The opportunities and empowerment that technological development brings to feminism

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Abstract:

In an era where technology shapes our world, feminism is experiencing a resurgence. Recognizing technology as pivotal for gender equality, the United Nations' theme for International Women's Day 2023, "Everyone for Digitalization: Leveraging Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality," underscores the dynamic union of technology and women's empowerment as a fervently discussed issue. The study aims to highlight technology's positive impact on women's development. This study delves into how technological growth empowers women, with a focus on Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan. It adopts a case study approach, utilizing interviews for data collection, and concludes that technological progress significantly enhances women's education, economic empowerment, social engagement, and health. However, the phenomenon of confrontation between men and women still exists in society, and women are still in a weak position in employment, education, and other aspects. While women recognize technology's positive impacts, there is a call for continued efforts in social and policy realms to support women fully.

Keywords: Feminism; technology development; case study.

1. Introduction

Women's rights may be a social development and philosophy that pursues gender uniformity and women's freedom [1-5]. It includes a long and diverse history and convention, from the primary wave of suffrage and civil rights developments within the 19th and early 20th centuries to the moment wave of radical and communist women's liberation within the 1960s and 1970s to the third wave of postmodern and intersectional women's liberation since the 1980s.[1] With the advancement and popularization of innovation, women's rights moreover face modern openings and challenges [6]. How to utilize innovation to empower women to advance women's support and advancement has ended up a critical inquiry about the theme, particularly within the time of computerized and biotechnological changes [7-9].

The effect of innovation on feminism may be a cross-disciplinary, cross-domain, and cross-cultural issue. It includes the speculations and strategies of humanism, instruction, financial matters, legislative issues, media, social thinks about, and other disciplines. It moreover concerns the rights and welfare of ladies in different locales, classes, and bunches around the world. Through the inquire about on this issue, one is able to enhance understanding and appreciation of women's liberation, conjointly provide reference and proposals for promoting gender equality and social progress.

The research into the convergence of technology development and feminism, initiated in the 1970s and 1980s, has illuminated the growing empowerment of women through technological advancements [2]. This interdisciplinary exploration, enriched by feminist perspectives in science and technology narratives, has notably enhanced women's academic recognition and contributed to a broader discourse on gender equality in tech fields [3]. Despite acknowledged advancements in women's societal roles facilitated by information technology, the body of research specifically addressing women's empowerment through technology is relatively underdeveloped and predominantly conducted by female scholars. This gap signifies an imperative for more profound investigations and amplified efforts to advocate for gender equality within the technological sphere.

This study uses Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan as a case to explore how the development of technology, especially new media technology, empowers feminism. The research investigates various aspects, including education, health, economy, political status, and human rights through interviews. Four Xiaohongshu users were interviewed, including college students and bloggers, to collect data for this analysis. This research aims to delve into two

key areas regarding the empowerment of women through technological development: firstly, it seeks to identify the growth opportunities Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan offers to women; secondly, it explores female users' perspectives on the Newcomer Growth Plan and the broader impacts of technological evolution.

2. Case Description: Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan

Up to 2013, Xiaohongshu has been increasingly important in people's daily lives, especially in their spare time, having become a leading social media app for the youth [10]. Young women spend the most time on the app, accounting for 87.24% of users, with approximately 300 million users in total, 70% of whom were born after the 1990s. This indicates that the fashion app significantly attracts young people, particularly young women who prefer to use Xiaohongshu [11]. Consequently, the user demographics and data underscore the need for researchers to study the influence of technology, especially social media, on women and how technology development is intertwined with their experiences through apps like Xiaohongshu.

Moreover, Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan has been introduced to assist new users in navigating the platform, accessible to every fresh registrant [5]. This initiative has brought significant commercial value by aiding new users and contributing to the personal development of women. The „Creation Centre," which lies at the heart of the program, offers new users useful features such as „Recent 7-Day Data" and „Note Inspiration," essential for efficiently managing their accounts. Additionally, Xiaohongshu provides a wide range of official courses tailored specifically for video creation at the „Creation Academy." These courses cover everything from selecting a topic to designing and editing videos, supplemented with insights from accomplished female producers, making it an invaluable resource for anyone interested in enhancing their content production skills. Furthermore, Xiaohongshu incorporates a commercial cash-in component, openly demonstrating its trust in its users. While some platforms might shy away from discussing this aspect, Xiaohongshu addresses it candidly, empowering women in economic matters and enhancing their understanding of economic principles.

3. Analysis of the Problems

3.1 Promoting Economic Empowerment for Women

With a heavy focus on commercialization, Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan encourages women to start their own businesses, dramatically increasing women's economic empowerment. The genuineness and preponderance of female-owned enterprises on Xiaohongshu contribute to a distinctive and courteous purchasing experience, according to an interview with a frequent female user of the site. The respondents said they preferred Xiaohongshu and commended its female vendors for their genuineness and easy connection. They underlined the platform's extraordinary regard for women, pointing out that even shops managed by males treat women with the utmost care. The majority of respondents said they preferred to shop on Xiaohongshu because of the genuineness of its merchants, especially the abundance of female business owners who made interacting with them easy. They underlined that Xiaohongshu's great regard for women sets it apart from other platforms. This tendency has created a strong industrial chain focused on women, giving them more economic agency within families and a plethora of career choices. It is a potent example of the economic empowerment that women may achieve through technology, especially through new media platforms like Xiaohongshu.

3.2 Promoting Political Empowerment for Women

In addition to giving women the ability to hear and share the voices of others, the Xiaohongshu Newcomer Growth Plan provides them with a private area to control their social visibility, reducing the discomfort that sometimes accompanies online encounters. The interviewee attributes her preference for Xiaohongshu over other platforms to the supportive women who work there, as well as the welcoming atmosphere that fosters candid discussions on a range of topics. She expressed, ‚I don't post on the internet very often; I mostly listen on social media. However, I've noticed that I engage more frequently on Xiaohongshu than elsewhere. I'm very drawn to the attitude of many of the amazing women here.' This supportive community actively helps one another, speaks up for justice, and highlights the voices of women in the digital sphere. It demonstrates the important role that these platforms play in creating a strong, empowered community for women.

3.3 Promoting Women's Education, Health and Life

The Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan provides a large platform with a respectful and harmonious atmosphere for people, especially young women, to share practical skills, healthcare navigation, good suggestions, and facilitate the sharing of personal experiences, knowledge, and ideas among women, thus greatly enhancing daily life convenience. Some people who usually share ideas or use Xiaohongshu state that when they encounter problems, need assistance, or wish to share personal opinions,

experiences, and skills, they are more likely to open the Xiaohongshu app. This not only provides knowledge but also offers suggestions and even opportunities for great wealth. Additionally, Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan provides free materials for users to study, such as arithmetic and English guidance. Moreover, the platform is increasingly playing a vital role in women's education and lives, providing abundant educational and informational resources. Through the platform, women gain a more global perspective and become more confident and optimistic about their daily lives.

3.4 Female Users' Views on The Newcomer Growth Plan and Technology Development

Through information and resource collection and gathering, women have more and more rights and power in the new media and internet era, helpful to reduce gender gaps. A Xiaohongshu blogger with more than 30,000 followers told us how she left her job and became a successful influencer. She attached much importance to the platform because it gives women equal access to participation in communication and economic development. She also told the researcher that when she first lost her job, she was terribly worried and had no idea for the future. However, as long as she made contact with internet media Xiaohongshu, and as the follower base grew, she became more confident and earned much money, thus Xiaohongshu gradually became her career. As her number of fans continued to grow, she felt compelled to share more of her knowledge and stylish ideas, contributing further to society. Thanks to Xiaohongshu, she could earn 30,000 RMB each month.

Xiaohongshu can go viral due to many factors. It provides a good platform for people, especially for women, to show their abilities and advantages and satisfy their needs for communication and exchanges. Additionally, frequent users of Xiaohongshu are recommended higher quality materials or information and have the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals. Through searching for information on Xiaohongshu, users gradually broaden their horizons, gaining more opportunities to learn about the world outside, consequently boosting their confidence. The Newcomer Growth Plan helps bloggers to develop their innovative ideas and turn what they are good at into money. Xiaohongshu encourages females to exchange ideas and develop their own businesses.

4. Characteristics of the Xiaohongshu in promoting female development

Through its uniqueness, more and more women advance their recognition level, learn much from the outside world, and grow rapidly. Xiaohongshu provides a wealth of tools, methods, and assistance for women through its extensive coverage, interactive nature, and user-friendly experience. First of all, Xiaohongshu offers a wide range of information to users, including travel, beauty, fashion, and employment. Women study and interact with the outside world through all kinds of information. Besides, they can find their own interests and needs here, make more friends, bringing great happiness and excitement.

Additionally, Xiaohongshu pays more attention to health value, music, exercise, reading, and emotion, offering a good platform for women to share their ideas, experiences, and skills, thus providing valuable information about preventing diseases and bodybuilding. On Xiaohongshu, more and more women, including homemakers and college students, share daily life and promote healthy living experiences.

Due to physical differences, women and men have lots of differences in characteristics. Men may have more strength to make more money by lifting heavy loads or moving big articles. However, women have less strength in nature and cannot make a living by physical strength, making them less confident and competitive in making money. As society develops, productive elements have changed a lot, and now people who are good at cooperating with others or communicating will catch the new trend of society. However, women are more suitable to express their own ideas with others and share skills or experiences on the internet, which is just what social media needs. Therefore, women have the advantage over men in using social media to make money. Xiaohongshu is one of the apps for sharing daily life, which is a good chance for women to make the most of their advantage.

5. Suggestions

The following recommendations for advancing women's development in the age of new media are provided by this study:

Promoting the worth of women at the societal level requires making extensive use of new media channels to share their accomplishments and contributions in a variety of social, cultural, and economic domains. To inspire and drive future generations, for example, it is crucial to share the highly regarded spirit and resolute attitude of female scientists, as shown by the remarkable figure of Tu Youyou. It is possible to elevate women's social standing and awareness by promoting favorable stereotypes of them.

Developing policies that encourage women's growth is essential at the government level. This entails implementing an extensive range of actions, including offering training materials and startup funding. For example, the provision of targeted capital to female entrepreneurs and the encouragement and support of institutions like Springboard

Enterprises provides an idealized environment for women and foster their development and accomplishments inside a formal educational setting. Furthermore, it is prudent to learn from some strong regulations from the US and Europe to improve internet monitoring and address the issues related to gender discrimination.

In addition, schools should pay more attention to setting up some lessons related to gender equality. As for the ideas of gender equality, we can learn from some practices of Sweden, which has made success in dealing with women's education. Students of all ages and classes should receive lessons about gender equality, and teachers should try their best to guide students in the right direction and form a harmonious and good atmosphere.

Also, women are supposed to participate in all kinds of activities and express their own thoughts to realize dreams and goals. Through Xiaohongshu, people can express their opinions and ideas about things in the environment, which may have an influence on social issues and choices. Compared to men, women have the advantage of expressing ideas and emotions, which is greatly needed on social platforms such as Xiaohongshu. Women should be encouraged to develop their own businesses by their advantages and strengths, finding their own positions in society, thus becoming more and more confident and energetic. Besides, women should pay more attention to self-development and higher education. Parents with girls should encourage their daughters to study hard and acquire higher education, which are sure to help a lot in their girls' correct choice and direction in the future. Women in society should never give up learning and developing skills to make more money and become more beautiful, trying their best to own as many rights as men do. Women in the workforce should be given more chances to contribute to the company, showing their potential and earning more praise.

Men also should be conscious of gender equality and try to comprehend the difficulties women are facing, especially the issue of how to balance work and family. There are a large number of chores and housework in daily life, such as cooking, laundry, and cleaning, which is a heavy burden if they are only left to women, causing much worry. So, men should understand the uneasiness of women and try to share household chores and stress, helping women in daily life as much as possible. When men involve themselves in women's daily chores, family life will be more harmonious and smoother. Pamela Clark, a professor at York University, once listed 35 ways that men can help women in daily life, which will have a positive effect on gender equality. Also, there are more good examples of former researchers, which should be applied and accepted by us, helping a lot in the issue of gender equality.

There should be a strong atmosphere of female self-identification in society. Children at a young age should be taught that men are equal to women in society, making them confident and optimistic about life when they are young. Besides, some books related to female rights should be made public to promote women's rights in society. Moreover, more literature works related to gender equality should be published in the market, encouraging women to protect their own rights. In addition, behaviors helpful to gender equality and female rights should be given a thumbs-up and recognition in society.

6. Conclusion

Using case analysis, this study explores Xiaohongshu's Newcomer Growth Plan and conducts interviews with four platform users. Every responder acknowledges the significance that technology innovation plays in advancing gender equality and agrees that the platform helps them grow in areas such as economics, politics, health, and education. One encouraging finding from the interviews is the firmly embedded belief that women should help other women, showing support for one another in a variety of situations when faced with difficulties. This has a good impact on women's technological empowerment.

Also, the essay pays more attention to gender equality and guides women to be more confident and develop their own businesses in their advantageous fields, such as social media Xiaohongshu. There should be more efforts made by governments and the whole society to respect women and encourage them to realize their own dreams and potential. Moreover, the concept of gender equality should be accepted by everyone, and all are supposed to advance the idea of gender equality.

Gender theory posits that the social construction of femininity is a societal phenomenon. This study echoes this perspective, emphasizing that gender should not serve as a determinant of capability. While acknowledging the physiological differences between genders, this study does not align with extreme feminist views. It criticizes societal expectations placed on women, such as the presumption of becoming homemakers, advocating for equity rather than inequality. The study aims to highlight the positive impacts of technological advancement on women's development while acknowledging that patriarchal norms still persist, presenting both opportunities and challenges for women. However, there are also some limitations in this study. Given the breadth of the research topic, it was difficult to capture every detail during discussions and interviews. Additionally, the fact that only four women were interviewed limits the representativeness of the study.

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