

The Rationality of Search Theory Framework in Late and No Marriage

—Findings and Discussion Based on the Survey of Marriage Attitudes of College Students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai

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Abstract: In recent years, China's marriage model has a tendency to converge with the European marriage model, and the tendency of young people to get married late and not to get married has become obvious. College students are the main body of China's marriage behavior in the next ten years, and college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai have certain regional characteristics and unique views on late marriage and non-marriage, which are worth studying and exploring. This study will utilize the search theory, the theory as an economic concept in marriage has a certain reference, but the previous research has not been "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" This region of the youth of late marriage, non-marriage point of view of systematic research, and in the era of information technology college students thinking changes fast update, the previous research has a certain lag. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the rationality of the search theory in explaining the problem of late marriage and non-marriage among college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and to try to make discoveries. Through in-depth interviews, this study concludes that the search theory is reasonable in explaining the situation of late marriage and non-marriage among college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and based on this, it is found that college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai have a fixed-sample search behavior in the search process.

Keywords: Late marriage, no marriage, search theory, college student

1. Introduction

Data from China's population censuses since the 1980s show that there is a gradual shift towards the European marriage model of late marriage and late childbearing for generations born after 1980, which is even more pronounced after entering the 21st century. It is important to understand the reasons why the population of marriageable age is tilted towards late marriage. On the one hand, late or even no marriage will have a significant impact on China's future fertility rate, and will also have a certain impact on the age structure of the working population; on the other hand, digging into the phenomenon of late marriage and no marriage can give a glimpse of the social phenomenon, problems, and operation mechanism behind it.

College students are the core body of marriage behavior in the next ten years, and their attitudes towards marriage, active or passive late marriage, or even non-marriage have triggered close attention from academia and society [1]. According to the seventh national census, 52.20% of young people aged 18-22 in China have a college education or higher [1]. Meanwhile, the young generation growing up in "Generation Z" is the aboriginal people in the digital age and witnesses to the reform and development of society, and they have unique attitudes and perspectives on marriage. Their tendency to marry late or not at all will have a profound impact on their parent's generation, which will lead to certain changes in China's pension system and insurance system.

"Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai are three cities in China that have developed economies and e-commerce that have had a profound impact on China's GDP growth. Many families in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai are nuclear families, where only children are tilted by the family's material resources from a young age, and even if there are two or more children in the family, parents in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai tend to pursue fair treatment and are more open-minded and democratic. According to statistics, in 2018, the national marriage rate was 7.2%, and the marriage rates in Shanghai and Zhejiang were only 5.9% and 4.4%, and the average age of first marriage became later [2]. Children who grow up in such a happy environment have different views on marriage, and their tendency to marry later and not marry is more obvious. The existing research on college students' marital relationships does not involve the study of this key region in detail, but with the degree of influence of "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" in the whole country, one can foresee the future marital relationships and births in more regions from the choice of college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai for marrying late and not marrying.

The search theory proposed by Stigler, which is originally applicable to the economic field, can be categorized into fixed-sample search and continuous search, which refer to the following respectively: consumers pre-select a few sellers and choose the lowest price among them; consumers search continuously until they find the most acceptable price. Some scholars do apply this theory to the study of late marriage, but they focus more on the theory of "continuous search" in an attempt to see the impact of "fixed-sample" search in late marriage and non-marriage, and at the same time, they use targeted, geographically specific small-area studies to argue for the previous view. At the same time, the research is targeted and geographically specific to a small region to prove the viewpoints of the predecessors.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Late Marriage and Non-Marriage

There is no very clear definition of late marriage in society, and the age of late marriage in social life is dynamic with social development. In a narrow sense, China's current family planning policy, later than the legal age of marriage (female 20 years old, male 22 years old) three years or more to get married (female 23 years old, male 25 years old), that is, late marriage [3]. However, broadly speaking, often later than the average age of marriage in the region where they live (or in some regions have not reached the legal age of "marriage" age), or later than the concept of the age of age is late marriage. Secondly, in terms of non-marriage, non-marriage in the narrow sense means not registering a marriage but having a partner and children [4]. In the broader sense, the population of marriageable age not marrying regardless of the reason can be called non-marriage. This study adopts the broad concepts of late marriage and non-marriage, and based on the above, further summarizes the specific views of the "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" region on the age of late marriage, the number of relationships experienced, the length of relationships experienced, and the form of non-marriage chosen by the "Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai" university students. The viewpoints of the students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai are summarized.

2.2. Search Theory of Late Marriage and Non-Marriage

In the marriage market, having a household registration in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai will be labeled as "superior", and marriageable people with such a label will try to find a partner with a better label. The Search Theory explains this process of searching for and targeting a quality partner. According to this theory, the marriage decision-making process is the process of entering the marriage market to find and compare candidates, and the duration of this process is determined by the age of the marriage [5]. The age at marriage is the sum of the age of entry into the marriage market and the time spent searching in the marriage market. If the first date or the first time a man and a woman have sex is considered a sign of entering the marriage market, it can be found that the age at which people enter the marriage market is relatively stable from one generation to another [6]. The delayed age of marriage in modern society is not due to late entry into the marriage market, but rather to the fact that it takes longer to find a consensual spouse in the marriage market. There are two main reasons why it takes more time to search: first, the increased mobility of the population cannot be satisfied with a full understanding of the marriage partner in a short period. In the fast-paced, information-based modern society, the virtual nature of the Internet, the impatience and insincerity of people's hearts, and the asymmetry of information make it impossible to quickly identify the true character of the marriage partner, and the marriageable population has been experiencing the cycle of "locking up-getting along with-abandonment," and naturally chooses not to get married; and secondly, as more and more women enter the labor market, the traditional gender and family differences have become more important. the labor market, traditional notions and forms of gender and family division of labor have shifted, and "the gains from marriage are due to increased female income and labor force participation and declining fertility, as the sexual division of labor becomes less favorable" [7]. Economic autonomy has led to many women no longer needing to rely on marriage to fulfill their material needs, and marriage has gone from being a necessity to being optional [8].

3. Characteristics of Youth in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai

The main target of this survey is young college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai (young people who were born and grew up in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai and are currently studying in higher education institutions). Their characteristics are as follows:

First, the general material conditions of the family are good, growing up in the process of being well-protected by their parents, have not encountered very big setbacks in the character will have some no opinion, will be more simple, but also in the process of looking for a partner to be pickier (mostly related to the family culture).

Secondly, because of the better material conditions of their families, many young people in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai are prone to the negative emotions of "sucking" and "lying down" in the competitive environment driven by technology and capital [1].

Third, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai are the origin of e-commerce and live broadcasting, self-media development is booming, and many large-scale self-media companies have settled here, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai youth can often receive the most cutting-edge fashion, more open-minded, flexible, in the career choices and life planning will be more diverse. At the same time, because of early contact with the Internet, being happy to share in cyberspace, make friends, and form all kinds of circle culture, such as closer circle, etc., the social scope is more extensive than the parents.

Fourth, young people in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai generally choose to live in the local area, not willing to leave home too far because they feel that they are already in a more prosperous region of the country.

4. Research Methodology and Target Audience

4.1. Research Method

This study is based on the qualitative research method, hoping to prioritize the inner feelings of college students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and respecting their views and thoughts on the issue of "late marriage and no marriage". In this way, compared with the large-scale questionnaire surveys in the past, this study can collect newer and more realistic feedback. Since the past discussions on the issue of "late marriage and non-marriage" were mostly based on the marriageable people themselves, this experiment focuses on the views of university students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and also refers to the views of the parents of the young people who marry late and do not marry, to get more information about the issue. This experiment focuses on the opinions of university students in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and also refers to the opinions of parents of young people who marry late or don't marry, to obtain more valuable opinions. This study adopts the in-depth interview method, choosing online interviews or face-to-face interviews according to the interviewee's hospital, and using audio recording equipment to record and form verbatim transcripts of the interviews in the process of the interviews.

4.2. Research Participants

The participants of this experiment are mainly young people who are currently receiving higher education in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, and three mothers whose children are still pursuing higher education and have a clear tendency of "not marrying or marrying late" were invited. Table 1 shows the backgrounds of the six college students who participated in the study; Table 2 shows the backgrounds of the three mothers who participated in the study.

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Table 1: Background of the college students participating in the interview.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Period	Area	Is it an only child	Love Frequency	Interview time
Long	23	Male	Senior	Ningbo, Zhejiang	Yes	Three	2 hours and 10 minutes
Yu	22	Female	Junior	Shaoxing, Zhejiang	Yes	Zero	2 hours
Xv(Gay)	30	Male	Grade 2 master	Shanghai	Yes	Five	2 hours 30 minutes
Qi	23	Female	Senior Student in the UK	Nanjing, Jiangsu	No	Two	2 hours
Yuan (Gay)	25	Female	Grade 2 master	Hangzhou, Zhejiang	No	four	2 hours
Xi	21	Female	Sophomore in us	Ningbo, Zhejiang	Yes	More than fifteen	2 hours 45 minutes

Table 2: Background of the mothers participating in the interview.

Pseudonym of the mothers	Age	Marriage	Area	Educational level	Job	Children	Interview time
Gui	54	Married	Ningbo, Zhejiang	Junior high school education	Aquatic business operator	Older son: 32 years old, single; younger son: 11 years old	3 hours
Juan	53	Married	Shanghai	High school education	Housewoman	The only daughter: 28 years old, single	2 hours 45 minutes
Ying	55	Single	Nanjing, Jiangsu	University education	Retired high school teacher	The only daughter: 27 years old, single	2 hours

4.3. Analysis of Research Results

According to the data of this study, the choices of the interviewees were concentrated in the age range of 30-35 years old, with a mean value of 31.8 years old, and the age of late marriage perceived by male college students as well as mothers of the men was a bit later compared to the women. The mothers interviewed all indicated that as their children delayed, they also self-soothed themselves by delaying their perceived age of late marriage again and again.

4.3.1. Reasons for Marrying Late

As the views of the interviewees are rather fragmented will categorize them as narratives. First of all, for the two interviewees who are homosexuals, it is known from the interview that Xuyin was hurt by the relationship between the two sexes and thus had the tendency not to get married; Margin often witnessed her father's violence against her mother since she was a child, and thus she was disappointed and even fearful of males, and Margin also said that because homosexuality is not legal in our country, there is no institutional protection, and the relationship has a certain degree of concealment, and after some time that some people got along with her, she found that the other person did not have a rather firm same-sex orientation.

Secondly, the remaining college student respondents said that marrying late and not marrying largely stemmed from spending time examining whether their current choices were appropriate and compatible. The three mothers also said that they could not easily decide on a marriage partner and that they had to get along with them thoroughly, both in terms of their true character and in terms of the type of work and room for advancement.

Again, almost all the women in the interviews mentioned their fear of childbirth and their reluctance to take great risks to conceive a new life, so they resisted marriage, while parents are more conservative and hope that small families will be able to conceive a life, so the contradiction tends to make the tendency to marry late and not to get married obvious.

Finally, the participants agree that marriage is not a necessary option in life, especially from the answers of college students, who care more about the realization of personal values than marriage.

Both female students and their parents said that girls must have their careers and be able to rely on themselves to establish a firm foothold in society, which is a prerequisite for them to consider marriage, and that this is the capital they are searching for, as well as the basis for marrying late or not marrying.

To summarize, whether it is homosexual love or heterosexual marriage, people are intentionally carrying out a "search-examination-search" step, to eliminate more uncertainty, through time to examine many uncertain promises, the possibility of the ideal and the real; at the same time, women need to be able to make a living in the society's concept of the deep-rooted, at least, in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai areas, people intend to pursue the realization of personal values, and as a major factor in the consideration of the new candidate. In Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, people intend to pursue the realization of personal values and use this as a major factor in considering marriage; if the current partner is unable to give a mutually reinforcing marriage, people tend to give up and look for a new candidate. As a result, late marriages and non-marriages are becoming more common among the people of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, who are good at "investigation" and love to weigh the pros and cons.

4.3.2. Search Objects

Fixed-sample search in the marriage is expressed in the daily saying "N boats", and choose the best one from these "boats". The six college students, except Long and Yu, all said that they had been or even are in this kind of relationship, and Xi said that this way is the most time and cost-saving way to find the most suitable person and that they can understand and investigate many people at the same time, but she also admitted that because this way is often "practiced" by others, it makes some of the "Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai" young people not want to be in the relationship. Zhejiang and Shanghai" young people are not willing to easily touch the relationship, worried about their own tainted, not willing to take this uncertain risk. Gui said that her son once dated multiple girlfriends at the same time, and was severely reprimanded by his family for this behavior, which is against the correct values. All participants agreed that they were more comfortable with the "continuous search" style than the "fixed sample search" style, and were even willing to accept not getting married. However, it is also reflected that the behavior of "being in many different boats" happens in the youth society nowadays, at least in the regions of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai.

4.3.3. "Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai" Identity

Each participant considered the two aspects dialectically, but to summarize the views, it can be seen that interviewees tend to think that the identity of "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" increases the frequency of late marriage and non-marriage. Parents are more demanding on their children's choice of spouse and interfere with their children's marriage to a certain extent; "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" parents are more open-minded and have a high degree of acceptance of the phenomena of late marriage, non-marriage, and buying sperm to have a baby; there are a lot of only-children in the region, who are pampered and spoiled since childhood, and cannot often think differently. Lack of ability to think differently, often breaks up at the drop of a hat; "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai" region's economic development, e-commerce is booming, providing such as Taobao shopkeepers and other new occupations, personal contact with the opposite sex of a short period, fewer opportunities; the rapid development of the Internet, "Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai" young people can With the rapid development of the Internet, young people in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai can choose their spouses online, but there are many choices, many comparisons, and many entanglements; women in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai have their careers, are capable of independent living, and are not interested in marriage.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study are that young people in the process of searching for the object, the other party's age, gender, place of domicile and other basic information is easier to obtain, but such as the future of personal development, personal career prospects, personal character and other uncertainties cannot be in-depth understanding at the beginning of the acquaintance, people to transform these uncertainties into a known, generally need to spend time searching for, and inspection, which leads to the phenomenon of late marriage, not marriage This has led to the emergence of the phenomenon of late marriage and non-marriage, as well as the increase of the phenomenon. Meanwhile, in "Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai", because the family conditions are better, they have the material basis for a longer search.

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This study provides a lot of valuable references for future research in this direction, which mainly affects the perception of concepts and behaviors of college students' marital relationships in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai, as well as the breadth of the use of the search theory framework, and future

research should focus more on the exploration of the rationality of the search theory framework in other key regions, as well as an in-depth investigation of the frequency of fixed-sample searches and the reasons for the emergence of the fixed-sample searches in the marital relationships.

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