



The Influence of the Weibo Platform Coverage of Male Violence on Feminism in China in the Past Six Years

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Abstract. Due to the rapid development of the new media industry in recent years, people can conveniently receive any news from the internet. In China, the Weibo platform has become increasingly popular in people's daily life. Weibo is a social media where people can post photos and articles, and many young people like to view news on Weibo's hotspots and interact with other netizens. Meanwhile, the information on male violence in the past six years spread quickly on the mass media and has aroused many discussions and protests by feminists in China. Based on male violence in China, the author explores how male violence news on mass media influences feminism and netizens' attitude toward feminism. This essay will focus on male violence reported on the Weibo hotspots in China in the past six years, including undifferentiated violence, targeted social violence, and acquaintances crime. From collecting male violence news and netizens' attitudes on Weibo, people can find that most female users upload their angry and nervous emotions. A significant number of feminist Weibo accounts criticize male violence news and dissatisfaction with the punishment of male offenders. Feminist users appeal for support for feminism to improve women's social status against malicious behaviour from men. Therefore, male violence incidents promote some feminist communication, but the news easily loses people's attention after a few days and still lacks visibility and daily discussion.

Keywords: Feminism · Media and feminism · Male violence on mass media · Male violence and feminism · Chinese feminism

1 Introduction

Today, an increasing number of people are concerned about feminism. Feminism changed the perception of discrimination against women and male-dominated societies to fight for women's rights and societal position [1]. There is no doubt that historians find that feminists used three movements to fight for women's rights in politics, employment and the family. In 21st, feminists use technology to fight for their rights, especially on social media [1]. In China, feminist consciousness began to spread in 1919 in the 54th movements to support women's rights and against the oppression of feudal ideology [2]. However, traditional media are not paying much attention to feminism; therefore, feminism and the oppression of women have to be spread by public opinion through mass

media [2]. Meanwhile, the news of male violence in the past six years spread quickly on the internet and has aroused many discussions and protests by feminists and people who are against male violence in China. When male violence news is posted on social media, netizens always raise topics of feminism to discuss why males commit a crime and how female victims can speak up for themselves. This essay will categorize three specific types of male violence: undifferentiated violence, targeted social incidents, and acquaintances crime to explore whether male violence will advance the feminist movement or curb it. Based on the netizens' attitudes and official media's content on the mass media, it is evident that news of male violence posted on the Weibo platform in the past six years has influenced feminist movements in China.

2 Literature Review

This essay hypothesizes that social media will enforce the feminist movement, and people posting content about male violence can let feminism spread faster. According to Jackson, the author states that mass media have provided a good platform for feminism that connects feminism worldwide [3]. Females can get a deeper understanding of their previous experience of discrimination under feminist topics in the mass media, such as misogyny and prejudice. Kasana claims that mass media provided a suitable space for feminism to protect themselves [4], for example, by exposing perpetrators of female assault to draw the whole society's attention and other women reading the posts to remind themselves to stay safe. Kumar et al., using the example of online violence against women in India [5], concluded that there is a need for greater regulation of harassing speech on social media to protect women from online violence. In Xie and Chao's article is based on an example [6]: the woman in the divorce case between Lianglei Li and Lihong Wang used Weibo to clarify their experience. This article also cites gender schema theory and examples of gender-different stereotypes. In traditional people's stereotypes, men should work hard, and women should take care of family members. In the article, *Feminist Communication in the New Media Environment*, the author analyzes how feminism develops and spreads in mass media in China. The author provides that feminism started during the May Fourth movement in China in this article. She also said feminism is not taken seriously in traditional media; therefore, the topic of males violating females and the subject of feminism has to spread fast by public opinion.

3 Sample Collection

Social media reports male undifferentiated violence news always arouses netizens' attention. Undifferentiated violence refers to men randomly attacking women in public spaces. Male undifferentiated violence includes the beating incident in the Tangshan barbecue shop and the incident in which a 13-year-old girl was attacked in a square. To be specific, On June 10, 2022, at 2 am, seven men accosted two other girls at a barbecue restaurant in Tangshan and violently assaulted them because those two girls refused the men's harassment. The beating incident in the Tangshan barbecue shop quickly became a popular topic on the Weibo Hot Search page. China News' Weibo account promptly reported an article at 9.10 am on 6.10, stating their position that harassment of females or beating

females of any type is not allowed by the whole society, and the thugs who attacked the lady should pay their dues seriously. Meanwhile, netizens on Weibo also announced their opinion. Some netizens shared their experience with harassment by a male, and they feel that the low cost of crime leads to more harassment and criminal behaviour. On 8.29 at 00:34, CCTV News' Weibo account released a video about the Tangshan beating that took place on Weibo, and most netizens expressed their belief in the government's handling of the issue. However, some netizens also post the fear of strange men after this male violence happens. In addition, on August 9, 2022, the Dancheng Public Security Bureau's Weibo account posted an article about a male attacking incident in the square at 10 pm on August 8. Even though that article did not clearly state the whole thing, people can get information that the injured girls are in stable condition, and the perpetrator has been arrested. Many netizens posted a video about a male attacking two 13-year-old girls as a supplementary. Meanwhile, much vague information and speculation from Weibo users appeared on Weibo, such as one saying that the little girl had lost her eyeball and had her arm cut off. Some netizens felt disappointed that the official account did not clearly state the complete detail of the incident. Many female netizens get a sense of depression because they do not know how to protect themselves.

Netizens and official accounts also have uploaded their opinions about feminism after viewing targeted social incidents. Male-targeted social incidents mean male-targeted attacks on a female in a situation where they are strangers. Targeted social incidents include female tourists disfigured in Lijiang and an air hostess killed in a cab crime. On May 5, 2018, an air hostess was raped and killed by a strange male driver after she used DiDi ride-hailing software to get home from work. After the male driver committed the crime, he chose to commit suicide by jumping into the river. After the solicitors' decision, the family member of the man who killed the victim paid RMB 660,000 to the victim's family as a follow-up to the incident. DiDi ride-hailing platform posted the announcement to show their apology and willingness to cooperate with the police in their follow-up work in 2018. 05.08. Meanwhile, many males Tieba users uploaded some erotic joke comments about female flight attendants and said it was all about feminine mistakes leading to male rape. Some other Weibo users consider why some women are afraid to report rape to the police and talk to people around them, and they believe that traditional ideas bind many women for a long time. Victims are innocent, and that chastity should not be a shackle for women. However, the murder of the flight attendant in the taxi did increase women's fears about commuting. Some female netizens speaking out on Weibo said that some taxi drivers think that flight attendants should be raped simply because some of the female passengers they met complained about them. After one year, People's Daily's Weibo account posted an article on April 2, 2019, about a Shanghai etiquette lecturer who said the air hostess was killed because she was underdressed. There is no doubt that this claim aroused many netizens' disagreement and anger. In addition, on November 11, 2016, a female trip to Lijiang and was beaten by more than ten men in a barbecue restaurant just because she was speaking the dialect in the restaurant. On February 21, 2017, the injured woman's injury diagnosis was a Grade 2 minor injury with a comminuted nasal fracture and four operations she needed to take. Finally, the punishment for the three male perpetrators is only three years and six months in prison. Many female netizens feel horrible about this incident. They are

unsatisfied with the punishment for the perpetrators because they feel it is too simple to prevent them from committing their crimes.

Acquaintances' crime never fails to arouse netizens' and official accounts' attention to discuss feminist movements. Widespread acquaintances crime in the past six years in China include a Tangshan man running over an ex-girlfriend with a car and a male-killing a wife in Hangzhou. Specifically, a man drove his car to run over his ex-girlfriend's body in front of a swimming pool in Tangshan on 2022 Aug. 2, and his ex-girlfriend died instantly. An eyewitness recorded this video and uploaded it to the mass media. After that, the People's Daily Weibo account issued an official notification from the Tangshan police about the case at 8 p.m. on Aug. 2. The comments under the People's Daily Weibo account support that perpetrator should have punishment for the death penalty. At the same time, many female netizens have posted fear comments about their worries about intimacy. However, until 2022 Sept. 17, no official account posted the follow-up solution for the male driving and killing his ex-girlfriend. The incident of a man driving his car killed his ex-girlfriend reminds many netizens of the previous incident of a male-killing his wife in Hangzhou. On the afternoon of Jul. 6, 2022, a man named Guoli Xu went to the Public Security Bureau to report that his wife was missing. Later, after the Public Security Bureau investigation, his wife's DNA was found in the septic tank of the man's community. Finally, the Public Security Bureau found that man had chopped up his wife's body. On July 26, 2021, the court finally sentenced Guoli Xu death penalty. This incident brought a powerful negative emotion to people, and a significant number of female users have posted about their fear of marriage on mass media. Some of the female Weibo users with empathic solid try to imagine what it would be like for them to be violated by men. They feel helpless because they do not know how to fight back and protect themselves in a dangerous situation.

4 Methods

This research project includes content analysis and a questionnaire survey. To be specific, attitudes from netizens and official articles about male violence that appear on the internet and Weibo platforms will be collected. The following up methods of dealing with male violence also be collected. While collecting netizens' attitudes and reporting on mass media about male violence, the influence of male violence incidents on the netizens and how netizens feel from their comment will be considered for analysis. The questionnaire was a credible way to collect samples because it included various age groups from any location and surveyed 153 random people, 59.48% female and 40.52% male. The age group has five categories: under fifteen, fifteen to nineteen, twenty to thirty, thirty-one to forty, and over forty. The age group of twenty to thirty occupied the most area of the pie chart at 33.99%. The questionnaire included 17 questions on WeChat and other personal social media pages. The questionnaire's content includes how respondents feel about male violence and their attitude toward feminism and surveyed their time spent on social media. At the end of the questionnaire, the author also created an open question that let the public write about how to against male violence.

5 Result in Discussion

Male and female attitudes differ regarding male violence and feminism not only on the Weibo platform but also in the feedback from the questionnaire survey. After exploring the Weibo platform, it is evident that many female users posted their worries about male violence and fear of protecting themselves in the public square. The male violence also arouses many feminist Weibo users to upload related content, attracting many feminist netizens. Users who support feminism aim to post not only feminist-related movies or articles but also sexist and misogynistic statements from men. Feminist Weibo users also post male's view of male violence and their attitudes toward feminism after male violence incidents on Weibo Hot Tendency. For example, a feminist Weibo user posted a question on July 14, 2022 to ask netizens if they have heard negative comments about the Tangshan beating incident. Five top ten hot comments indicated that the men they know expressed gender-biased comments about the Tangshan beat incident, and three said that the males they know never talked about it. Only two comments under that Weibo content claim only a few men they know have posted pro-feminist statements. However, 15 of the first 20 live Weibo content under the Tangshan beating search expressed negative feelings about male violence and the official follow-up measures. One female netizen in live Weibo content posted content about she felt like the Tangshan beating incident gradually lost people's attention, and six netizens posted their disappointment feeling in society.

After collecting the questionnaire survey, 153 participants answered the question about their attitude toward male violence. There was 62 male participants total, with 20–30 being the highest percentage at 38.71% and only 1.61% males under 15 years old. The highest proportion of male participants felt that male violence on the internet could easily affect their mood 27.42%; however, most male participants held a neutral attitude towards feminism 58.06%, and positive attitudes were the second most significant part for male participants with 27.42%. Most male participants never posted male violence-related information on social media 70.97%, and most just sometimes focused on follow-up measures after male violence with 40.32%. After viewing male violence of undifferentiated violence, targeted social incidents, and acquaintances' crimes on social media, most males still hold a natural attitude toward feminism. Most male participants believe that strengthening the law against male perpetrators is the best way to follow up. Seven male participants still show extreme sexist remarks and indifferent attitudes toward women and feminism. For example, one said feminism should not exist, and another said women are suck because of the suppression of feminism to men's social status. There are 91 female participants in the questionnaire survey, and the largest age group is 20–30, occupying 30.77% of the pie chart. The minor proportion is 15.38% of the age group from 15 to 19. Most women feel more affected by viewing male violence, and 54.95% of female groups hold a positive attitude toward feminism. The highest percentages of women who occasionally follow feminist and male violence on social media are 62.64% and 59.34%, respectively. Both the highest proportion of men and women identified educational factors as contributing to male violence in society. After viewing undifferentiated violence through social media, most males and females hold a neutral attitude toward feminism. However, after viewing targeted social incidents and

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