Dispute and mediation of Weibo hot topics from the perspective of gender issues

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Abstract: *In the context of China's digital transformation, Weibo, as one of the leading social platforms in China, has become a focal point for discussions on gender issues. This paper examines the controversies and mediation strategies related to hot topics on Weibo from the perspective of gender issues. Discussions on Weibo regarding gender issues often become increasingly polarized due to opposing viewpoints and emotionally charged expressions, leading to significant public opinion divides. This phenomenon not only highlights the divergence in gender perspectives but also reflects the societal contradictions and dilemmas in gender role perceptions. The paper first reviews typical gender controversies on Weibo in recent years, such as the conflict between women's career development and family roles, the dichotomy between appearance and competence for women, and the authoritative discourse from a male-dominated perspective. By analyzing the dissemination characteristics of these trending events, this paper reveals how gender issues rapidly escalate into focal points of public attention through Weibo. Additionally, the study evaluates the effectiveness of existing mediation strategies in alleviating gender conflicts, including official statements, community guidance, content moderation, and public education. The research indicates that while these measures have some short-term success in controlling public sentiment, they are insufficient in addressing long-term impacts and integrating diverse perspectives. Then the paper proposes recommendations for improving mediation strategies, such as establishing platforms for diverse dialogue, optimizing algorithmic biases, and enhancing the sustainability of public education. The aim of this study is to provide theoretical support and practical insights for resolving gender conflicts in the social media environment, promoting the formation of more rational and inclusive gender perspectives.*

Keywords: *Gender issues, social media, hot topics on Weibo, gender disputes, mediation of gender issues*

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of social media, Weibo, as one of the most influential public opinion platforms in Chinese mainland, has played a critical role in discussions surrounding gender issues. Gender conflict, as a component of broader societal issues, typically involves the dynamics of gender power, gender ideologies, and their expression and confrontation in specific social contexts. The gender conflicts observed on Weibo not only reflect existing gender inequalities but also intensify public differences in the perception of gender issues, thereby exacerbating disputes surrounding gender concepts. As a highly open and interactive social platform, Weibo's extensive reach and rapid information dissemination make gender conflict topics prone to becoming trending issues within a short period. Typical gender-related controversies, such as whether women should prioritize family over career or whether men should be granted paternity leave, involve the allocation of social gender roles, and reflect public attitudes toward traditional gender norms. Discussions often become polarized due to emotional expression and bias, resulting in strong oppositional stances on Weibo. This phenomenon has led researchers to explore how to effectively mediate gender conflicts within the social media environment and achieve consensus among different groups.

In the study of gender conflicts, literature[1] addresses how gender power structures influence the discourse rights of different genders in public spaces, resolving the issue of how gender inequality manifests on social media. Literature[2] analyzes the mechanisms of gender topic dissemination on social media, exploring how Weibo amplifies gender conflicts through trending topics, thereby addressing the rapid spread of contentious topics within a short period. Literature[3] focuses on gender bias and stereotypes in social media, proposing that gender disputes are often rooted in traditional gender role perceptions, which resolves the tension between emotional expression and rational discourse in gender discussions. Additionally, literature[4] discusses the diversity of mediation strategies in gender conflict

topics and their applicability on social platforms, resolving the issue of the effectiveness of mediation methods in gender disputes. These studies provide the theoretical foundation and research background for the analysis presented in this paper.

Regarding the mediation of gender concepts, existing research has proposed various strategies. Literature[5] suggests filtering extremist discourse through community guidance and content review mechanisms, addressing the issue of uncontrolled public opinion in gender conflicts. Literature[6] points out that public education and the promotion of gender equality content are essential for long-term mediation, resolving the pathways for the sustained formation of gender concepts. Literature[7] argues that dialogue platforms offering diverse perspectives can effectively alleviate gender conflicts by fostering rational discussion and interaction, thereby addressing the unidirectional and partial implementation of mediation strategies.

This paper delves into the generation and dissemination mechanisms of disputes within Weibo's trending topics from the perspective of gender conflict, and subsequently offers recommendations for optimizing mediation strategies based on the findings of these studies. Specifically, this paper first analyzes the dissemination characteristics of gender conflict topics on the Weibo platform, exploring the conditions and mechanisms for the formation of trending topics. Next, it investigates the typical mediation strategies in gender concept disputes and their effectiveness in practice. Finally, it proposes strategic recommendations for enhancing mediation effectiveness in the Weibo environment, aiming to provide practical insights for mediating gender conflicts on Weibo.

2. Overview of the hot topics on Weibo

2.1 The Importance, Significance, and Popularity of Weibo as a Trending Social Media Platform in Chinese Mainland

Since its launch in 2009, Weibo has rapidly evolved into one of the most influential Weibo in Chinese mainland. As a public sphere characterized by immediacy, interactivity, and extensive reach, Weibo demonstrates unique advantages in information dissemination, public opinion shaping, and social interaction, exerting a profound influence on various aspects of Chinese society. The platform's significance is first evident in its wide-ranging and swift information dissemination. In Chinese mainland, Weibo has become a key channel for accessing real-time news and social updates. Whether it involves breaking events, public policy interpretations, or entertainment gossip, Weibo provides users with instant access to information. Its 140-character format facilitates faster, more efficient communication, embodying a decentralized model where any individual can serve as a content distributor. Particularly in major societal events and breaking news scenarios, Weibo's dissemination efficiency often surpasses that of traditional media, making it the primary platform for public information consumption[8].

2.2 Social influence and public opinion on hot gender conflict-related topics

In recent years, Weibo has emerged as a critical space for public discourse on gender issues in China, reflecting broader societal concerns and tensions. Gender issues on Weibo span a wide range of topics. Discussions frequently focus on persistent workplace challenges, such as the "glass ceiling" faced by women, wage inequality, and sexual harassment, reflecting ongoing societal concerns over gender-based power imbalances. Similarly, debates on marriage and independence reveal the dilemmas modern women face between traditional expectations and personal autonomy. Topics like "choosing not to marry or have children" have repeatedly sparked heated discussions, illustrating the deep-seated tensions surrounding gender roles and societal pressure[9].

3. Embodiment of gender issues on hot topics on Weibo

3.1 Gender stereotypes and biases

3.1.1 The embodiment of gender stereotypes on Weibo

This chapter delves into the various forms of gender stereotypes that frequently surface in heated discussions on Weibo's trending topics. These stereotypes, deeply rooted in traditional societal perceptions, manifest across multiple dimensions, including stereotypes related to professional roles, education, leadership, and societal norms. By examining these categories, we can better understand how

public discourse on Weibo reinforces and perpetuates conventional gender roles. Gender stereotypes emerge prominently in discussions of trending topics on Weibo, often driven by long-standing societal expectations for both male and female roles. These stereotypes typically stem from entrenched perceptions of traditional gender norms, shaping public attitudes and influencing the nature of the discourse.

For instance, in discussions surrounding gender equality in the professional sphere, a prevailing sentiment is that women should prioritize domestic responsibilities, while men are expected to be the primary drivers of the workforce. This bias is reflected in discussions where many argue that a woman's career success is secondary to her ability to balance work with childcare and household duties. Hashtags like #More than 80% of the full-time mothers interviewed have plans to re-employment# frequently attract heated debates, with comments reinforcing the belief that women are naturally better suited for domestic roles. This bias contributes to women being frequently overlooked for leadership positions, leading to the pervasive 'glass ceiling' effect. Conversely, men who choose to prioritize family or adopt more active roles in domestic responsibilities face criticism and are often labeled as 'less committed' or 'unambitious.' Discussions under hashtags like #Stay-at-Home Dads# reveal societal expectations that discourage men from deviating from traditional breadwinner roles. To further illustrate these points, visual elements such as screenshots of trending Weibo topics, popular comments, and links to relevant posts could be included to provide context and support for the analysis. Incorporating these elements strengthens the argument by showing how these biases are actively discussed and perpetuated within public discourse on Weibo [10].

The societal emphasis on financial success and provider roles for men remains a significant source of pressure, with various socio-cultural phenomena further amplifying these expectations. On platforms like Weibo, topics such as high bride prices, mortgage burdens, and declining marriage rates frequently emerge as focal points of discussion, reflecting broader societal anxieties.

For instance, the topic of high bride prices often sparks debates, with users discussing the increasingly unaffordable dowry demands that men are expected to meet before marriage. This not only highlights the financial strain on men but also underscores the commodification of marriage, where economic capability becomes a precondition for forming a family. Similarly, the pressure associated with mortgage payments is another recurring theme. Discussions reveal that many men feel trapped by the societal expectation to purchase property as a prerequisite for marriage or social status [11]. The financial burden of long-term loans exacerbates their anxiety, especially in the context of rising property prices and economic uncertainty, leading to a sense of inadequacy when they fail to meet these milestones.

In China's film industry, gender stereotypes subtly influence the evaluation of male and female actors and shape public opinion. When discussing gender issues, these biases are reflected not only in the excessive focus on actors' appearance and image but also in the different expectations regarding their roles, acting styles, and societal standards. The cases of Ge Hu in Blossoms Shanghai and Xun Zhou in Ruyi's Royal Love in the Palace illustrate how these gender stereotypes manifest in public discourse[12].Blossoms Shanghai, adapted from Jin Yucheng's novel of the same name, features Ge Hu as the lead character "A Bao," who is portrayed as calm and reserved, embodying the complexities of Shanghai's social life from the 1970s to the 1990s. Ge Hu's performance has been widely praised, with discussions focusing on his nuanced portrayal of the character's emotions and his deep understanding of the role's trajectory. However, Weibo discussions often revolve around Ge Hu's on-screen image, particularly his costumes and appearance, which are lauded for capturing the "old Shanghai elegance." While these discussions include some analysis of the character, they tend to focus more on whether Ge Hu fits the audience's idealized image of a "gentleman" or "vintage literary youth." Compared to female actors, male actors are subject to some scrutiny regarding their appearance, but the overall discourse tends to concentrate more on their acting skills and professional qualities [13]. In contrast, Xun Zhou's portrayal in Ruyi's Royal Love in the Palace highlights the multiple challenges female actors face under gender stereotypes. Xun Zhou plays Ruyi, a queen navigating palace intrigues, embodying resilience, resistance, and awakening within a feudal system. Discussions on Weibo often diverge from her acting. Many comments focus on whether her appearance meets the "royal beauty" standard, with some even criticizing her age and physical condition as unsuitable for playing a young concubine. These critiques largely ignore the emotional depth and artistic value of the role, shifting the focus to the female actor's appearance, reflecting society's persistent expectation for women to "maintain eternal youth."Exploring the deeper reasons behind gender stereotypes reveals that male actors are generally evaluated using broader criteria[14].

In male-dominated fields such as technology and politics, women often encounter a "double bind." If they display confidence and assertiveness, they may be labeled as "overly aggressive" or "lacking

femininity." On the other hand, if they are well-dressed, cooperative, and communicative, they may be considered "not tough enough" and unsuitable for leadership roles. This gender bias extends beyond professional settings and is amplified on Weibo. Women in these fields are often scrutinized for their appearance and behavior rather than their professional contributions on Weibo. The gender bias faced by female scientists, exemplified through the experiences of Dr. Ning Yan, highlights systemic challenges that women encounter in high-level research fields. Despite being a pioneering structural biologist whose work on protein folding has garnered international acclaim, discussions surrounding Dr. Yan's presentation at the 2023 UNESCO Women in Science conference were notably skewed towards her gender rather than her academic contributions. This focus reflects a deeper societal bias where, even at the peak of their careers, female scientists are often judged based on their adherence to traditional gender norms, rather than their intellectual achievements. Such biases are indicative of broader structural inequalities within the academic and research communities. Female researchers frequently face shorter career spans, lower salaries, and limited visibility in prestigious journals. The case of Dr. Yan illustrates how these systemic barriers are reinforced by societal narratives, which continue to prioritize traditional gender roles over the recognition of women's intellectual contributions in science[15].

Obvious contrast can be seen in discussions about the Chinese scientist Pan Jianwei, who is renowned for his pioneering work in quantum communication. Conversations rarely focus on his appearance or personal life on Weibo. Instead, the discussions emphasize his groundbreaking research and scientific contributions, such as the development of quantum cryptography and secure communication systems. In contrast to how female figures like Ning Yan are discussed, the focus on Pan Jianwei centers almost entirely on his intellectual achievements and professional expertise. This discrepancy highlights how societal standards differ based on gender, revealing that male professionals are more likely to be recognized for their accomplishments rather than scrutinized for superficial traits. Such differences in discourse underscore the persistent gender biases that need to be addressed. Gender equality should be grounded in assessing individuals based on their professional contributions rather than stereotypes that limit how success is perceived across genders.

Similar patterns are evident in the political arena, especially in Weibo discussions comparing U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump. As the first female, first Black, and first South Asian Vice President, Harris's political achievements should be central to the discussion. However, much of the commentary focuses on her appearance, demeanor, and whether she embodies the "softness" expected of female leaders on Weibo. Rather than engaging with her policy positions and professional capabilities, many discussions revolve around whether she is "too assertive" or critique her personal image. These discussions reflect the gendered standards applied to female leaders: a woman who displays strength is often criticized for lacking gentleness, while demonstrating warmth is seen as a sign of weakness in navigating complex political situations. In contrast, the discourse surrounding male political figures on Weibo is markedly different. For example, despite the controversial rhetoric and behavior of Donald Trump during his campaigns, Weibo discussions primarily focus on his political style, decision-making skills, and strategic intentions. Even negative evaluations tend to critique his policy stance or leadership approach, rather than his appearance or gender-related traits.Additionally, the excessive attention on female leaders in social media extends beyond their appearance to their personal lives. For instance, Harris's marriage and family roles have become hot topics on Weibo, with some questioning whether she can effectively manage both family responsibilities and the Vice Presidency. This additional scrutiny on women's roles contrasts sharply with male leaders, revealing the underlying bias society holds regarding gender equality .

A relevant example that illustrates this double standard is Chinese high jumper Guowei Zhang, whose energetic and flamboyant celebrations after successful jumps have been widely celebrated on Weibo. Zhang's signature salutes and exaggerated gestures are seen as endearing expressions of confidence and individuality, with many users applauding his playful personality. However, if a female athlete were to display similar behavior, it is likely that she would face criticism for being too showy or attention-seeking. This difference in public perception reveals how gender stereotypes influence interpretations of expressive behavior, where men's actions are often celebrated as unique and spirited while women's similar expressions are scrutinized or dismissed as inappropriate.

3.1.2 Impact of gender bias on the discussion of hot topics

When addressing gender discourse in the realm of popular debates on Weibo, the profound impact of gender biases cannot be overlooked. The intricate and pervasive impact of gender bias in various forms of discourse is a complex phenomenon that manifests in multiple dimensions. Firstly, it serves as a catalyst for a tense and polarizing communicative atmosphere. When one gender group is subjected to the insidious effects of prejudice or unfair treatment, the members of that group often experience a

justified sense of resentment and frustration.

Gender bias also taints the perceived fairness and neutrality of the discourse. Discussions related to gender issues often lose objectivity due to stereotypes and biases on Weibo. For instance, the topic of high bride prices frequently becomes a focal point of intense debate between men and women. Many male users express dissatisfaction with the financial burden of bride prices, viewing it as a major barrier to marriage for young people. However, when female users criticize this practice, often from the perspective of equal marriage rights and autonomy, they are frequently labeled as "greedy" or "materialistic," even if their stance is based on legitimate concerns. Some comments even escalate the criticism, generalizing the issue into a moral judgment against women as a whole. This gender-based bias diverts the discussion from its original focus on the economic pressures affecting marriage and family relationships, reducing it to entrenched views on gender roles. Another notable case involves debates over career women's choices regarding marriage and childbirth. When discussing women's decisions to prioritize their careers over starting families, many comments characterize such choices as "selfish" or "antisocial," suggesting that women who opt out of marriage and motherhood are shirking societal responsibilities. Some even attribute this issue to "excessive feminism," claiming it disrupts social stability. In contrast, when men express similar views about not wanting family obligations to interfere with their careers, they typically receive more understanding and support. This double standard highlights the different societal expectations for men and women when it comes to balancing work and life, leading to unfair interpretations of women's perspectives. These examples demonstrate how discussions on gender topics on Weibo are often skewed by biases that lead to the misinterpretation, marginalization, or devaluation of one side's arguments. This not only hinders productive dialogue but also reinforces stereotypes, further obstructing truly equitable discussions.

3.2 Gender inequality in power

3.2.1 Gender power inequality on Weibo

3.2.1.1 The Marginalization of Women's Authority in Professional Discourse

In the public sphere, particularly on platforms like Weibo, women who articulate political or social perspectives face not only gender biases from the public but also the strategic marginalization of their voices by "official" forces, "capital," and the algorithms employed by these platforms. These forces work in tandem to diminish the presence and impact of women's voices in public discourse, effectively sidelining their subject positions. The design and control of algorithms play a critical role in this marginalization process, as they selectively amplify or suppress specific narratives, thereby determining which voices gain visibility and which are silenced. This algorithmic bias reinforces a male-dominated discursive environment, making it increasingly challenging for women's voices to be heard and recognized.

Algorithms also play a subtle yet significant role in perpetuating gender inequality. By analyzing user behavior data—such as clicks, comments, and shares—algorithms identify which content is more likely to engage users and prioritize its dissemination. However, due to prevailing gender biases, the content that is prioritized often reflects male voices, while female perspectives, deemed as "low-value" by the algorithm due to insufficient interaction, are further marginalized. This algorithmic bias not only diminishes the discursive position of women on platforms like Weibo but also reflects deeper structures of gender power, where women's voices are filtered and diminished even before they can be heard.

Overall, the interplay of "official" forces, "capital," and "algorithms" on platforms like Weibo serves to guide discourse, control content, and manipulate data processing in ways that marginalize women. Under the weight of these intersecting forces, women's subject positions are increasingly eroded, further exacerbating the gender inequities present in public discourse. This not only limits women's right to speak and their influence but also poses a significant challenge to the advancement of gender equality in society at large.

3.2.1.2 Reinforcement of Male Dominance through Social Hierarchies

The power dynamics within family structures are also replicated and reinforced through Weibo discussions. The traditional gender roles, where men are positioned as breadwinners and women as caretakers, continue to dominate the conversation. When gender power is examined in this context, it becomes evident that men retain control over financial and decision-making aspects, while women are relegated to supportive roles, even when they contribute equally or more to the household income. Discussions often amplify this inequality by glorifying male authority in the family while portraying

women who challenge these roles as "neglecting their duties." Such narratives perpetuate the imbalance of power, ensuring that men maintain dominance in both public and private spheres. For instance, when businesswoman Dong Mingzhu shares her business strategies, the comments section is often filled with remarks like "Is she so driven because she has no family?" or "Women in leadership are too aggressive and lack warmth," disregarding her successful experience in corporate management. Similarly, female political figures like U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris frequently face scrutiny over whether they possess sufficient leadership qualities, with discussions often diverting to her fashion choices or marital status. This shift in focus distracts from meaningful discussions on her policy insights and leadership abilities, instead steering the conversation towards gender-related issues. These discussions reflect deeper power dynamics, where the perspectives and achievements of male leaders are more readily perceived as "professional" and "authoritative," while women constantly have to prove themselves, even when their success in professional fields is often overshadowed by personal matters. This imbalance in discourse diminishes women's influence in public opinion and subjects them to unnecessary scrutiny and pressure in the workplace.

3.2.1.3 The Reproduction of Gender Power Structures in Everyday Interactions

Even in seemingly casual interactions on Weibo, the reproduction and reinforcement of gender power imbalances are pervasive. These dynamics are subtly perpetuated through gendered language, microaggressions, and dismissive attitudes that routinely undermine women's contributions. Such behaviors may appear trivial on the surface but collectively play a significant role in sustaining gender hierarchies. Men's opinions in traditionally male-dominated fields such as technology, finance, or politics are more likely to be accepted as credible, while women's expertise in these areas is often subjected to greater scrutiny or outright dismissal. This disparity in perceived authority not only diminishes the value of women's input but also consolidates male dominance in public discourse.

3.2.2 The obstacle of gender power inequality in dispute mediation

Gender power inequality presents a significant barrier to fair and effective dispute mediation, especially in the digital arena of Weibo. The platform's dynamics reveal that discussions are often influenced by power imbalances, where male voices dominate the narrative, shaping the discourse in ways that marginalize or distort women's perspectives. This imbalance not only hinders the resolution of conflicts but also perpetuates existing gender biases and deepens societal prejudices.

A relevant case is the "# Women's Workplace Rights #" discussion, which attracted widespread attention and debate on Weibo. Despite the significance of this conversation, the mediation of disputes was heavily influenced by gender power imbalances, leading to the dismissal of many female netizens' arguments and viewpoints. Some male participants countered with the outdated belief that "women should prioritize their families," thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles and exacerbating the dispute. This power imbalance not only stalls the mediation process but also perpetuates gender discrimination and entrenches societal biases.

These findings highlight the urgent need for a more inclusive and equitable digital space. Addressing the systemic biases that undermine women's voices in dispute mediation requires proactive measures, such as promoting gender-sensitive media literacy, encouraging respectful dialogue between genders, and implementing stricter policies to curb online gender-based violence. Without such interventions, the disparities in gender power will continue to obstruct genuine conflict resolution and the pursuit of a more just society.

3.3 The sensitivity and controversy of gender issues

3.3.1 Characteristics of Gender Sensitivity on Weibo

Gender issues frequently involve deep-seated conflicts rooted in social culture and values, leading to starkly polarized opinions in Weibo discussions. Supporters and opponents tend to express their views using highly emotional, often extreme language, reinforcing group divisions. For example, debates surrounding early sex education for young girls have generated heated and polarized arguments on Weibo. Supporters advocate for early sex education as a necessary tool to protect girls, while opponents argue that such exposure could have negative consequences, claiming it might disrupt innocence or introduce inappropriate content at a young age. These debates are not only characterized by strong opinions but also by the emotionally charged and labeled language that each side uses to defend their stance.

The widely circulated topic "#Proposal to Extend Paternity Leave for Male Spouses to 38 Days#" garnered over 360 million views and sparked 44,000 intense discussions. This proposal was put forward

by Sidong Xiong, a National People's Congress representative and president of Soochow University, during the Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress. The widespread attention and discussions surrounding this topic reflect the society's heightened concern regarding gender equality and the distribution of family responsibilities. As an issue that pertains to family welfare and the division of gender roles, extending paternity leave holds significant practical implications today. It not only addresses the distribution of responsibilities within the family but also explores the redefinition and adjustment of societal gender roles. In this context, Sidong Xiong's proposal has prompted public reflection on the role that men should play in the childcare process. By extending paternity leave, this measure aims to encourage greater male involvement in family life, particularly during the early stages of a child's life, thereby helping to balance gender roles within the family to some extent. Furthermore, the heated debates and differing opinions indicate that society's views on this issue are far from unanimous. Some support the extension of paternity leave, viewing it as a crucial step toward advancing gender equality, reducing the pressure on women in childcare, and fostering a closer relationship between fathers and their children. However, opponents may argue that extending paternity leave could impose additional burdens on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, potentially leading to managerial and economic challenges. Additionally, there is concern that even with extended paternity leave, whether men will genuinely use this time to engage in family and childcare remains uncertain.

3.3.2 Social Implications of Gender Sensitivity

The widespread attention that gender-sensitive topics attract on Weibo is not solely driven by their relevance to personal interests and social norms; these discussions often delve into the power dynamics embedded within societal structures. Gender issues touch upon deeply ingrained beliefs about identity, equality, and the appropriate roles of men and women in society, making them a focal point for broader debates about justice and fairness. As such, Weibo becomes a battleground where competing ideologies clash, with the platform acting as both a catalyst for social change and a venue for reinforcing existing prejudices.

One of the most significant social implications of these discussions is the role Weibo plays in amplifying opinion polarization and conflict. The platform's open and participatory nature allows diverse voices to engage in public debates, which can be positive in promoting gender equality and awareness. However, this inclusivity also provides fertile ground for emotional and extreme expressions. Gender-sensitive topics often evoke strong personal reactions, and this emotional intensity can make discussions less rational and more divisive. The comment sections and retweet culture encourage users to take sides, reinforcing echo chambers where polarized opinions are amplified rather than challenged.

4. The mediation strategy of gender issues in the hot topics on Weibo

4.1 Theoretical Framework and Principles of Mediation

4.1.1 Application of Mediation Theory in Social Media

The application of mediation theory is essential, particularly when addressing sensitive and complex topics like gender conflicts on Weibo. Mediation theory emphasizes reaching mutually acceptable solutions through dialogue, negotiation, and compromise. Platforms like Weibo provide a unique environment for applying these principles in real-time, large-scale public discussions.

Firstly, governments, international organizations, NGOs, and media organizations play significant roles in facilitating mediation by disseminating accurate information, guiding public opinion, and clarifying facts. When gender issues spark widespread controversy, these entities can mediate conflicts by providing authoritative information and involving experts to help the public approach these problems rationally. For instance, campaigns like the United Nations' "HeForShe" and the "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women" have been instrumental in promoting gender equality globally. Governments in various countries have also implemented policies that address gender inequality through legal reforms, education, and empowerment programs.

However, despite these efforts, significant challenges remain due to entrenched cultural biases and resistance from conservative groups. On digital platforms like Weibo, polarization often exacerbates rather than mitigates conflicts, making consensus-building difficult. While progress has been made, bridging the gap between policy intentions and actual societal outcomes requires continued effort.

4.1.2 The Role of Public Figures and Opinion Leaders in Mediation

In the context of social media, influencers and opinion leaders play a pivotal role in mediating gender-related conflicts. Influential Weibo figures like Papi Jiang and sociologist Liang Hong have used their platforms to guide public opinion towards more rational and balanced discussions. By sharing personal insights and promoting gender equality, these figures help break stereotypes and encourage open-mindedness.

Their impact is particularly visible when they contribute informed perspectives that challenge biased narratives. For example, discussions led by influencers regarding women's rights and professional success often highlight the importance of addressing underlying societal issues. In addition to influencers, ordinary netizens contribute significantly to shaping the discourse. Practicing self-mediation and rational communication is crucial, especially on platforms where discussions can quickly become emotionally charged. Users who engage in respectful dialogue, avoid inflammatory language, and promote understanding play a vital role in fostering a more inclusive environment.

4.2 Effect evaluation and improvement of mediation strategies

Discussions on gender conflicts on Weibo are often accompanied by intense emotional expressions and sharply opposing viewpoints. Effectively mediating such conflicts within this complex public opinion environment has become a significant issue in social media governance research. The implementation of mediation strategies holds potential positive impacts in alleviating gender conflicts and promoting rational discourse, yet it also faces numerous challenges. This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of these mediation strategies on Weibo and proposes suggestions for further improvement.

4.2.1 Analysis of the Implementation of Mediation Strategies

When handling gender conflict topics, Weibo typically employs a range of mediation strategies, including official statements, community guidance, automated content review, and public education. These strategies have varying degrees of influence on public opinion and conflict resolution.

Firstly, official statements are the most common mediation tool, typically issued by involved institutions or the platform itself, aimed at clarifying facts, dispelling misunderstandings, and calming disputes. For example, in certain high-profile incidents involving gender discrimination, relevant companies or organizations issue official statements to clarify their stance and response measures, attempting to defuse the public backlash. While this approach can effectively control the situation in the short term and curb the spread of misinformation, it tends to overlook the emotional concerns and diverse voices of the public, leading to the sustained dissatisfaction of certain groups.

Secondly, community guidance and automated content review are crucial tools Weibo uses to regulate public discourse. By setting up keyword filters and guiding users toward rational discussions, the platform can, to some extent, curb the spread of radical statements. For instance, in heated debates about gender relations, Weibo recommends high-quality content that promotes rational discourse, encouraging users to consider the issues from multiple perspectives and thereby reducing the influence of extreme views. However, the limitations of this strategy lie in the bias of algorithmic selection criteria and the potential suppression of certain opinions, which can lead to new controversies.

4.2.2 Directions and Recommendations for Improving Mediation Strategies

Firstly, mediation strategies should place greater emphasis on incorporating diverse perspectives and fostering interaction. In the current mediation mechanism, while official statements and community guidance can quickly curb disputes, they often lack comprehensive consideration of different stakeholders' opinions. It is recommended that platforms introduce multi-party discussion channels in gender conflict mediation, inviting experts, gender equality advocates, and ordinary users to engage in public dialogue, thereby facilitating the exchange of diverse viewpoints. For example, hosting Weibo live streams or roundtable discussions with representatives holding different positions could help reduce misunderstandings and foster consensus.

Secondly, mediation strategies need to enhance user engagement by promoting an "empathy-based mediation" model. In the mediation process, if users are passively receiving information without avenues to express their emotions and concerns, it often exacerbates conflicts. It is suggested that Weibo focuses more on emotional mediation, encouraging users to express their opinions rationally and constructively while fostering a respectful and inclusive discourse environment through guided comments and positive reinforcement mechanisms. Establishing incentive mechanisms such as "voices of reason" labels or

"civilized discussion" leaderboards can help users develop positive social interaction habits.

5. Conclusions

In the context of Weibo's role as a critical platform for public discourse on gender issues, this study highlights the intricate dynamics of gender conflicts and mediation strategies in the digital age. Weibo, as one of China's most influential social media platforms, not only reflects but also amplifies the polarization of public opinion regarding gender issues. The analysis of trending topics reveals that discussions often evolve into emotionally charged debates, leading to entrenched divisions and the reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes. The study finds that while existing mediation strategies—such as official statements, community guidance, and public education—can achieve short-term control over conflicts, they are limited in addressing the deeper societal and cultural biases that underlie these issues. The application of mediation theory on social media, especially on platforms like Weibo, requires a more nuanced approach that goes beyond simply moderating content. It demands the integration of diverse voices, improved algorithmic design, and sustained efforts in public education to shift societal norms.

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