

The Strong Connection of Weak Ties: A Study on Social Patterns and Relationship Construction in the Dazi Culture of Xiaohongshu

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ABSTRACT

Against the backdrop of an ever-accelerating pace of social life and the continuous penetration of digital scenarios, contemporary youth generally face issues such as fragmented time, solidified social circles, and a decreasing willingness for real-life social interaction. Traditional strong relationship socializing centered around relatives, friends, and colleagues, due to its strong constraints, high emotional costs, and considerable pressure in maintaining relationships, is difficult to meet the current needs of young people for lightweight, functional, and high-boundary social interaction. In this context, the Dazi culture, which is based on shared interests, scene binding, and common goals, has rapidly emerged as an important way for young people to alleviate loneliness, enhance efficiency, and relieve social pressure. Xiaohongshu, a highly concentrated platform for life sharing among young users, has become a core field for the release of Dazi information, interest matching, and the transformation of online and offline social interaction, thanks to its young community ecosystem, intelligent algorithm recommendations, and aggregation of local topics. Currently, academic research on Dazi culture mainly focuses on macro-level aspects such as social motives, psychological needs, and behavioral characteristics, with few dedicated studies on the Xiaohongshu platform^[1], and there is a lack of systematic analysis of the formation, evolution process, and platform mechanism of weak Dazi relationships. This paper takes Dazi socializing on Xiaohongshu as the research object, exploring its social characteristics, the path of weak relationship construction, and the platform empowerment mechanism. It adopts methods such as literature research, content analysis, and in-depth interviews, and combines platform text data and user interview materials for analysis. The research shows that Dazi socializing on Xiaohongshu has distinct features of being scene-based, functional, low-burden, and high-boundary, and the Dazi relationship follows the evolution logic of “high-frequency shallow interaction and low-frequency deep connection”. This study enriches the application of weak tie theory in youth socialization and provides references for understanding youth online behavior and building a healthy online community atmosphere.

Key words: Dazi Culture; Xiaohongshu; Weak Ties; Social Model; Relationship Construction.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Digital media has deeply integrated into daily life, profoundly altering the social interaction patterns and interpersonal relationship forms of contemporary youth. The fast-paced urban lifestyle and high-intensity study and work pressure have led to real-life dilemmas such as narrow social circles, insufficient offline interactions, and rising social anxiety^[5]. Traditional strong tie socialization, with long-term emotional investment and heavy responsibility binding, is too restrictive to meet young people’s needs for free, relaxed, and efficient social interaction. Thus, Dazi socializing, based on specific scenarios and common goals, has emerged and become a mainstream choice among young people, covering study, fitness, postgraduate examination, travel, and other fields. Xiaohongshu has formed an active Dazi social ecosystem through note posting, tag search, algorithm recommendation, and city aggregation^[2]. Users find partners online and then carry out offline activities. However, existing studies lack targeted analysis of Xiaohongshu and systematic explanation of the formation and evolution of weak Dazi relationships^[1]. Therefore, this study is of great practical and academic significance.

1.2 Research Questions and Significance

This study explores the communication forms and social characteristics of Dazi culture on Xiaohongshu, analyzes the evolution path of weak Dazi relationships, and examines how platform mechanisms promote the transformation from temporary matching to stable interaction in Dazi socializing. Theoretically, this study integrates weak tie theory into the new media context, expanding the research scope of youth social culture and filling the gap in platform-specific research

^[7]. Practically, it helps understand the social needs of contemporary youth, provides references for rational Dazi socializing, platform content governance, and the guidance of a healthy and lightweight social trend.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research on Dazi Culture and Youth Social Interaction

In recent years, Dazi culture has become a research hotspot. A Dazi relationship is a short-term or long-term companionship based on specific scenario needs, featuring lightness, functionality, clear boundaries, and controllable emotional investment ^[1, 4]. Young people choose Dazi socializing to improve efficiency, gain companionship, relieve loneliness, and reduce social pressure ^[9, 10]. Relevant studies also explore learning, sports, and postgraduate examination Dazi, analyzing their impacts on well-being ^[4, 8, 9]. However, most studies focus on macroscopic description and lack in-depth analysis with Xiaohongshu as a case ^[2], leaving room for exploring the dynamic formation of Dazi relationships.

2.2 Research on Weak Ties and Platform Social Interaction

Weak tie theory holds that weak connections outperform strong ties in information acquisition and social circle expansion ^[7]. Social media enables strangers to connect quickly through algorithm recommendation, content tagging, and city-based aggregation ^[6]. Existing studies discuss the reconstruction of interpersonal relationships by social media ^[7], but few combine Xiaohongshu's ecosystem and algorithm to explain the generation and development of Dazi relationships ^[2], resulting in insufficient integration of theory and practice.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study adopts literature review, content analysis, and in-depth interviews. Content analysis takes interactive Dazi notes and comments on Xiaohongshu as samples to extract social characteristics. Twelve young users with Dazi experience are interviewed for their motivations, matching processes, and relationship boundaries. Interviews show that users choose Dazi socializing to reduce pressure and pursue efficient companionship ^[10], and relationships evolve through demand matching, online testing, offline meeting, and stable maintenance ^[2]. Data and materials support the core arguments of this study.

4. TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DAZI SOCIALIZING ON XIAOHONGSHU

4.1 Main Types of Dazi Socializing

Dazi socializing on Xiaohongshu is divided by daily scenarios, including study and postgraduate examination Dazi, fitness Dazi, food exploration Dazi, shopping Dazi, short trip Dazi, self-study Dazi, video-watching Dazi, and hobby Dazi ^[1, 4]. Each type centers on clear goals, focusing on companionship and task completion with obvious functionality.

4.2 Core Characteristics of Dazi Socializing

Xiaohongshu Dazi socializing has four core features: contextualization, formed by specific needs and scenario binding ^[2]; functionality, aiming for efficiency and minimal unnecessary interaction ^[1]; low burden, with clear boundaries and no deliberate maintenance ^[10]; high boundaries, maintaining personal space and non-interference ^[6], which fits young people's social preferences.

5. THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS OF THE DAZI RELATIONSHIP

5.1 The Development Stages from Weak Ties to Strong Connections

Dazi relationships on Xiaohongshu develop in four stages ^[2]: demand matching and initial acquaintance via notes and algorithms; online exploration through private messages; offline meeting and trust establishment; long-term maintenance and deepening. It follows the logic of frequent shallow online interaction turning into infrequent deep offline connection ^[7].

5.2 Promoting and Hindering Factors

Promoting factors include goal consistency, positive offline experience, boundary respect, geographical proximity, and precise algorithm matching^[6]. Hindering factors include demand mismatch, time coordination difficulty, privacy concerns, personality incompatibility, and excessive instrumentalization^[3, 6].

6. THE EMPOWERING ROLE OF XIAOHONGSHU IN DAZI SOCIALIZING

6.1 The Supporting Role of Platform Functions

Xiaohongshu's functions strongly support Dazi socializing^[1]. Notes display demands clearly; algorithms match efficiently; tags and city functions filter local partners; comment interaction and private messages connect publicly and privately, lowering social thresholds and improving matching efficiency^[2].

6.2 The Unique Advantages of the Platform Ecosystem

Xiaohongshu's real-life community atmosphere is its core advantage^[1]. Users share real experiences, reducing vigilance and facilitating matching. Concentrated young users ensure high compatibility. The inclusive, lightweight, and high-boundary community supports online-to-offline Dazi socializing, forming a scenario-based youth social model^[3].

7. CONCLUSION

Taking Dazi culture on Xiaohongshu as the research object, this study explores its types, characteristics, relationship evolution, and platform empowerment mechanism. Dazi socializing features contextualization, functionality, low burden, and high boundaries^[1, 2]; Dazi relationships evolve through four stages from virtual to real^[2]; Xiaohongshu empowers Dazi socializing functionally and ecologically, promoting weak ties to strong connections^[7]. This study enriches the application of weak tie theory^[7] and provides references for understanding youth psychology, platform governance, and social trend guidance^[3]. Limitations include a small sample and single platform. Future research can expand samples and conduct multi-platform comparisons to deepen the study of Dazi culture^[8-10].

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