extremely difficult" predicament of finding a job and encountering many obstacles. Women lack comprehensive qualities and are difficult to meet the job requirements [20]. Due to long-term historical factors and the influence of traditional patriarchal thinking, fewer women have received high school education or above than men, resulting in women being at a disadvantage in terms of academic qualifications. Women have a narrow concept of employment and have high requirements for the geographical environment, salary, welfare level, frequency of business trips, overtime work, etc. When choosing a work unit, they are more inclined to work in government agencies and institutions. Many reasons have resulted in women's low quality, poor adaptability to the workplace, low skill level, and difficulty in fulfilling the needs of their positions. The Influence of Traditional Social Concepts Since the early slave society period, Chinese women have been bound by feudal ethics [21]. Under traditional social concepts, women's status has always been lower than men. Social culture requires women to obey men more. Arrangements, the ideas of "Three Cardinal Guidelines and Five Constant Rules" and "Men are superior to women" run through the entire feudal society. Although with the development of the times, women's power has gradually risen, and the country has begun to use legal means to issue various regulations to protect women, and the status of women has improved step by step, there is still discrimination and prejudice against women. It is believed that women are inferior in physical strength, intelligence, etc [19]. Inferior to men in every aspect. The tendency of enterprises to pursue maximizing profits. In order to maximize profits, employers will find ways to reduce employment costs. However, when recruiting female workers, they will face various expenses such as maternity leave and maternity leave, which will undoubtedly increase employment costs and thereby reduce corporate profits [22]. Therefore, in order to pursue greater profits, many companies formulate many biased regulations when recruiting. The imperfection of the relevant national legal system. According to relevant facts, there is currently no clear definition of gender discrimination in our country, and there is no current absolute standard for judges to judge cases of corporate gender dilemmas [20]. The lack of law causes judges to pity women who have been discriminated against, but they also act more as "pacifiers" and provide a more formal and authoritative platform for both parties to mediate conflicts. However, in this case, mediation often fails, and it also comes with the additional risk that female workers will be fired from the company because of these reasonable rights protection behaviors that anger corporate managers.

3.3. Economic Results

Gender discrimination in employment serves as the primary cause of gender bias in human capital investment, leading to increased social and economic costs and a reduction in the efficiency of human capital investment. This inefficient resource allocation method perpetuates a harmful cycle of 'employment gender discrimination - gender bias in human capital investment - employment gender discrimination' [24].

Discrimination in employment not only diminishes female employment rates but also curtails the human capital investment in women by both enterprises and families. Inadequate investment in women, whether by businesses, families, or society, does not contribute to optimizing women's capital value. Women's decisions regarding human capital investment have a significant impact on their children's development and growth. Neglecting women's roles in household management and their irreplaceable contributions to child-rearing can severely impede welfare maximization within
families. From a societal perspective, this leads to a significant reduction in overall social welfare [25].

Furthermore, the inclination to invest in gender-based human capital naturally reinforces gender discrimination in two primary ways. First, the direct outcome of gender bias in human capital investment is the lower accumulation of women's human capital compared to men's [26]. In the context of existing gender discrimination, it becomes particularly challenging for women to secure employment, let alone promotions. This exclusion may seem 'reasonable' on the surface, as market efficiency typically favors those with stronger capital attributes while the weaker, such as women, are deemed 'superfluous in employment' [27]. This exclusion poses a significant challenge to women who, as a discriminated group, suffer due to resource disparities and a lack of bargaining power.

Second, the indirect consequence of gender bias in human capital investment lies in the reinforcement of women's social roles. As productive forces have developed, gender-based perceptions of priority, inferiority, and nobility have emerged, influenced by culture, customs, and social stereotypes. These perceptions profoundly impact human capital investment patterns, further amplifying gender disparities [28].

Gender discrimination in employment results in women making less investment in human capital than men, which in turn exacerbates gender discrimination in employment. The economic and social costs incurred by this vicious cycle are substantial [29]. Economically, women with the potential for higher returns on investment receive little or relatively lower investment (especially from society), diminishing the efficiency of human capital investment. From a different perspective, given that Chinese women's human capital stock is lower than that of men, under the influence of the law of diminishing marginal returns on investment, investing in female human capital yields diminishing returns, aligning with economic principles [30]. Wages reflect the value of production factors, and investing more in female education can yield greater corporate benefits. Thus, inadequate investment in women's human capital contradicts economic principles [31].

From a societal standpoint, the intersection of these two phenomena significantly impacts women's roles within families and society. Within families, difficulties in securing employment, occupying lower positions, and possessing limited skills can lead to women's frustration and a sense of loss. Economic hardships can escalate internal conflicts within families, sometimes culminating in domestic violence [27]. These cases are regrettably not uncommon. From a social perspective, the marginalization of women's employment status and limited skills can lead to their marginalization in political and social spheres, rendering them a perpetually disadvantaged group. This contradicts long-term social progress and has short-term repercussions for the construction of a harmonious society. Additionally, the intersection of these two phenomena also impacts future improvements in population quality. As mentioned earlier, women's educational levels have a profound influence on their children's physical health and intellectual development. In fact, women's overall quality significantly impacts their children, including their intellectual development and educational quality [28]. Therefore, insufficient investment in women's human capital hinders progress throughout society.

3.4. How to Optimize: Policy Suggestions

Female job seekers should enhance their overall quality, unlock their full potential, and bolster their competitiveness in the job market. Initially, they should actively construct a solid knowledge foundation, engage in a wide range of practical experiences, and hone their individual skills. At the same time, people must expand our social horizons and increase our added value to improve our overall personal quality, create our own irreplaceability, and add effective protection to our careers. Secondly, people must be good at discovering our own strengths, fully exploring our own potential, eliminating negative thinking in our own concepts, seizing opportunities, and meeting the challenges of the job market.

Promote the transformation of traditional social norms and instill the principle of gender equality. In today's modern society, it's imperative to expedite the shift from traditional social norms to a
mindset of gender equality between men and women. This necessitates harnessing the full potential of mass media in advocating gender equality, along with implementing legal policies related to employment equity. This, in turn, will boost women's self-reliance and legal awareness, enabling them to use the law as a means to safeguard their rights and interests.

Increase the penalties for companies that engage in gender discrimination in employment and increase the cost of violations for companies that engage in biased recruitment practices during the recruitment process. The increase in the cost of violations can more effectively reduce the violations of employers, because most business managers are from the perspective of rational economic people, out of the desire to reduce business risks and reduce the cost of legal sanctions caused by violations.

Improving the system of laws and regulations to protect women's legal rights is the last line of defense to protect people's rights and interests. In order to alleviate the gender dilemma of women seeking employment, it is necessary to establish and improve relevant laws and regulations, such as drawing on the successful experience of developed countries in dealing with employment discrimination. Formulate a special law that addresses the gender plight of women, clearly define the concepts of "gender deviation", "implicit discrimination" and other related terms, stipulate the responsibilities that employers should bear and the consequences of violation, and speed up the introduction Employment Discrimination Act [5].

4. Conclusion

In modern society, price discrimination in marriage and price discrimination in the labor market have brought different forms of pressure and distress to both men and women. Price discrimination in marriage puts men under more financial pressure in family life. Not only do they need to pay bride price, but they also have to bear the financial responsibility of supporting the family. This makes men need to make difficult choices between career development and family responsibilities. On the other hand, price discrimination in the labor market limits women’s employment opportunities and development space, making it difficult for them to demonstrate their potential and abilities in the workplace. This not only affects personal growth, but also hinders the development of the entire society.

For men in marriage, they face pressure from traditional social concepts. They are regarded as the breadwinner of the family and need to assume more financial responsibilities. This social expectation forces men to weigh between career and family responsibilities. While pursuing career success, they also have to bear the financial burden of the family, which brings huge pressure and psychological burden to them.

On the contrary, gender discrimination in the labor market causes women to face various challenges in career development, including limited career advancement and unfair pay. This kind of discrimination limits the space for women to develop their potential and talents, preventing them from fully demonstrating their value. When facing gender discrimination in the workplace, women not only have to overcome challenges at work, but also face family and social expectations for their roles, which brings them greater challenges and pressure.

Addressing price discrimination against women in the labor market is an important social task. By eliminating gender discrimination in the workplace and allowing women to earn income independently, it will not only help improve women's social and economic status, but also bring broader development space to the entire society. When women achieve economic independence and autonomy, price discrimination in marriage will also be alleviated because they no longer need to rely on men to pay for their childbearing and living costs. This shift will help reduce men's financial pressure in the family and thereby address gender discrimination against men in marriage.
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