

Research on the effect of short video empowerment for rural elderly women

Zeng Xin^{1,*}

¹*Institute of Political Science and Law, University of Jinan, 336 Nanxinzhuan West Road, Jinan, China*

**Corresponding author*

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Abstract: This paper mainly explores the empowerment effect of short video empowerment function on rural elderly women. Through video text analysis and semi-structured interviews with rural elderly female users of the Tik Tok platform, the empowerment of the rural elderly women from the media platform has substantial empowerment to the economy and emotions, which can increase the economic income of rural elderly women, gain emotional and identity recognition, and realize emotional transmission. These have not improved the gender awareness of rural elderly women, nor have they really changed their social status. They are still in a subordinate position, and the empowerment of short videos is false.

1. Questions and literature review

According to the data of the 52 nd " National Internet Development Statistics and Analysis Report, " in June 2023, China 's network coverage area has exceeded 1,079 million, and the popularity of the Internet has also exceeded 76.4 % ; in addition, the number of short video users in China has also exceeded 1.026 billion, and its usage rate is also increasing. Rural elderly women are a group with relatively low social attention. They have been forgotten and ignored for a long time in the situation of "double low" in family and social status. Short videos from the media make this group get the opportunity of self-expression.

One view is that short video can bring opportunities and development to elderly women, and can give them ' the dominance of the front stage performance, narrative discourse power and emotional expression power, so that elderly women can gain self-control in the practice of short video media, and promote the redistribution of gender power structure in media use^[1]. It plays a significant role in promoting individuals to obtain resources widely and conveniently, realizing the transformation from passive to active initiative, and making individuals, collectives and society closely linked. Therefore, the empowerment of new media makes the media an important source and power for the realization of power ^[2]. With regard to the empowerment of elderly women by new media, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development issued by the United Nations clearly proposes to strengthen the application of information and communication technologies to enhance women's empowerment. The empowerment of older women by new media is a spiral process^[3]. In this process, the rural elderly women have more opportunities for self-expression, and the marginalized groups are also

given the opportunity to go to the public view.

Another view is that the self-media commercializes elderly women. The capital profits from the behind-the-scenes manipulation of short video traffic, while rural elderly women transform their emotional expressions into commodities or even become part of commodities in order to chase economic income. With the development of short video and traffic realization, live broadcast and other technologies, it is the object that is gazed, materialized and commercialized^[4]. Moreover, the traditional patriarchal system is deeply rooted, and online feminist action is low-cost, low-risk, and easy to satisfy, but it does not increase or even replace the political participation of offline elderly women, resulting in a decline in the overall level of participation and effectiveness^[5].

In summary, the academic community has not reached an agreement on the effect of self-media short video on the empowerment of rural elderly women, and there has always been controversy between real empowerment and false empowerment^[6]. Based on the empowerment theory, this paper explores the short video content presentation of rural elderly women, and further analyzes the effect of empowerment of rural elderly women on the self-media platform.

2. Theory

Empowerment theory, also known as empowerment theory, originated from western sociology in the 1970 s. In " Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities, " Solomon proposes empowering black African Americans who are discriminated against^[6]. She believes that it is the powerlessness of individuals or social groups that leads to negative evaluations, not the victims themselves. Solomon believes that empowerment means the process by which individuals acquire the necessary resources out of a certain need, which is the need to be able to control their own lives and have an impact on the living environment^[6]. In September 1994, the United Nations released the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which formally included the empowerment of older women as a mode of thinking, a source of practice and a discourse power in the public policy agenda, and clearly identified the three areas of health, education and employment as the focus of poverty reduction and empowerment^[7].

The concept of "empowerment" of "older women's empowerment " dates back to a major social change in the 1960s. It aims to alleviate the inequalities of the time by strengthening the rights of individuals or groups, and on this basis enhancing the influence of others. It is an endogenous poverty reduction process that empowers individuals or groups from the outside and enriches them internally to reduce lack of authority^[8]. As far as the term " elderly women " is concerned, it clearly points to the goal of empowerment practice or the object of power transfer with " cooperation, " " sharing " and " development " as the transition, reshapes the subjectivity of the poor elderly women, and realizes the " internalization " of power " responsible for me. " In short, ' empowerment of older women ' aims to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation by providing a new way to demonstrate the rights of poor older women and help them cross gender boundaries. " Women in Development " (WID), " Women and Development " (WAD), " Gender and Development " (GAD), these works provide effective support to achieve this goal^[9].

J. Rowlands argues that the empowerment picture has three dimensions: the individual dimension, the close relationship, and the collective effort^[10]; Naila Kabeer points out that empowerment is inextricably linked to the conditions of disempowerment. Empowerment is the process by which people who have been deprived of the ability to choose acquire this ability, which can be considered in three dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements^[11]. Chen Shuqiang emphasizes that the core of empowerment is to transform individuals from passive weak to active strong, and needs to provide individuals with the necessary resources and cultivate and enhance their abilities^[12].

Different scholars have slightly different interpretations of ' empowerment ', but most of them emphasize that individuals can improve their abilities and take the initiative to control their own life development. In general, empowerment is a multi-dimensional and rich conceptual system. Empowerment can be understood as enabling vulnerable groups to obtain rights and increase self-efficacy. Different from direct relief, empowerment should enhance individual initiative.

3. Research methods

In 2016, ByteDance released a new music creative short video social application Tik Tok. Nowadays, China's short video field has formed a stable development trend, and Tik Tok is in the first place. At present, the market structure of China's short video industry is stable, and Douyin stands in the first echelon. Tik Tok has 13.3 % of elderly female users.

The object of this study is the rural elderly female group of Tik Tok short video users. In this study, four participants were selected for interviews. See Table 1. First, their education level is not high, there is no stable source of income, daily life is limited to housework and farm work. The dual identity of elderly women and rural residents in this group makes them marginalized in society and vulnerable in rural families and traditional rural society. This paper adopts video text analysis and participatory observation to conduct research. Four rural elderly female Douyin users were selected from Douyin as the main research objects. Through the collection and analysis of short videos, live broadcasts, and comments and interactions with fans posted by these users. Research teams participate in semi-structured interviews during user live interactions and fan interactions, and further analyze the main content and actual empowerment effects of rural elderly female TikTok users.

This study adopts the purpose sampling method, focusing on the selection of elderly women in rural areas as interviewees. Rural women over 60 years of age are required to have at least the experience of using short video platforms (such as Douyin, Kuaishou, etc.). Ensure sample diversity to cover different economic backgrounds, education levels and social support. The content of the semi-structured interview is mainly : First, the use experience. The frequency and duration of participants ' use of short video platforms ; favourite content types (such as entertainment, education, social, etc.). Second, empowerment effect. The influence of video on their self-confidence, social ability and life satisfaction ; whether the participants have the experience of expressing opinions and sharing stories on the short video platform. Third, social support and cognitive changes. Rural elderly female's experience of obtaining information and social support through short videos. How short videos change perceptions of social roles or lifestyles.

Through the above methods, this paper aims to deeply understand the empowerment effect and social impact of rural elderly women in the use of short video.

Table 1: Font styles for a reference to a journal article.

numbering	sexuality	age	Main content
F1	female	61	Rural daily life
F2	female	64	Record rural poverty life
F3	female	65	Rural daily life
F4	female	65	Rural local specialty food production

4. The effect of short video empowerment on rural elderly women

The transformative power of new media has broken the gender boundary of technology to some extent. Rural elderly women can use cyberspace to write freely, gain the right to speak to a certain extent, and increase social attention. The intervention of capital and flow in self-media short video can make it gain economic benefits. Therefore, self-media short video can undoubtedly promote the empowerment and empowerment of rural elderly women to a certain extent.

4.1. Substantive empowerment of rural elderly women's short video

Rural elderly women through the use of short video, one is economic empowerment. With the increase of income opportunities, short video platforms provide rural women with diversified sources of income. Through the creation and sharing of content, they can obtain advertising income, appreciation and sponsorship to help improve the economic situation of their families. Training programs for skill upgrading and active participation in short-video production and editing enable rural women to acquire new skills, improve digital literacy, and create more opportunities for their future employment or entrepreneurship. Market Connection: Short videos provide a platform for them to showcase their products and services, promote the sale of local specialty products, and enhance their connection with the wider market. The second is emotional empowerment. The short video platform provides rural women with the opportunity to show themselves, allowing them to share life experiences, talents and perspectives, and enhancing self-identity and self-confidence. Through interaction and sharing, they can build an online community, gain support and recognition from other creators and viewers, alleviate loneliness and enhance their sense of belonging.

Short videos not only bring actual benefits and skills to rural women economically, but also help them build self-confidence, enhance social support and cultural identity emotionally, and achieve multi-dimensional substantive empowerment.

4.1.1 Economic Empowerment: Economic Income Increase

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Constrained by traditional gender role consciousness and limited social capital, rural elderly women are mostly in a state of " aphasia " in economic activities, with low participation share in the economic market and wandering on the edge of the economic market. The education level of rural elderly women is low, and they are often trapped in the traditional idea of ' men outside, women inside ', which is mainly engaged in housework and reproduction that cannot be expressed in currency, resulting in rural elderly women without economic income and low status in family and society.

We-media short video provides rural elderly women with the opportunity to change from being covered, presented to active self-presentation, and achieves a certain degree of flexible employment, thus increasing the economic income of rural elderly women. The full-time baby mother of the second child born after 90 is ' the ordinary life of the grain '. The video shooting writes the story of her parenting from the first-person perspective. The content of the release is the daily life of the grandson, the nutrition meal made for the grandson, the growth and change of the grandson, and so on. 'Particles of ordinary life ' encourages mothers to say in a live broadcast: ' Everyone is willing to see the content I send online. She is very happy. Thank you very much for the short video from the media to give her a chance to make money. She can make about 20,000 in three months. '

Tik Tok uses centralized recommendation. The algorithm judges whether the video is popular according to forwarding, commenting, likes, and completion rate, and continuously increases the

popularity of the popular video, so that the traffic is realized^[3]. In the context of self-media short video empowerment, rural elderly women create video content through their own wisdom and courage, increase their popularity, and obtain traffic. They can start to bring goods to obtain commissions, receive gifts from the live broadcast room, and implant advertisements in the short video content. Rural elderly female TikTok users can open a commodity window on the TikTok platform to realize the flow and obtain economic income. Empowering the self-media platform can increase the economic income of rural elderly women, reduce poverty among rural elderly women to a certain extent, and promote rural poverty alleviation.

4.1.2 Emotional empowerment: emotional transmission, resonate

Rural elderly women walk on the edge of society and have a low status in the family. It is difficult for them to convey their emotions in real life and their emotions are not valued by their families and society. As the carrier of emotional transmission, the mass media plays an important role in stimulating feelings and spreading emotions. Some scholars believe that short video meets the emotional needs of short video users in the era of mobile communication^[13].

Tik Tok short video is based on a large amount of data, and its centralized algorithm recommendation makes Tik Tok short video users have a high matching degree with watching fans. At the same time, by analyzing the short videos and live broadcasts of rural elderly women, the content presented by rural elderly women mainly revolves around the daily life at home, which also conforms to the role expectation of the society for rural elderly women. They are more likely to cause emotional resonance among other rural elderly women. In this open space, rural elderly women can be recognized by more people, expand their real and virtual social circles, and gain more social interaction. On the one hand, they show themselves through short video content and can be known by more people offline. Through short videos, they convey their emotions to the viewers, and then generate their emotional expression and communication, which also gets more attention in real life.

On the other hand, in the interaction between the virtual community and fans, it is praised as a sense of pride and satisfaction that can improve the self, such as " good virtue " and " good ability. " The interaction with the comment area called " family " and " dear " between fans further consolidates the emotional connection with the viewer. In the process of interaction with the viewer, short video undertakes the cycle and reproduction of emotional energy^[14], and also conveys the emotions of elderly women to the greatest extent. The various topics centered on her in the real and virtual communities make the short video platform allow rural elderly women to experience a sense of ' centrality ' that has never been experienced before and form a strong emotional resonance with fans.

4.2 False empowerment of rural elderly women in short video

The false empowerment of rural elderly women on the short video platform can be manifested in a variety of ways. First, the materialization of the image. In many short videos, the image of rural elderly women is often materialized as a benefit. This appearance makes their life experience and wisdom ignored, making their empowerment seem only superficial rather than substantive. The second is the lack of social support and identity. Although the short video platform provides a display space, it lacks the necessary community support, which leads to the isolation of elderly women in creation and communication; the ambiguity of identity, the commercialization of short video content may lead to the neglect of traditional culture and values, and the cultural identity and sense of belonging of rural elderly women are weakened. The third is the drive of economic interests. Some platforms use the image of rural elderly women to attract traffic through advertising

or business cooperation. Their participation is only an accessory to economic interests. The concept of empowerment is weak under the pressure of interests and is driven by short-term interests. The creators are eager to cater to the market and ignore the opportunities for sustainable development and real self-expression. Furthermore, due to the unfair distribution of income, the economic benefits of short video creation are often concentrated in the hands of a few well-known creators, and the efforts of rural elderly women in content creation may not be reasonably rewarded.

4.2.1 Subordination: the gazed object

Rural elderly women have gained a certain right to speak in cyberspace and can show themselves through the platform. However, the patriarchal system in rural areas is deeply rooted, and the traditional gender consciousness has not changed. It is still dominated by male values, while elderly women are materialized, not respected, and placed in a dependent position.

First of all, the image presentation of the short video from the media only improves the visibility of the image of rural elderly women, but the reproduction role and community role of elderly women in society are still neglected, and the factors affecting women's rights are not taken seriously^[15]. In most rural areas of China, men's family participation is low, elderly women bear a very heavy family affairs, men control the family's economy, have a lot of voice, in the long run, the default 'men outside, women inside' behavior. The presentation of rural elderly women in short videos is rooted in the patriarchal ideology. The short video text of the study has appeared many times 'looking forward to the husband's return' and 'for the family'. Rural elderly women also unconsciously accept and cater to the standards of patriarchy and internalize the concept of gender. The logic behind this is to support and consolidate male authority.

Tik Tok's bloggers' rural essays, 'ordinary life of grains', 'Yang Ma records daily' and other short videos all take cleaning at home, washing and cooking for their families, taking grandchildren, raising social animals or growing vegetables as the main content. In the short video and live broadcast, 'Yang Ma Records Daily' repeatedly talked about 'I want to be a good wife, men work outside to earn money, and he can't worry about things at home'. Under the hidden patriarchal culture, the traditional gender consciousness of "men outside, women inside" has not been broken. They take the initiative to put themselves under the gaze of the patriarchal imagination of older women and cater to the gender cultural structure in the patriarchal society.

Secondly, the short video content of rural elderly women also has some vulgar short video content, which places themselves under the gaze of men and has the tendency to materialize elderly women. John Berger, a British cultural critic, proposed "male gaze." In a patriarchal society, men use male power to gaze, occupy and dominate the body of older women, and use older women as objects of consumption to complement men. The status of older women is completely marginalized^[16].

Tik Tok's three rural blogger 'Tang Xiaoyu' is under the banner of the three rural accounts. In the short video, it shows videos such as wearing high heels, ultra-short skirts, and black stockings in the field. Male fan users commented 'really very beautiful', 'sexy cook', 'very good figure' and other comments. During the live broadcast, a considerable group of men rewarded her, and even received harassing private messages in the background. The rural elderly women in this kind of short video put themselves under the male gaze, and the male-centered thought still exists. They have the tendency to please men and materialize elderly women, and even further aggravate the problem of materializing elderly women through the self-media platform.

4.2.2 Self-biasedness: self-dwarfing and group attack

'Self-biased' is habitual attention and prejudice. The self-bias of rural elderly women can be both

the emphasis on the evaluation criteria of other groups and the prejudice against their own cognition. This self-bias comes from the domestication of discourse.^[3] The short video content of rural elderly women's Tik Tok shows a tendency to dwarf and vilify themselves to cater to the viewers. Therefore, with the instability of traffic data, many rural elderly women's self-dwarfing and self-deprecating will continue to deepen. Self-dwarfing is manifested in a large number of Tik Tok rural elderly female users, and short video content deliberately highlights poverty and distress. In the flow competition, it seems that their lives will become more 'bitter' and more 'difficult'. The record of daily life began to be completely reduced to 'bitter competition', and netizens ridiculed it as 'bitter melon team'. The injection of flow economy will inevitably lead to the alienation of self-materialization and daily records. Through self-deprecation and self-dwarfing, it deepens and solidifies the dwarf image of rural elderly women and their substantive status in society. Such as 'Yang mother records daily' Douyin short video presentation content is the living environment is very bad, take care of three grandchildren every day, do all the housework, very hard and so on.

Qian Hezi Ueno pointed out that elderly women often make "exceptions" to other elderly women, or become "honorary men" or "strong women," or withdraw from the category of elderly women to become "ugly women." The common premise of the two is to recognize that older women in the general sense have a standard template: emphasizing sexual values such as appearance and size, and lagging behind men in intelligence^[16]. This cognition is imposed on elderly women through social norms and cultural customs, and is internalized into the general consensus of elderly women. The same-sex assault in the short video of rural elderly women is concentrated in the field of appearance. For example, when the content of the short video mainly presents the simple rural life, the netizens commented: 'Although it is simple and good, at least don't make yourself like a woman in the 60s'; when the rural elderly women in the short video begin to learn make-up, netizens will laugh at her technology and aesthetics: 'Is it to sing?'; and when they don't mend their borders and concentrate on running the family, they will be ridiculed as not knowing how to cherish themselves: 'You have lived like a man who dares to cherish you'.

5. Conclusion and discussion

The plight of rural elderly women is only a microcosm of the elderly women, they are neglected in the family and society, not respected, wandering in the edge of society, but also need to bear the heavy family affairs. The development of short video and the sinking of the market have enabled elderly women to have the opportunity to show themselves, to a certain extent, to achieve economic benefits, to convey feelings in real and virtual communities, and to gain emotional resonance and identity. However, the influence of patriarchy is deep-rooted, and the empowerment of elderly women in short videos has multiple obstacles. Rural elderly women are still in a subordinate position, being gazed at, commercialized, and have low decision-making power. In addition, it is easy to form a dilemma of self-dwarfing and being attacked by other groups in the use of short videos.

In order to reduce the materialization of rural women on the short video platform, suggestions are made from the following four aspects: First, advocate a positive image: encourage the platform to promote and display the diversity and depth of rural women, emphasizing their positive roles in family, community and culture, not just appearance or lifestyle. The second is to strengthen platform norms and education to develop content review standards. Short video platforms should establish a strict content review mechanism to prevent the dissemination of vulgar and materialized women's content and ensure the health and safety of the platform environment. The third is to carry out educational propaganda. Government departments related to media regulation improve users' media literacy through educational activities, advocate respect and understanding of the value of

rural women, and reduce the consumption and dissemination of materialized content. At the same time, it provides funds and resources to support content creation aimed at demonstrating the wisdom, skills and experiences of rural women, and promotes stories with depth and value. Fourth, relevant departments and platforms should strengthen the community and support system. They should establish a support network, encourage rural women to form support groups to discuss and share creative experiences together, enhance their self - protection awareness, and resist materialized culture. Legal and psychological support should be provided, and the platform should offer legal advice and psychological counselling to help rural women cope with possible cyber-harassment and materialization issues, thus protecting their rights and dignity.

There are still some shortcomings in this study. Due to the limitations of the conditions, there is no interview with the rural elderly female users of the research object. The research scope of short video rural elderly women's empowerment and false empowerment needs to be more comprehensive.

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