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User Needs Analysis of "Dazi Culture" Based on Social Media Text Mining

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Abstract. As a new social phenomenon, "Dazi culture" has gradually become an increasingly important means for contemporary urban people to seek efficient and precise companionship. In this study, we take the "Dazi" recruitment posts downloaded from Xiaohongshu as research objects, and conduct quantitative analysis on the popularity indicators of 2， 000 posts. Then, we explore whether these posts contain other kinds of emotional or social needs besides the functional needs, and verify the specific screening method used by users in the process of seeking high-quality social experience. In addition, the results show that the needs of users are composed of functional needs, safety needs and emotional needs, and the proportion of emotional needs is the largest. In the case of relevant data support from correlation analysis, it is verified that the "soft thresholds" required in the recruitment posts by users for obtaining high-quality social experience, such as the requirements for personality and emotional state, had a significantly positive correlation with the social effectiveness of the posts. This strongly proves that only when the pre-screening method is used can the social effectiveness be improved and the success rate of social experience greatly increased. This study provides data support for studying new types of interpersonal relationships in the digital age.

Keywords: Dazi culture, social filtering, emotional needs, text mining, soft barriers.

1. Introduction

According to Wen and Wei, today's urban youth are exhibiting a pursuit of "emotional value," a phenomenon they consider to be one of the most prominent symptoms of our times [1]. Under this context, "Dazi culture" suddenly goes viral on social media. As a superficial observation, this phenomenon seems to be nothing but a kind of "utilitarianism principle": Dazi is a low-cost and low-expectation form of partnership for merely executing certain concrete activities, e.g. joint eating, reasonable travel arrangement, etc.

However, when we analyze the posts of recruitment, we find a paradoxical phenomenon: if merely efficiency is of concern, users will just stick in the "logistics". However, what we can find in the posts are "self-introduction" and concrete "requirements" of activities, which are not logistics, but some kind of "non-function" information, e.g. s-person (shy), psychologically mature, emotion stably, etc. This phenomenon leads to our key question: Is Dazi merely for function screening, or do users also have other demands for the safety and "emotional value"?

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Based on the above exploratory questions on the logic analysis, this study thus developed the following basic hypotheses: “The motivations behind establishing ephemeral social partnerships are not one-sided, but 'multifaceted demand’. That is to say, although users have concrete expectations on the goals of certain activities, they still desire more general secure social space and emotional experience in the end. Exactly to meet such deep-level demands, all kinds of descriptions in the posts of recruitment thus form users’ kind of pre-existing 'soft threshold’, which can be further used for active 'social screening’ to avoid ineffective communication. Therefore, we argue that the final evaluation of a high-quality social experience may not lie in the final success of the activity, but in the substantive quality of emotional communication between users during the process.

2. Literature review

As a new type of social relationship, the connotation of the "Dazi" culture has been generally defined as "vertical sociality" and "precise companionship" by scholars [2]. Wang and Hu found that this kind of relationship is different from other intimate relationships. In terms of functional complementarity and the sense of boundary, it is more stringent in certain situations [3]. This relationship appears to be the ultimate pursuit of social efficiency made by modern urban people; Sun and Lu further summarized its characteristics as "stranger-based light social interaction". They think that this kind of connection based on practical needs and common interests establishes a light boundary for communication. This kind of relationship cares more about companionship efficiency than feelings [4].

From the perspective of psychology, modern urbanites meet two contradictory situations: on one hand, they want to establish interpersonal connections to alleviate loneliness; on the other hand, they are afraid of devoting a lot of energy to emotional communication because they are concerned about the high cost of establishing a strong relationship. The concept of "Alone Together" mentioned in the classic works introduced by Turkle explains why people will definitely seek "dazi" (activity partner) in this situation. It provides a kind of "low-cost, low-maintenance, high-efficiency" emotional comfort for people. This kind of relationship not only meets the need for companionship but also escapes devoting a lot of energy to it [5]. Based on the empirical research on the 'Dazi' (activity partner) seeking practice on Xiaohongshu, Zhang and Liao found that this kind of relationship can be seen as an important 'emotional compensation' for establishing a relationship in the algorithmic era [6].

From the perspective of sociology, 'Dazi' relationships can be seen as a practical application of Granovetter's 'Weak Ties' [7]. Although weak ties have many advantages in the process of obtaining information and resources, in the 'Dazi' (activity partner) culture, these connections have higher expectations for emotional support and security. Marwick and boyd pointed out that in the digital environment, the social boundary will appear "context collapse" [8]. This uncertainty makes people involved in the interaction situation to do "Impression Management" [9]. This kind of pre-screening is thought to be the basis of reducing social risks and establishing Initial Trust. As Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs found in their research on digital self-presentation, people manage their online image to reduce the uncertainty and risks of the offline world in comparison to the virtual world [10].

From the above review, it can be concluded that academic studies on 'Dazi' culture have already started to construct an initial theoretical framework. Researchers have already delimited its conceptual scope and explained its popularity from the perspectives of psychological explanations and sociological theories. Existing studies mostly focus on macro-level qualitative analysis or conceptual deduction on the 'why' question. Therefore, there is still a lack of how users 'construct' this relationship in practice at micro-level large empirical data for quantitative investigation [11].

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This lack of research perspective offers an obvious starting point for this study. This research attempts to directly conduct quantitative analysis on raw corpus from social media through text mining methods and empirically examine the validity of existing theories.

3. Methodology

Research on the "activity partner" (Dazi) culture has just started to build its theoretical basis. In previous studies, the definition range of the concept of "vertical social interaction" has been clarified. These studies explain social motivation well from the perspectives of sociological weak-tie theory and psychological coping with loneliness. However, most of the previous studies focus on qualitative analysis or conceptual deduction.

This study adopts a three-stage analysis method to strictly test the hypotheses. Take the analysis of content feature of text data as an example. We adopted word frequency analysis on the text data after segmentation. We sorted out the top 100 most frequently appearing words. Then we manually classified these words into three main types of demands: functionality, sense of security, and emotionality. Subsequently, we calculated the relative frequency of different types of words to verify the complexity of user's needs; at the same time, we also extracted the posts containing sentence pattern "I hope you..." and "My red flag is..." to summarize users' soft thresholds. Secondly, for the analysis of differences in social efficacy, since the number of comments shows users' participation in interaction besides replying, we selected it as the indicator to measure social efficacy. After sorting out the samples by the number of comments, we defined the top 25% as high social efficacy group and the bottom 25% as low social efficacy group. Not only did we compared the distribution of keywords in the two groups, but we also calculated the frequency of appearance of emotional vocabulary to decide what weightage emotional resonance would take in high-quality experiences. Finally, we adopted correlation analysis. For this, we developed a simple quantitative model. Actually, in the preparation for this study, the study had calculated words related to emotion and security. In this study, we summed the words with related meanings to form the total score, which was used to measure how high the "soft threshold" users set was---this was our input (independent variable). And for the effectiveness of the post, we observed how many comments it could get, which was our output (social efficacy). Subsequently, we adopted the Scipy library to compute the Pearson coefficient. What we wanted to know was, statistically, how likely would users who invested more in "screening" likely to be "socially successful", and whether there was a significant linear relationship between these two.

4. Results

4.1. Analysis of core demand structure

Table 1 presents the statistical classification results for the Top 100 high-frequency words. The data indicates that the total word frequency for emotional needs accounts for the highest proportion (35.8%), surpassing functional needs (32.6%) and safety needs (31.6%). This finding strongly supports the study's conclusion: users' core needs are multifaceted. When seeking 'activity partners' (dazi), users' focus on emotional comfort, such as 'easy to talk to' and 'emotionally stable', and their emphasis on safety boundaries, such as 'females only', now carries a weight no less than the activities themselves, like dining or traveling.

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Table 1. Statistical distribution of core needs high-frequency words

Need Category	Total Frequency (Top 100)	Proportion	Examples of Core Keywords
Emotional Needs	305	35.8%	Easy to talk to, emotionally stable, i-person (Introvert), Comfortable, Sincere
Functional Needs	278	32.6%	Sports, Gaming, Traveling, Dining, Watching exhibitions
Safety Needs	269	31.6%	Female, Female only, Safe, Reliable, Verified ID

4.2. Social screening strategies and efficacy

Pertaining to the screening strategies, the analysis revealed that a significant 57.5% of the posts distinctly employed specific screening phraseologies. The high-frequency words in these posts, which establish 'soft thresholds', are primarily concentrated on requirements concerning personality and emotions.

A further comparison of the content differences between high and low social efficacy groups (see Table 2) shows that the core vocabulary of the high social efficacy group is highly concentrated on describing relationship quality and emotional states (e.g., 'compatible in conversation,' 'sincere'), while the low social efficacy group's vocabulary remains more on purely functional recruitment terms (e.g., 'AA system,' 'strong instrumentality'). This indicates that posts achieving higher interaction often emphasized emotional resonance and relationship quality, rather than merely finding partners for activities.

Table 2. Comparison of core vocabulary between high and low social efficacy groups

Group	Core Vocabulary (Top 5)	Interpretation of Vocabulary Characteristics
High Social Efficacy Group	Easy to talk to, Very comfortable, Sincere, Emotionally stable, Meet again	Emphasizes emotional resonance and interaction quality
Low Social Efficacy Group	Strong purpose, Pure function, AA system, No one talks, Q&A style	Emphasizes instrumental attributes and task completion

4.3. Correlation analysis

The results of the correlation analysis (see Figure 1) showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the number of "soft threshold" keywords and the number of post comments was $r=0.47$ ($p=0.0012$). This statistical result indicates a significant moderate-to-strong positive correlation between the two. Paradoxically, the more 'thresholds' concerning emotional and safety aspects that a poster establishes in their recruitment posts, the more readily they tend to receive positive responses from potential activity partners. This logically forms a closed loop: although the preliminary screening seemingly increases the threshold, it actually reduces communication costs through precise matching, thereby improving the ultimate social success rate.

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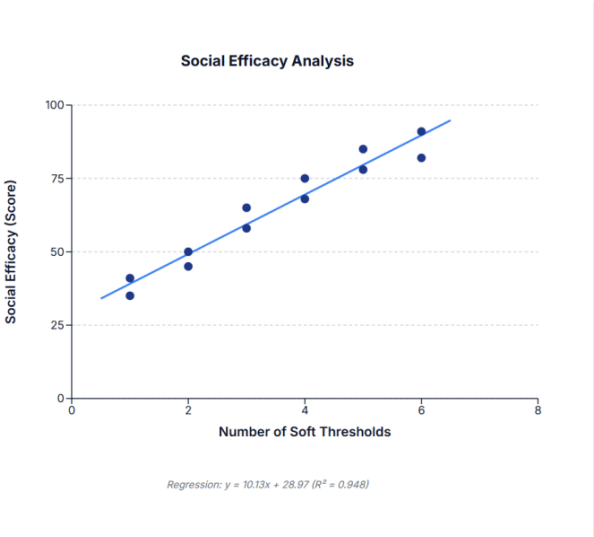

Figure 1. Correlation analysis between soft thresholds and social efficacy

5. Discussion

Empirical analysis results verified the importance of emotional needs and social screening in activity-based social partnerships. Based on the above research findings, we not only can theoretically revisit the relevant research on weak ties in the digital age but also can offer valuable practical suggestions for individual users and social platforms [12].

The research findings in this study help to dispel the public stereotype that 'activity partners' (Dazi) are 'purely instrumental relationships'. Actually, behind functional activities, users are pursuing a 'warm weak tie'. Compared with weak ties, this kind of 'warm weak tie' still has the low-burden characteristic of weak ties. Meanwhile, it also owns the emotional core of strong relationships through soft requirements such as 'emotional stability' and 'conversational compatibility'. This implies that in the social market of the digital age, matching models only based on efficiency are facing challenges. 'Precise Companionship', which considers both a sense of security and emotional needs, is the mainstream trend.

Based on the validated hypotheses H2 and H3, we propose the following two strategies to improve the 'Dazi' experience.

First, effective recruitment needs self-disclosure. It is not enough to simply list an itinerary. Users should boldly declare their 'soft thresholds', that is, they should state whether they are 'silent types' or 'certain personality types'. Our research results show that the filtering mechanism is not superfluous when finding more options is not the only goal. Only through this safe and accurate filtering mechanism can users ensure their 'correct match'.

Second, when finding potential partners, users should pay attention to the signals of high social quality. When selecting 'activity partners', users do not need to care too much about the description content. They just need to prioritize descriptions with signals of high social quality, such as 'sincerity' or 'stability'. These descriptions can also play a heuristic role to reduce social risk, which will make the subsequent face-to-face interaction more secure and psychologically comfortable.

To promote the healthy development of 'activity partner culture', social platforms should optimize the current content distribution and tagging systems. It is recommended that in addition to multidimensional 'social style tags' based on specific activities (e.g., #eatingpartner), platforms should further develop multidimensional 'social style tags' based on different social styles (e.g.,

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#quietandundisturbing, #deepconversations, #emotionalvalue). By applying algorithmic weighting, the content of recruited users with good credibility and complete information disclosure should be prioritized. This would reduce users' trial-and-error costs at the system level and create a safer and more trustworthy social environment for strangers.

6. Conclusion

This study based on social media text mining technology, systematically explored the user needs and behavioral logic behind 'Dazi' phenomenon, and reached the following three bottom line conclusions: Firstly, user needs have multi-dimensional characteristics. Functional activities (such as eating or visiting exhibition) are only the occasion of establishing relationship. Users will consciously or unconsciously adhere to the requirements of emotional comfort (such as personality similarity) and social security (such as identity verification) in the recruitment post. Secondly, "soft thresholds" is an effective way to improve social efficiency. Personality and emotion criteria that users release in the recruitment post is actually the rational screening mechanism in the process of recruitment. This mechanism can effectively reduce the cost of ineffective communication, and the results of data show that the posts with clearer thresholds have higher social matching success rate and more interactive intensity. Third, emotional resonance is the most basic criterion to define high-quality experience. Research results show that a good experience of social partner does not lie in completing the activity, but in the emotional resonance brought by the interaction process. The realization of emotional value is the basis to maintain the stability of this kind of new social relationship.

There are still some limitations for this study. First, the number of entries is limited (only 2,000 entries). In addition, the sample comes from a single social platform (Xiaohongshu), which may not cover all the characteristics of Dazi culture on the whole network. Second, even if using "comment count" as a proxy indicator of social effectiveness is statistically significant, there is no semantic sentiment analysis on the specific content of comments.

The research plan of the future will be carried out in two directions: First, we will expand the range of data collection to collect social platforms with different characteristics, such as Douyin and Weibo, to verify whether the conclusion can be generalized to other social platforms. Second, we will import more refined sentiment analysis algorithm (such as SnowNLP, BERT models, etc.) to directly calculate the sentiment score of the content interacted by users. We will also try to establish multiple regression model to quantitatively calculate the precise influence weight of different types of thresholds.

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