



Why Is the Emotional World Blank?

Self-ethnography of a Relationship Virgin

Lili Qin^(✉)

University of Jinan, Jinan Shandong Province 250000, China
Q1117527@163.com

Abstract. At present, the single group in my country is growing, and relationship virgins, as part of the growing single group, is rarely involved in research. This paper uses the method of self-ethnography to textualize his own experience through theoretical reflection and writing of self-emotional experience, and reveals the thinking and entanglement of relationship virgins when facing the problem of marriage and love. The common reasons for the formation of relationship virgins are obtained, that is, the bias of self-positioning, the emphasis on self-subjectivity and the negative concept of marriage and love. Finally, some suggestions are given for relationship virgins to get rid of the predicament of marriage and love.

Keywords: relationship virgin · self-ethnography · individualization · youth concept of marriage and love

1 Introduction

According to the data released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the number of single adults in China reached 249 million in 2018, among which more than 77 million were living alone [1]. This phenomenon appeared earlier in western developed countries. Data released by the Office for National Statistics in the UK in 2015 showed that the number of single people in the UK exceeded half of the total population. One-third of Americans are single; Japan and South Korea also have a high proportion of single population [2]. At the same time, the marriage age of young people has been delayed [3], which means that young people stay single for longer [4].

The year-on-year increase in the proportion of the single population is due to the dual influence of individual active choice and environmental driving, and this phenomenon has received continuous attention and heated discussions among the public in recent years. Among the single population, there is a group of people who are not celibate, but have never established a romantic relationship with others due to economic level, age, appearance, concept of marriage and love, etc., so they are called “relationship virgin”. However, the academic circles have paid little attention to relationship virgins, so this paper attempts to explore the reasons and formation mechanism of relationship virgin who are difficult to establish romantic relationships with others.

2 Concept Definition and Literature Review

2.1 Concept Definition

“Relationship virgin” is a foreign term that emerged from the Korean entertainment industry and later introduced to China to describe people who have remained single since birth and have no experience in love [1]. “relationship virgin” often appear in discussions about personal relationship status on Weibo and other online platforms. Conditions such as “rejection of relationship virgin” are often seen in courtship information posted on various social platforms, which shows that Never having been in a relationship can be a disadvantage in the marriage market.

2.2 Theoretical and Literature Review

2.2.1 Individualization

The theory of individualization was proposed by Ulrich Beck, and its biggest feature is that more and more people expect to live for themselves [5]. Baker divides individualization into institutional individualization and subjective individualization in his analysis of the process of Chinese individualization [6], and Yan Yunxiang further divides subjective individualization into “progressive self” and “desire self” [7].

2.2.2 Literature Review

Kang Yijin explores the formation mechanism of relationship virgin under the effect of individualization, and believes that the reasons for the formation of relationship virgin are the bias of their own positioning and the rationalization of intimacy [1]; You Chunxue believes that the awakening of subject consciousness and the sense of marriage mission Diluted, decreased social trust, increased gender awareness, the reasons for the formation of leftover women. However, due to the de-traditionalized individual characteristics, single young people pay more attention to the satisfaction of “desired self” and emphasize the subjectivity of the self, so it is more difficult for single young people to establish intimate relationships with others [1].

At present, the marriage and love issues of single people have attracted much attention from the public. Among them, relationship virgin is a group that deserves more attention on the issue of marriage and love. However, there are not many studies on this group.

3 The Emotional Practice of Relationship Virgin

In recent years, the marriage and love issue of young people has changed from a private issue in the private domain to a public issue in the public domain [8]. But contrary to the public’s keen attention, young people are more reluctant to talk about love and marriage. What are their struggles, considerations and worries when facing love and marriage? Now I’m going to start with myself as the research object.

3.1 Desire and Resistance: The Inferiority and Entanglement of the Person Born Single

I am a late lover, and I didn't have much interest in Mary Sue idol dramas when I was a teenager, and the educational environment at that time made me think that puppy love was a very serious deviant behavior. As I got older, being in a relationship was no longer a deviance, it was a life-course thing, but I always felt like I wasn't quite ready for an intimate relationship and stayed single all the time.

Eric H. Erickson proposed in "Identity: The Identity Mechanism of Adolescents" that individuals are prone to stick to stereotyped interpersonal relationships when they have not completed [9] intimate relationships with others or their own inner resources in late adolescence or early adulthood. "relationship virgin" have constructed conservative and cautious love concepts in their teenage years, so they have not fully exercised their emotional abilities in their teenage years, resulting in a lack of emotional abilities in adulthood, and lack of emotional ability in the face of love. Coupled with the sudden increase of external pressure after entering the marriageable age, stimulated their resistance.

3.2 Freedom and Risk: Individuality and Tradition in the Person Born Single

China is a country that attaches great importance to family culture. From a national perspective, our country has always maintained a very low rate of celibacy, and the vast majority of people will eventually form a family [10]. From a family point of view, the traditional family concept believes that one should "start a family first and then establish a career", and marriage is a very important life goal. However, with the development of modernization, individualization has been more reflected in the younger generation. Young people pay more attention to their own subjectivity, and consider their own academic, career and emotional needs from their own standards.

Taking myself as an example, first of all, I have an "enterprising self" attitude in my current studies and future career development, and try my best to achieve the highest goals within my ability, so my emotional problems have not been my priority in recent years. Issues to consider. Secondly, when it comes to life and relationship issues, I choose to satisfy my "desired self" first. I enjoy being alone and don't need to consider other people's thoughts, but imagine that if you are in a relationship, there will be compromises on certain things.

3.3 Fantasy and Reality: Matrimonial Conception of Relationship Virgin

In film and television dramas, a lot of artistic means are used to create a lot of perfect love. Many single young people are influenced by these plots and are immersed in the beautiful love fantasy with fairy tale plots. However, in recent years, the vicious incidents of marriage, such as the murder of a wife and a corpse in Hangzhou, and the tragic result of the failed marriage have caused young people to question the sacred marriage and the intimate relationship between husband and wife. Coupled with the frequent incidents of Wu Yifan, Luo Zhixiang, Wang Leehom and other incidents in the entertainment industry, young people have reduced their trust in intimate relationships. This series of

events made young people fear marriage, and even refused to fall in love because of fear of marriage.

The illusory and beautiful scene of love has led me to have too high expectations for the love object, but there is a gap between reality and expectations. Coupled with the frequent exposure of some public figures of failed marriages and chaotic private life, my trust in strangers has decreased, and I even have some fear of contacting some people of the opposite sex that I don't understand. Therefore, it is more difficult for me to contact me with a relatively fixed social circle. Make new friends and be content with being single.

4 The Reasons for the Formation of Relationship Virgins

By analyzing the growth experience, social situation and emotional practice of a single mother and child, I explore my entanglements and considerations when facing the problem of marriage and love. This research believes that the self-positioning bias, emphasis on self-subjectivity and negative concept of marriage and love are the main reasons for relationship virgins.

4.1 Self-positioning Bias: Self-doubt

Individuals' emotions, thoughts, concepts and behaviors are internalized as standards to judge themselves based on generalization of others, and self-identification in Eastern cultures is more dependent on the evaluation of others [11]. In the traditional sense, marriage is a life task that everyone must complete. Although the traditional marriage order is facing dissolution under the impact of modern concepts, it is still difficult to accept non-marriage and celibacy in the public concept at the present stage, and even single mother-to-child and older unmarried youth are stigmatized [8]. Being of marriageable age but never having been in a relationship is seen by the public as "abnormal" and "unhealthy", leaving individuals with self-doubt. People who fall in love, get married, have children and enter into a standardized life at the marriageable age define this kind of non-standard life as abnormal. This kind of voice from outside constantly puts pressure on the single youth in various forms, and individuals fall into self-doubt under the attack from inside and outside.

4.2 Value Self - Subjectivity: Refined Egoist

In the process of self-construction, "relationship virgins" believe that love will bring a burden to them. The rich and diverse ways of leisure and entertainment in modern society also provide young people with more channels to meet their own needs. Individuals who value self-subjectivity enjoy the feeling of freedom when they are alone. They believe that establishing an intimate relationship will destroy this state of freedom and deviate from the track of your own life, so you choose to be single from the standpoint of the individual, and reduce the risk that the relationship will break the order of your life.

For the new generation of young people, everyone and things are highly rational in the market economy, so "human feelings" are excluded as a disadvantage in public

spaces, so the emotional and emotional abilities they acquire from public spaces are The relative lack of them causes them to often bring the “de-emotional” and market-oriented spirit into family emotional relationships [12]. Although single mother and child are also eager to establish and manage intimate relationships, but at the same time they do not want to affect their own subjectivity, so they use a “de-emotional” way to reduce emotional payment, so as to maintain their comfortable emotional experience.

4.3 Love and Marriage Concept Deviation: Fear of Marriage Refused to Love

Nowadays, the unmarried group with higher education level, better occupation and income and higher social status, their single life is often very comfortable [13]. For them, marriage does not exist as a necessity, but the icing on the cake, so they will reluctantly enter an intimate relationship if they don't meet a suitable marriage and love partner. The life and concept of marriage and love of these people also provide an example for young people. Coupled with the frequent exposure of tragedies caused by failed marriages and the collapse of public figures, people have questioned the sanctity of marriage and made people question the society. The degree of trust in young people is reduced, and topics such as “marriage is a bet” and “marriage is a grave” are frequently discussed, which to a certain extent makes young people fear marriage, and refuse to fall in love because of fear of marriage [14].

5 Conclusion

This paper uses the method of self-ethnography and analyzes its own experience to find out the reasons for the formation of single mother and child, that is, the bias of self-positioning, the emphasis on self-subjectivity and the negative concept of marriage and love. If relationship virgins are to get out of the predicament of marriage and love, and to re-look at the problem of marriage and love, the joint efforts of society, the public, families and themselves are needed.

To this end, we must first create a good social environment for youth marriage. Let young people face their marriage and love affairs easily and without pressure. Second, we must guide young people to establish a correct view of marriage and love. This requires the full cooperation of society, schools, and families to strengthen education on healthy marriage and love relationships, and cultivate young people's positive, healthy and upward concept of marriage and love. Finally, the single mother and child should actively overcome their own inferiority mentality, improve their own shortcomings through self-education and practice, and complete the construction of self-identity. Young people with self-identity dare to take the risk of intimacy with others [15].

References

1. Kang Y J. Formation mechanism of “relationship virgin” under individualization: A case study of urban youth [J]. *China youth research*, 2021 (12) : 33-39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19633/j.carol.carroll.nki.11-2579/d.2021.0172>.

2. Wang Shuang. 200 million in China, 100 million in America... The “single society” is getting closer and closer to us [J]. *International Business Management*, 2019(10):30–32.
3. hu Xinli. Changes and Reflections on Youth’s Views on Marriage and Love [J]. *People’s Forum*, 2021(35):94–97.
4. Duan Zhuqing, Jin Xiaoyi. A study on marriage matching of urban and rural population in China and its influence on age at first marriage [J]. *Demographic Journal*, 2020, 42(06):58-71. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16405/j.cnki.1004-129X.2020.06.005>..
5. Ulrich Baker, Elisabeth Baker-Gernsheim. Individualization [M]. Li Rongshan, Fan Xu, Zhang Huiqiang, translated. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011.
6. Li Rongshan. The Variations of Modernity and the Rise of the Individualized Society: A Review of Ulrich Beck’s Theory of “Institutional Individualism” [J]. *Xuehai*, 2012(05):77-82. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16091/j.cnki.cn32-1308/c.2012.05.032>.
7. Yan Yunxiang. The Individualization of Chinese Society [M]. Lu Yang, et al., translated. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2016.
8. Qian Changping. The alienated situation and solution of young people’s love and marriage [J]. *China Youth Studies*, 2020(07):81-86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19633/j.cnki.11-2579/d.2020.0105>.
9. Eric H. Erickson. Identity: Adolescent Identity Mechanism [M]. Sun Mingzhi, translated. Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 2018: 96.
10. Chen Weimin, Li Xiaoqing. To marry later or not to marry: marriage tradition and personal choice [J]. *Population Research*, 2020, 44(05): 19-32.
11. Dang Yongqiang. Pursuing Self: The Crisis and Opportunity of Modern Self-Identity[J]. *Journal of Tongji University(Social Science Edition)*, 2020,31(05): 94–102+113.
12. Jiang Lei. The individuation dilemma of the “post-material” generation: From the perspective of family ethics drama to see the emotional lack of public values [J]. *Exploration and Contention*, 2020(08): 113–120+159–160.
13. Liu Shuang, CAI Shenghan. Who is left behind? -- Rethinking the problem of “Older unmarried” in China [J]. *Youth Studies*, 2015 (04): 76–84+96.
14. Summer and spring. Single subculture: youth subculture landscape of multidimensional perspective [J]. *Journal of shandong youth political college*, 2018 (6) : 35 to 39, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16320/j.carol carroll nki sdqzzyxb.2018.06.007>.
15. Guo Ting. On Erickson’s Theory of Personality Development Stages [J]. *Theoretical Review*, 2010(06): 26-27.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

