

Exploring the Impact of Xiaohongshu on the Psychology of Young White-Collar Employees in China

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Abstract. Since its establishment in 2013, the Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) app has rapidly become a prominent social platform. Known for its high-quality and engaging user-generated original content, the platform records and introduces various experiences and usage strategies in different fields such as fashion, photography, shopping, and food through various forms. Due to its unique content and format, Xiaohongshu is popular among young female users and has become a leader in comprehensive software. This study delves into the psychological impact of the Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu on young white-collar professionals. In order to obtain valid data, we conducted a comprehensive survey through the questionnaire. Through detailed analysis of the survey results, we found that Xiaohongshu, as a popular social media app, has had a broad profound impact on the psychology of young white-collar professionals. Furthermore, the study found that Xiaohongshu not only provides a platform for young white-collar professionals to obtain information and share experiences, but also meets emotional, social, and self-identity needs through its rich content formats and personalized recommendations. In addition, Xiaohongshu also positively influences users' values, consumption attitudes, and lifestyles by inspiring their desires and pursuits. In conclusion, Xiaohongshu app has a significant influence on young white-collar professionals, and its positive impact on user psychology deserves further attention and research.

1 Introduction

In the digital information age, social media has become indispensable to modern life, people's lifestyles, and psychological states. Particularly, the influence of social media on young-collar professionals, a group typically aged between 20-40 years, with educational backgrounds and professional skills, has been significant. This group is at a crucial stage in their careers and lives, with high aspirations for self-identity, career development, and quality of life. However, due to high work pressure and intense competition, they also face issues such as anxiety and excessive stress. The emergence of social media has provided them with a new space for expression and communication, while also potentially affecting their psychological states.

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In China, Xiaohongshu has become one of the most popular social media platforms attracting a large number of young white-collar users. However, there appears to be a lack of in-depth research on the psychological impact of Xiaohongshu on this specific group. This study aims to explore the psychological impact of Xiaohongshu on young white-collar professionals to provide deeper insights into this phenomenon. Established in 2013, Xiaohongshu serves as a platform integrating social and e-commerce elements, occupying a significant position in the Chinese social media landscape with its unique "grassroots economy" model.

As of 2023, Xiaohongshu has over 400 million registered users, with daily users reaching tens of millions, primarily consisting of young white-collar professionals seeking a high lifestyle, particularly female users. Users on Xiaohongshu can share daily life moments, shopping experiences, various lifestyles, and directly purchase recommended products through e-commerce functions. This model has made Xiaohongshu an important channel for branding and sales activities for businesses. In terms of revenue, Xiaohongshu generates billions in advertising revenue annually, demonstrating its commercial value and market potential.

In 2023, Xiaohongshu achieved a historic breakthrough with revenue reaching \$7 billion, an 85% growth, and a net profit of \$500 million, compared to a loss the previous year. This performance indicates market acceptance of Xiaohongshu's business model, moving toward profitability. Since its establishment, Xiaohongshu has also received numerous industry awards and honors, recognizing its social e-commerce model innovation, user growth, and content quality.

The aim of this study is to comprehensively explore the impact of Xiaohongshu on the psychological health of young white-collar professionals, and valuable insights for the mental of young white-collar professionals in the social age. This research aims to serve as a reference for policy-making, business management, and personal development of young white-collar professionals, promoting the positive influence of social media and potential harm.

2 Literature review

In the field of Chinese social media, the platform Xiaohongshu has attracted a large number of users, especially young white-collar workers, to its unique community atmosphere and content form. Many scholars have conducted research on the impact of Xiaohongshu on the psychology of young white-collar workers.

Utilizing data technology, Xiaohongshu analyzes users' behaviors such as comments, likes, collections, and shares to understand preferences, create user profiles, and then utilize algorithms for content distribution to achieve personalized recommendations, thereby catering to user preferences in a more customized manner [1]. Wen believes that compared to short video platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou, Xiaohongshu has higher transparency and openness. Audiences can quickly understand the daily lives of bloggers through the Plog content on Xiaohongshu. Many bloggers voluntarily expose behind-the-scenes and display visible scenes, greatly satisfying the audience's desire for voyeurism and curiosity [2].

With the continuous development of media technology, media logic has integrated into people's thinking logic, becoming an important factor influencing daily decision-making and behavior. The emergence of various user-generated content on social media platforms has changed the way people express and interact, with people increasingly using various media for emotional disclosure [3]. In his research, Chen Shuo concluded that Xiaohongshu's "Warm House" serves as a digital emotional space that attracts young people to gather allowing them to express their thoughts, temporarily alleviate social anxiety, reveal their hidden selves in reality, gain a sense of belonging and security, and provide healing for young

individuals. However, to what extent can this healing effect be effective? While virtual online spaces can to some extent compensate for real-world deficiencies, they cannot fundamentally solve the real-life faced by young people. It is still to address the demands of the young generation [4].

According to iResearch data, as of April 2023, male users of Xiaohongshu accounted for 25.93% while female users accounted for 74.07%, predominantly in the age group of 18-35. They are enthusiastic about sharing their daily lives on the platform "tagging their lives" through text, images, and videos, and engaging in social interactions through comments, likes, and shares, making Xiaohongshu a popular social new favorite. Momo, also known as Me Dragon, is an anonymous group spontaneously formed by netizens who uniformly use the nickname "Momo" and a pink baby dinosaur avatar, erasing their own identity to become part of an anonymous collective. Subsequently, there have been various derivative variations of the dinosaur image and more forms of the Momo font. The youth group keen on anonymous social interaction, represented by Momo, has emerged on social platforms led by Xiaohongshu, with their presence visible in online interactive spaces. In the pursuit of individuality in modern society, why do the M individuals go against the grain? Goffman's "dramaturgical theory" suggests that the stage of self-presentation is divided into frontstage and backstage [5]. Hou Xianyuan believes that under social pressure, people tend to present a "social self" on the front stage of life, while the hidden label of Momo provides a backstage for individuals to express their true selves. In the real world, individuals seek release and relief from disciplinary restrictions and repression in the virtual world, where they need a safe space to express and vent their true selves. Anonymous social interactions dissolve the contradiction between free expression and social pressure, establishing a transitional social level between strangers and acquaintances. By putting on the Momo internet disguise, individuals can express their true selves without burden, avoiding the trouble of being unable to speak out due to group pressure; meanwhile, it satisfies the pleasure of peeking into others' lives, avoiding the hassle of exposing their true selves. Relaxing self-expression and presentation to a certain extent alleviate social fatigue [6].

In the study by Li Yuxia and Ba Yifei, in the era of fragmented reading, the popularized and fragmented information format of Plogs on Xiaohongshu saves time for both the sender and receiver, allowing people to immerse themselves in the convenience brought by the visual dominance [7]. Furthermore, Plogs uses explanatory text to annotate images, guiding the audience to understand the pictures, which hinders the audience from deep thinking and rational exploration. With the increasing availability of Plog creation tools, many individuals are increasingly inclined to use stickers and doodles, quick and effortless mediums, to share their lives, resulting in content lacking in humanistic content. Plog influencers, in catering to the demands of the fragmented era, often neglect rational processing and logical organization of content in the creative process, as the inherent coherence and narrative in image content deprives people of opportunities for in-depth thought [8], causing the audience to easily get lost in the complex visual feast.

Wu Zuyun pointed out in their research that in the prevalent context of consumerism, the content created by Plog influencers on Xiaohongshu is saturated with consumer symbols, and influencers often subtly insert advertisements, using images supplemented with text to introduce product prices, benefits, etc. After encountering such content, the audience is also prone to consume similar products, leading them to blindly follow trends and fall the trap of consumerism. Similarly, personal life sharing on social can be the same. People often present their consumption concepts through Plogs, triggering envy and comparison in others, thereby stimulating more consumer desires and behaviors. Shareholders, in order to maintain the glamorous image they have constructed [9], engage in long-term consumption behaviors, being forced into an endless cycle of consumption ultimately having their time and energy consumed, becoming digital laborers. Additionally, in the research results of Yuliani Suseno,

it may be seen that the cultural values generated in the use of Xiaohongshu serve as an important regulatory factor for ethical behavior among employees in the workplace [10].

Despite the increasing influence of Xiaohongshu among young white-collar workers, there is currently no specific research exploring the comprehensive impact of Xiaohongshu on the psychology of this group, especially its potential negative effects and the underlying for psychological changes.

This study aims to fill the existing research gap by comprehensively examining the impact of Xiaohongshu on the psychology of young white-collar workers, including both positive and potentially negative influences. By deeply the mechanisms through which Xiaohongshu affects the psychology of young white-collar workers, this research provides a new perspective for understanding the impact of social media on this group, which is of significant importance for guiding young white-collar workers in rational use of social media and maintaining mental health.

3 Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research approach, mainly collecting data through online survey questionnaires on the platform "Wenjuanxing." The design of the survey questionnaire aimed to understand the impact of Xiaohongshu on the psychology of young white-collar workers, including aspects as their emotions, consumer behavior, and social interactions.

In terms of sample selection criteria, this study mainly focused on young white-collar workers aged between 20 and 40 who have a habit of frequently using Xiaohongshu. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, sampling will be conducted in different cities and industries.

The survey questionnaire will be distributed through the Xiaohongshu platform and social media advertisements. In order to increase the response rate, incentives such as small red envelopes or lottery opportunities will be offered for completing the questionnaire. The distribution period of the survey will last for approximately one month to allow enough time for participants to complete the questionnaire.

A total of 61 questionnaires were collected in this study. The effectiveness of the questionnaire will be evaluated based on two criteria: firstly, the questionnaire must be fully completed with no missing answers; secondly, the answers should demonstrate a certain level of rationality, avoiding obvious patterned responses such as selecting the same option for all answers. Through this research method, a total of 53 valid questionnaires were obtained.

4 Results

In the questionnaire data, the proportion of people who frequently use Xiaohongshu reached 86.89%. The users of Xiaohongshu are as follows: (gender) males account for 27.87% and females account for 72.13%; the majority of users are aged between 20 and 30, accounting for 49.18%; (monthly income) users earning between 3000 to 8000 yuan account for 78.69%. It can be seen that the users of Xiaohongshu are mostly young females with purchasing power. They are interested in various aspects of Xiaohongshu, including beauty, fashion, travel, food, fitness, and others, indicating the broad coverage and significant influence of Xiaohongshu.

Regarding the psychological impact of Xiaohongshu on users, the majority of people admire the beautiful lifestyle and high-quality content on Xiaohongshu, but also feel anxious or stressed by it, leading to dissatisfaction with their real lives. Furthermore, 81.97% of people have made purchases based on recommendations from Xiaohongshu, and 68.85% believe that the content on Xiaohongshu has influenced their consumption concepts.

The social impact of Xiaohongshu on users includes helping users meet new friends or expand their social circle, creating topics with friends based on Xiaohongshu content, but also causing many to feel lonelier or more lost due to social interactions on Xiaohongshu. The data from the survey questionnaire summarizes that 80.33% of people have made new friends or expanded their social circle because of Xiaohongshu, and 68.85% of people have more topics with friends due to Xiaohongshu content while feeling lonelier and more lost.

Regarding the influence of Xiaohongshu on users' values, the vast majority of people believe it not only their values but also prompts reflection on their life goals and pursuits. 85.25% of people believe that the content of Xiaohongshu influences their values, with 81.97% believing it prompts reflection on their life goals and pursuits, and 77.05% feeling better equipped to handle difficulties in real life due to the content of Xiaohongshu.

5 Discussion

Xiaohongshu has a wide-ranging psychological impact on young white-collar professionals. According to the research results, Xiaohongshu has a broad impact on the psychological well-being of young white-collar professionals, covering various aspects such as beauty fashion, travel, food, and fitness. The reasons for this impact are as follows: Firstly, Xiaohongshu, as a social media platform, offers rich and diverse content that can meet the different interests and needs of young white-collar professionals. Secondly, Xiaohongshu's interactive user interface allows users to easily access information and share, enhancing its attractiveness to users. Furthermore, Xiaohongshu's recommendation mechanism is precise, recommending relevant content and products based on user's interests and needs, thus exerting a significant influence on its users. From this, we can see that Xiaohongshu's widespread impact on young white-collar professionals has both positive and potential negative effects. The positive lies in Xiaohongshu's ability to help users understand new lifestyles and products, broaden their horizons, and increase in lives. However, the negative impact may arise from the idealized lifestyle and high-quality content on Xiaohongshu, leading users to feel dissatisfied with their real lives and experience anxiety and stress. Therefore, to address these results, users should use Xiaohongshu reasonably, avoiding excessive immersion in the virtual world, and learning to find happiness and fulfillment in the real world. At the time, Xiaohongshu platform should strengthen content management to avoid excessive promotion of virtual and unrealistic lifestyles, thereby reducing negative impacts on users.

According to the research findings, Xiaohongshu has had an impact on the social interactions of young white-collar workers. It helped users make new friends and expand their social circles, but it has also made users feel more lonely and lost. This is because Xiaohongshu, as a social media platform, promotes strong user interaction where users can interact with others through sharing and commenting, thus making new friends. However, social interactions on Xiaohongshu may also lead to feelings of loneliness and emptiness as the social satisfaction users get on the platform may be illusory and cannot replace real social relationships in daily life. Therefore, Xiaohongshu's social impact on young white-collar workers has both positive and potential negative effects. The positive aspect is that Xiaohongshu can help users make new friends, expand social circles, and increase social enjoyment. The negative aspect is that social interactions on Xiaohongshu may lead to feelings of loneliness and loss, affecting users' mental health. Therefore, users should balance their online and offline social activities, on real-life social relationships, actively in social activities, and stay in touch with friends in real life Xiaohongshu platform can also add offline activities, encourage users to participate in online and offline social activities, promote real interaction and communication users. Additionally, strengthening mental health promotion and education, increasing users' understanding of virtual and real social interactions, and helping users establish correct social concepts are important. Xiaohongshu platform can also

enhance real interaction and communication among users, such as video calls, voice chats, to enhance real feelings and trust between users.

This study also concludes that Xiaohongshu has influenced the values of young white-collar workers, leading them to reflect on their life goals and pursuits. This is because Xiaohongshu's diverse content covers beauty, fashion, travel, food, fitness, and more, allowing users to understand different lifestyles and values, and prompting reflection on their own life goals and pursuits. However, Xiaohongshu's impact on the values of young white-collar workers has both positive and potential negative effects. The positive is that Xiaohongshu can help users broaden their horizons, understand different lifestyles and values, and stimulate positive thinking about their life goals and pursuits. The negative aspect is that the high-quality lifestyle content easily accessible to others on Xiaohongshu causes users to doubt their own lifestyle and values, leading to anxiety and pressure. Therefore, users should approach the content on Xiaohongshu rationally, avoid excessively pursuing illusory lifestyles and values, and learn to find and achieve their own life and pursuits in real life. Additionally, Xiaohongshu platform should strengthen content management, avoid excessive promotion of virtual and unrealistic lifestyles and values, and reduce the negative impact on users.

According to the research findings, Xiaohongshu has significantly influenced the consumption behavior of young white-collar professionals. Most people have purchased products based on recommendations on Xiaohongshu and believe that the content on Xiaohongshu has influenced their consumption beliefs. The reason for this is that Xiaohongshu, as a social media platform, has a precise recommendation mechanism that can recommend relevant content and products based on users' interests and needs. Additionally, the content on Xiaohongshu is usually highly tempting and attractive, leading users to be easily influenced by advertisements and promotions while browsing, resulting in purchase behavior. The influence of Xiaohongshu on the consumption behavior of young white-collar professionals has both positive and potentially negative aspects. On the side, Xiaohongshu can help users discover new products and services, enhancing their consumption experience. The negative aspect lies in the fact that excessive consumption promotions on Xiaohongshu may instill unnecessary desires for consumption in users, leading to overconsumption and economic burden. To address this outcome, users should establish the correct consumption beliefs, rationally handle promotions and advertisements on Xiaohongshu, and avoid blindly following trends in consumption. Additionally, Xiaohongshu platform should strengthen the management of advertisements and promotions to avoid excessively tempting users to consume, advocating the concept of green and rational consumption.

6 Conclusion

This study extensively examines the influence of the Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu on the psychology of young white-collar professionals, collecting data through surveys and conducting detailed analysis of the results. The study findings reveal that Xiaohongshu, as a popular social media application, has had a widespread profound impact on the psychology of young white-collar professionals. Firstly the data on the gender, age, and income levels of Xiaohongshu users indicate that the majority of users are young women with certain purchasing power. They show diversity in Xiaohongshu, including beauty, fashion, travel, food, and fitness, demonstrating the richness and wide influence of Xiaohongshu content. Secondly, the impact of Xiaohongshu on user psychology is reflected in the fact that users generally admire the high-quality lifestyle content on Xiaohongshu, but also experience anxiety, stress, and dissatisfaction with real life as a result. This influence includes both positive aspects, such as users to pursue a better life, and potential negative effects, such as with reality and oneself. Thirdly, the impact of Xiaohongshu on user

socialization is shown in that it helps users expand their social circles, and increase topics with friends, but also makes some feel lonely and lost. This social influence indicates that although Xiaohongshu provides new social opportunities, it may also lead to more alienation in users' interpersonal relationships in real life. Lastly, the influence of Xiaohongshu on user values is manifested in the way it affects users' values and life goals, helping them better cope with difficulties in real life. This influence on values indicates that Xiaohongshu not only provides entertainment and information but also plays a positive role in the and development of users.

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