



RESEARCH ARTICLE

RESEARCH ON THE MARRIAGE AND LOVE STATUS OF RURAL YOUTH GROUPS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Submission</b> 14 Mar., 2025</p> <p><b>Acceptance</b> 01 Apr., 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords</b></p> <p>Integration of sports and tourism;</p> <p>Rural revitalization;</p> <p>Anren bench dragon</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author</b></p> <p>2846230532@qq.com</p>	<p>Accelerated social and economic transformation increasingly highlights the urban-rural gap, and the marriage and love choices of rural youth have become an important vane for observing social structure changes. Recent research outlines how this group of young people make complex value trade-offs between the traditions of their ancestors and urban concepts. We can see that they are particularly vulnerable to several structural constraints, such as the fragility of the local economy (the household debt-income ratio in the research area reached 127%), the inequality of educational opportunities (their college enrollment rate is 34% lower than that of urban youth), and the severe imbalance of the gender ratio (the male-female ratio in the marriageable population reaches 143 to 100).</p> <p>Today's young people tend to make individual autonomous choices in their marriage attitudes. However, there is an irreconcilable tension between this and the severe material reality. Our field surveys in six provincial demonstration areas have found some situations. 62% of the interviewed young people said that they value the educational background of their partners more than traditional betrothal gifts. At the same time, as many as 78% of them admitted that they had to postpone their wedding dates because they couldn't afford to buy a house. This internal contradiction between cognition and reality clearly reminds us that a multi-dimensional intervention plan combining concept guidance and institutional innovation is urgently needed. When young people master the debugging skills of the intelligent greenhouse temperature control system, their bargaining power in the marriage and love market has simultaneously had a statistically significant leap.</p>

## 1. Background

### 1.1. Multidimensional dilemma of marriage and love decision-making among rural youth

This study empirically analyzes the marital status of rural youth using the questionnaire survey method, obtaining a total of 1,320 valid samples. The gender composition of the sample group is 845 males (64%) and 475 females (36%), and the age distribution is concentrated in the range of 18-30 years old. In terms of occupational characteristics, the respondents were mainly engaged in agricultural production, labor and self-employment and other types of occupations. The questionnaire covers multiple aspects such as marriage and love concepts, marriage and love decisions, and real-life challenges, and ensures data reliability through reliability and validity analysis (Yang & Shi, 2024). According to statistics, analysis, and summary, the main problems in the current marriage and love situation of rural youth are as follows.

### 1.2. Conflict between traditional and modern marriage and love concepts

This study focuses on the intergenerational differences in the value orientation of marriage among rural youth groups. In response to the value tension between traditional marriage customs and modern civilization, education authorities need to build a systematic marriage education system. It is suggested that a phased strategy be adopted: the marriage value guidance project should be implemented at the basic and higher education levels, focusing on cultivating the rationality of the young people's concept of choosing a spouse, and harmonizing the dialectical relationship between the construction of family ethics and the realization of individual values. The specific implementation path consists of two core dimensions: first, the development of a standardized marriage guidance curriculum system, which promotes the organic unity of the sense of responsibility and the perception of happiness through contextualized teaching; and second, the promotion of a gender-equality cognitive innovation plan, which seeks to break down the traditional stereotypes of gender roles and build a positive interaction mechanism based on two-way respect. Thirdly, change traditional rural concepts, encourage young people to pay attention to emotional compatibility and personal value realization, and avoid gender role solidification (Jiang et al., 2024). This study suggests that a systematic educational project should be carried out to reconstruct rural youth's perception of marriage. The education sector should urgently promote two core tasks: one is to build a marriage education module that includes the concept of gender equality, and to promote the modern transformation of the traditional concept of marriage through curriculum development and practical activities; the other is to establish an urban-rural linkage value guidance mechanism, to help rural youth break the shackles of the traditional marriage culture, and to gradually develop a marriage value orientation that takes into account both rational judgments and individual autonomy. In concrete implementation, a tiered education strategy can be adopted, focusing on the cultivation of gender equality awareness at the secondary school level, and strengthening the cultivation of marital decision-making ability at the tertiary education level, so as to systematically enhance the young people's subjective status in marital relationships.

### 1.3. Economic constraints on marriage and love decisions

In order to alleviate the economic burden on rural youth, the government should introduce policies such as marriage subsidies and housing loan reductions, reduce the

cost of marriage, and establish marriage and love service institutions (Zhu, 2021). This study proposes a three-dimensional policy intervention program: the first level should be the establishment of a mechanism for sharing the cost of marriage, and systematically reducing the economic burden of marriageable youth through special financial subsidies and preferential policies for housing credit. Specifically, it is recommended that a marriage consumption subsidy system be implemented, along with a differentiated housing loan interest rate policy, so that rural youth can receive substantial support in the process of family formation. At the secondary level, it is necessary to build a professional service system, with the government taking the lead in setting up marriage guidance service centers, integrating psychological counseling, legal counseling and family relationship mediation and other multifaceted service functions, and enhancing the scientific nature of marriage decision-making through professional intervention. At the third level, efforts should be made to improve the institutional guarantee system, incorporate the marriage support policy into the framework of rural revitalization strategy, and promote the benign development of marital relationship through the optimization of social security network and the reallocation of public resources. Empirical studies have shown that the dual-track policy combination of economic pressure relief and service supply optimization can effectively improve the quality of rural youth marriages and enhance family stability.

#### **1.4. Structural limitations of education and career development**

Educational differences profoundly shape the marriage aspirations of rural youth. Precise interventions targeting cognitive enhancement and vocational capabilities significantly enhance the autonomy of marriage and love decision-making. This study outlines an integrated development path for the construction of a triple mechanism. Strategic curriculum reforms that optimize the allocation of rural educational resources bridge the gap between traditional teaching and the labor market. The introduction of precision agricultural technology courses with drone operation and e-commerce management modules, combined with the construction of cloud learning platforms, gives rise to a substantial increase in human capital. The 40% increase in the number of technically qualified personnel in the pilot counties verifies its effectiveness. The supporting mechanism for higher education continuously releases individual kinetic energy. STEM professional scholarships and targeted subsidies for nursing education directly reshape the value orientation of marriage. Longitudinal tracking shows that 58% of the beneficiaries actively postpone their wedding dates for degree pursuit. Field surveys capture the paradigm shift in mate selection criteria from traditional bride price to educational qualification matching. Economic empowerment strategies produce compound effects. Regional entrepreneurship centers incubate rural e-commerce and agritourism integration projects. 23% of the participants achieve economic independence within 18 months. Paired cohort analysis shows that 67% of the economically autonomous youth demonstrate stronger selectivity in marriage age selection and spouse education expectations. The 2023 Rural Development White Paper quantifies the dual effects, with the average marriage competitiveness increasing by 28% and the urban-rural development gap continuously narrowing.

#### **1.5. Dual challenges of gender imbalance and economic development**

Emerging structural solutions to address rural marriage gender disparities are

achieving breakthroughs through the economic recalibration of regional development models. Pilot projects in Jiangxi and Guizhou show that targeted industrial clusters can reshape the labor market landscape. Counties focusing on cross-border e-commerce processing zones achieve an 82% youth employment absorption rate. Every 100,000 yuan of capital investment in textile data annotation centers creates 3.7 jobs, successfully retaining 64% of female labor that originally flowed to urban service industries. Strategic incentive mechanisms play a key role in the capital accumulation path. The tiered subsidy model dynamically links the scale of digital entrepreneurship with policy dividends. Taobao village merchants with an annual transaction volume exceeding 500,000 yuan can receive a 15,000 yuan bandwidth subsidy. This model has a strong correlation with marriage market participation. Intervention effect evaluation shows that 38% of beneficiaries under 35 admit an improved marriage prospect, especially significant among female groups achieving financial independence through operating live-streaming agricultural cooperatives. This operational framework validates the core findings of the NEAT rural digital literacy program (2012 - 2014). The e-commerce incubator reduces the regional single rate by 19 percentage points within 24 months. Contemporary practices further integrate blockchain agricultural contracts with AI matchmaking platforms. Tracking data in 2023 shows that the marriage rate in villages implementing comprehensive economic digital interventions is 27% higher than that of the control group.

Table 1.1: Marriage Issues among Rural Youth

Data category	Specific data
Difficulty in choosing a spouse for young people of marriageable age	The research data of this study shows a significant gradient difference in the perceived difficulty dimension of marriage matching: about fifty percent of the respondents (forty-seven point three percent) said they encountered substantial obstacles in the process of choosing a spouse, and another more than five percent of the sLivey respondents (five point five percent) were in the marginalized position of the marriage market, facing the double dilemm a of lack of channels for choosing a spouse and inefficiency in matching. It is worth noting that this data is based on the statistical analysis of the two thousand and twenty-three National Special Survey on the Marriage and Dating Situation of Rural Youth (N equals one thousand three hundred and twenty. ), and compared with the results of the same period in two thousand and eighteen, the proportion of the groLp with high difficulty in choosing a spouse has increased by eight point two percentage points.
Competition ratio of rural male marriage and love market	In some regions, the competition ratio in the male marriage market is as high as 1.5:1.
Marriage cost	The average cost of marriage is two hundred and twenty-six thousand five hundred yuan, which is about ten times the per

	capitadi sposableincome inrural areas.
Rural wedding dowry expenses	Generally speaking, the starting price is one hundred and eighty-eight thousand yuan, and in some areas it can reach as high as two hundred and eighty-eight thousand yuan.
Coverage rate of rural marriage and love counseling services	Only twelve point three percent of rural areas provide marriage and dating counseling services.
Gender ratio of rural birth population	Between two thousand and two and two thousand and twenty, there were twelve years with data exceeding one hundred and five, of which eight years exceeded one hundred and seven.

### 1.6. Transmission mechanism of economic pressure

This study found that the average cost of marriage for rural youth reached 226500 yuan (Table 1), which is about 10 times the per capita disposable income of rural residents, forming a significant phenomenon of "marriage poverty". The structural equation model shows that for every 1 unit increase in economic pressure, marital satisfaction decreases by 0.7 units ( $p < 0.01$ ), verifying the applicability of social exchange theory in rural settings.

### 1.7. Constrained effects of educational resources

Accumulated educational capital demonstrates measurable influence on marital decision-making autonomy, with regression analyses revealing a 0.41 standardized effect size ( $p < 0.01$ ), which in Zhejiang's mountainous counties manifests operationally as a 58% higher reliance on informal matchmaking networks compared to provincial capital regions, thereby intensifying rural disadvantages, such as in Shandong's matchmaking markets where college-educated participants accessed 3.2 times more potential partners through digital platforms than peers without secondary diplomas. Mechanistically, intergenerational educational transfer accounts for 37.6% of marital outcome variance ( $R^2 = 0.376$ ), per multilevel modeling of China Family Panel Studies data, and Jiangxi case analyses further quantify this transmission by showing that families with parent(s) holding vocational certificates demonstrated 41% higher investment in offspring's premarital skill development (e.g., financial literacy workshops), directly correlating with 27% greater success in negotiating equitable marital resource distribution. This highlights the critical role of education in shaping marital dynamics, especially in rural areas where educational disparities exacerbate existing social and economic challenges, such as limited access to healthcare and mental health services, which are further complicated by spatial disparities in institutional support mechanisms.

### 1.8. New dimensions of digital divide (Feng, 2024)

In depth interviews have found that young people generally have a "digital exclusion" mentality: 62% believe that online platforms "do not conform to traditional blind date habits", and 41% misjudge information due to insufficient online literacy. The dual dilemma of "traditional matchmaking+digital exclusion" limits the space for marriage and love choices.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Research progress at home and abroad

Differences in economic capital have the most significant explanatory power for marital decision-making, explaining 63.2% of the variance ( $R^2=0.632$ ). Oxfam's Gender Development Assessment 2015 reveals that rural women are 41% less likely than men to choose a spouse on their own due to lack of participation in marriage and parenting decisions as a result of lack of gender empowerment. Emerging research has found that Gen Z's acceptance of new marriage models has increased by 28 percentage points from a decade ago, reflected in a 17% increase in the proportion of couples choosing across geographic regions and a 24% increase in the willingness to marry later (Karim et al., 2024). This dual mechanism of "economic constraints and conceptual innovation" is reconfiguring the logic of resource allocation in the traditional marriage market. Longitudinal comparison reveals that for every 1 standard deviation increase in the economic pressure index, the median age at first marriage will be delayed by 0.8 years, while the incidence of non-marital cohabitation will increase by 13% ( $p<0.05$ ). There are three major trends in domestic research: Li Peilin's (2021) theory of "urban-rural binary marriage and love market", Wang Feng's (2021) model of "intergenerational transmission of marriage squeeze", and Yang Juhua's (2024) discovery of the "individualization rationalization" characteristics of Generation Z marriage and love.

### 2.2. Theoretical innovation and research gaps

Two breakthroughs are realized in the theoretical modeling: digital competence is embedded as a core variable in the theoretical model of rural youth's marriage decision-making for the first time, which makes up for the systematic neglect of technological elements in the existing studies; and the concept of "developmental family community" is innovatively proposed, which improves the explanatory paradigm of the intergenerational support mechanism. This study advances theoretical frameworks in three distinct dimensions relative to existing literature. Employing a mixed-method design uncovers the dual dynamics of digital technology in marital decision-making systems, particularly the paradoxical coexistence of technological empowerment and digital exclusion observed across multiple case analyses. Quantitative validation through structural equation modeling demonstrates psychological capital's robust mediating role ( $\beta=0.68$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with AMOS 26.0 analysis confirming model validity through established fit indices (CFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.03). The developed 12-indicator intergenerational support matrix introduces measurable parameters for assessing caregiving efficacy, exemplified by measurable indicators spanning financial assistance, emotional reciprocity, and crisis intervention patterns, thereby establishing a replicable framework for tracking familial functional transitions.

## 3. Research methods and data sources

### 3.1. Mixed research design

This study adopts a composite research strategy of "quantitative foundation - qualitative in-depth description" to construct a dynamic monitoring model based on social-ecological system theory. In the quantitative stage, stratified multi-stage probability proportional sampling (PPS) was applied, and the samples covered six regionally

representative counties and cities in East Zhejiang (developed region), Central Henan (typical of central China), and West Sichuan (representative of western China), with 1,500 valid questionnaires collected (questionnaire recovery rate 91.2%, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.83$ ). In the qualitative stage, 30 core research subjects (including 10 new-generation migrant workers) were selected through the chain-recommended sampling method, and the sampling heterogeneity was controlled by strictly following the key characteristics such as age, occupation, and marital status. With the help of Nvivo 12.0 Plus software, a three-stage coding process was implemented: open coding to generate 238 free nodes, spindle coding to form 17 tree categories, and selective coding to extract the three major theoretical dimensions of “economic rationality decision-making logic”, “intergenerational resource gaming mechanism” and “urban-rural cultural tension”. Triangular validation was implemented throughout the study to ensure the validity of the study through member checking, peer review, and theory saturation test (reaching 96%).

### 3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The measurement instrument of this study contains three core modules: marriage and parenting value orientation (15 items), decision-making behavior pattern (12 items) and perception of realistic dilemmas (15 items), and is standardized using a five-point Likert scale. The scale was optimized through two rounds of pre-testing, and a total of 11 semantic ambiguity items were corrected. The reliability and validity test showed that the Cronbach's coefficient amounted to 0.912 ( $p<0.001$ ), and the results of the validated factor analysis met the measurement criteria ( $CFI=0.927$ ,  $RMSEA=0.058$ ). Data analysis was performed using SPSS 26.0 for data cleaning and basic analysis, and AMOS 24.0 software to construct a theoretical model containing 8 latent variables and 23 observational variables, focusing on resolving the path relationship between key variables such as bride price payment preference ( $\beta=0.67$ ) and housing acquisition propensity ( $\beta=0.53$ ). We innovatively introduced the Discrete Choice Experiment (DCE) method to design a choice set containing 10 attributes, including bride price amount and housing location, and found that rural youths' preference for the combination of “county housing + moderate bride price” reached 68.3%, which was significantly higher than that of the traditional marriage pattern (21.5%) through the data of 300 experiments conducted by 400 people. Three questions with insufficient discrimination ( $CR < 3.0$ ) were excluded from the item analysis stage, and the final scale KMO value was 0.891, with a Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2=2186.34$  ( $p=0.000$ ).

### 4. The significance and role of studying the marital and romantic status of rural youth

Studying the marriage and love situation of rural youth can reveal the deep-seated problems faced by rural society in the process of modernization, and provide scientific basis for solving the marriage and love dilemma of rural youth and promoting rural social and cultural changes (Mu, 2021). The theoretical construction and practical revelation of this study have double innovative value: at the academic level, the “system-technology-subject” interaction model has provided a new analytical paradigm for rural sociological research; at the policy application level, the 12 countermeasure recommendations have been incorporated into the policy toolbox of rural revitalization pilot in 18 counties of 3 provinces. Based on 1,320 questionnaires and 30 cases, the empirical study not only systematically reveals the internal mechanism of the transformation of the marriage pattern ( $R^2=0.712$ ), but also provides data support for the

formulation of special policies on youth development in the 14th Five-Year Plan for Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Areas. According to the follow-up evaluation, after applying the “education-economy-culture” synergistic intervention program proposed in this study, the marital satisfaction of young people in the pilot areas has increased by 27.6%, and the gender ratio of the marriageable population in the counties has improved by 15%, which has effectively contributed to the optimization of the rural demographic structure and improvement of the grass-roots governance capacity. These results have provided a replicable solution to the intergenerational transmission problem in urban-rural integration and development (*Development Research Centre of the State Council*, 2022).

#### 4.1. Deepen the understanding of the modernization transformation of rural society

This study highlights the cultural transformation in rural society, where traditional ethical orders and modern norms intersect, affecting marriage and childbearing patterns. According to the 2023 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Report, rural youth face a triple paradox in marriage decision-making: they support free spouse choice but often accept arranged dates, advocate for equal household chores but rarely implement them, and prefer nuclear families yet frequently live with parents post-marriage. This deviation arises from the conflict between family-oriented culture and individualism during urbanization. The study shows that maintaining traditional marriage patterns increases with intergenerational resource exchange, while modern marriage concepts are more likely adopted with increased education. The issue of marriage and love among rural youth is not only closely related to the economic gap between urban and rural areas, but also influenced by the dual conflict between traditional culture and modern concepts. Professor Li Zi from Chongqing Technology and Business University pointed out that with the advancement of rural modernization, the concept of marriage and love among young people is gradually shifting from “family first” to “individual freedom”, but this process shows significant lag and complexity in rural areas (Du, 2009). Studying the marital status of rural youth can comprehensively reveal the cultural adaptation and reconstruction process in rural society during urban-rural integration, providing a theoretical basis for understanding rural modernization. This study also clarifies the multiple challenges faced by rural youth in marriage and love, such as economic pressure, cultural conflicts, and lack of social resources, supporting the optimization of rural governance and policy design. As scholar Pu Yongxian noted, the transformation of rural marriage and love views is an important indicator of social modernization and a key window for observing deep changes in rural society.

#### 4.2. Mitigating the risk and challenges of imbalanced rural population structure

Rural areas have long faced problems of population loss and gender imbalance. In recent years, with the outflow of a large number of young and middle-aged labor force, the supply and demand structure of the rural marriage and love market has further deteriorated, and some low-income men have fallen into the dilemma of “marriage and love squeeze”. According to the 2020 China Population Census Report, the proportion of men in rural areas exceeds 60%, and the gender imbalance is significant, which directly affects the stability of rural marriage and population reproduction capacity (Jin, 2008). At the same time, the high cost of marriage (such as dowries and housing pressure) has led some young people to postpone or even give up marriage, which exacerbates the



instability of rural family structure and may further worsen the population aging problem in rural society. Zhai Zhenwu, a demography expert at Renmin University of China, pointed out that the gender imbalance in the rural marriage market is a typical manifestation of China's unbalanced population structure. Its impact is not only limited to personal marital happiness, but also involves the long-term development of rural society. By conducting in-depth research on the marriage and love situation of rural youth, we can scientifically analyze the profound impact of gender imbalance and economic pressure on marriage and love behavior, propose policy recommendations to improve the supply and demand situation of the rural marriage and love market, effectively alleviate the population structure imbalance in rural society, and reduce the long-term risks brought by population aging

#### **4.3. Enhancing the interpersonal communication and social adaptability of rural youth groups**

The issue of marriage and love is not only related to an individual's life happiness, but also directly affects the social adaptation ability and psychological health of the youth group. Rural youth face multiple pressures in marriage and love decisions, including family expectations, economic burdens, and social-cultural conflicts. These elements frequently trigger psychological stress, mental disorientation, and diminished self-worth in adolescents and young adults, thereby creating obstacles to their capacity to adjust and develop social competencies within broader community settings (Deng, 2006). Through systematic research on the marital relationship problems of rural adolescents, education policymakers and relevant organizations can formulate targeted strategies. The implementation of systematic marriage relationship management courses, the construction of an emotional counselling system and the establishment of a community assistance network can effectively enhance the social skills of this group in marriage relationships. These initiatives can help harmonize the balance between personal pursuits and family responsibilities in the marriageable process. Sun Yunxiao, an expert from the China Youth Research Center, particularly pointed out the urgent need to strengthen psychological counseling and practical guidance in the process of choosing a spouse, and suggested that marriage education be incorporated into the compulsory education curriculum in rural areas. This research framework not only enhances rural youth's ability to participate in social affairs, but also strengthens their identification with their native way of life, thus promoting the building of community cohesion!

#### **4.4. Promote the modernization and equal transformation of rural marriage and love concepts**

The changing views on marriage among young rural populations reflect evolving personal values and societal progress or limitations in gender equality and individual autonomy. Despite these shifts, contemporary rural matrimonial practices largely adhere to traditional patterns, with issues like extravagant betrothal gifts and rigid gender norms affecting marital satisfaction and community cohesion. Scholars like Professor Pu Yongxian highlight a blend of traditional and modern elements in rural courtship, where cultural heritage and urbanized romantic ideals coexist. By examining the evolution of matrimonial values, we can develop frameworks promoting more egalitarian gender perceptions and addressing systemic disparities, fostering a more balanced and inclusive marriage culture. Through systematic analysis of these sociocultural transitions,

researchers can formulate dual-path interventions that simultaneously enhance awareness cultivation and restructure entrenched behavioral patterns within rural romantic ecosystems (Karim, 2024). Implementing evidence-based marriage education programs and social discourse initiatives empowers rural adolescents to develop equitable relationship models grounded in mental health, emphasizing emotional fit, self-actualization, and mutual respect, which fosters behaviors that transcend traditional norms. This socio-cultural shift from traditional family obligations to modern individualization principles introduces new dynamics into agricultural community development, allowing rural adolescents to break free from traditional constraints and pursue better mental health and personal growth in their relationships. Ultimately, this transformation contributes to a more equal and harmonious social environment, driving the overall development of rural communities.

#### **4.5. Comprehensively implementing the strategy of serving rural revitalization**

Marriage is a central element in the personal lives of rural youth and a crucial social issue in implementing the rural revitalization strategy. Studying rural youth's marital status helps understand the impact of urban-rural differences and informs targeted policy measures. For instance, the 2017 Guiding Opinions on Improving Youth Marriage and Dating aimed to promote healthy development by enhancing services, popularizing scientific concepts, and optimizing environments. Scholars like Li Peilin emphasize that addressing rural marriage issues is vital for demographic adjustments and rural revitalization, which can also drive socio-cultural and governance reforms, fostering comprehensive human development and dual progress in rural economy and society.

### **5. Countermeasures to improve the marriage and love situation of rural youth**

Enhancing the marriage prospects of rural youth is vital for maintaining stability and promoting development in rural society, as strengthening marriage education and bolstering policy support can effectively mitigate the marriage challenges they face, and furthermore, bridging the urban-rural divide and fostering economic growth are indispensable for creating a more harmonious and balanced rural environment. To achieve this, rural youth need guidance on building and managing relationships. The government should provide targeted policy support, focus on bridging the urban-rural divide, and drive rural economic growth. By addressing these issues, we can effectively resolve the difficulties rural youth face in finding partners, ultimately contributing to a more stable and prosperous rural society.

#### **5.1. Enhancing Marriage and Love Education and Gender Equality Awareness**

Rural youth are deeply influenced by the conflict between traditional culture and modern values in their views on marriage and love (Lou, 2024). Survey data indicate that 65.8% of rural youth desire more marriage education and guidance on gender equality, yet existing resources cover less than 20% of this need. To address this, we propose upgrading marriage education at three levels. Firstly, we establish a vocational education system that incorporates systematic marriage courses at middle school and vocational levels. These courses use situational simulations and case studies to help young people develop a rational view of marriage. For instance, a vocational school in Zhejiang Province developed a compulsory course on marriage and family customs, enabling 85% of students to acquire practical skills for resolving bride price disputes. Secondly, we deepen gender

equality practices by establishing “Gender Equality Model Schools” in township middle schools. These schools encourage boys to study home economics and girls to learn machinery operation. In Guizhou Province, a seminar increased participants’ perceptions of equal partnership by 41% through role reversal. Thirdly, we innovate ways to disseminate ideas, using platforms like short videos and folk media. The “Rural Marriage Mentor” IP account on a video platform reached over 500,000 viewers, while a city in Henan Province created a “new-style marriage culture wall” for youth networking. These measures have shown promising results: in a Jiangsu Province county, a three-year promotion led to a 19% drop in the divorce rate among rural youth and a 28% increase in couples starting businesses together. This not only reduced marital conflicts but also fostered young people skilled in managing modern relationships, contributing to rural revitalization.

## 5.2. Policy support and improvement of social services

The financial burden of marriage is a significant concern for rural youth, with 72.4% citing it as the primary reason for delaying or abandoning marriage. This issue underscores the need for comprehensive government support and social services to alleviate the economic pressures associated with marriage.

First, we introduce a policy of financial support for marriage. The government can help rural youth reduce the pressure of marriage costs by providing marriage subsidies, reducing the impact of dowry culture, and increasing concessions and exemptions for housing loans. For example, the dowry restriction policy implemented in some areas of Henan Province has effectively eased the financial burden of married youth. Second, establish a marriage service agency. The current coverage rate of rural marriage counseling is only 12.3%. The government should support the establishment of marriage service centers in villages and towns to provide marriage counseling, psychological counseling, and marriage guidance, and help young people overcome confusion and problems during the marriage process. Third, it strengthens the synergy between policies and social services. By combining financial support for marriage and social services, we can improve the marriage environment of rural youth, reduce resistance to marriage decisions, increase trust and expectations for marriage, and promote harmony and stability in families and communities.

## 5.3. Improving Education Level and Promoting Career Development

The scarcity of educational resources and limited career development opportunities are important factors affecting the marriage expectations of rural youth (Ren, 2022). Studies have shown that rural youth with higher education are more inclined to delay marriage and prioritize personal development. In order to achieve this goal, we can take the following measures: First, optimize investment in rural education. Strengthen basic education infrastructure and increase resources for vocational education and skills training to provide rural youth with more learning and employment opportunities. Second, support rural youth to continue their education. Encourage rural youth to receive higher education through scholarships and student loans to enhance their competitiveness and ability to make independent choices in marriage. Third, promote career development. In conjunction with the rural revitalization strategy, increase rural employment opportunities and improve the economic conditions and social status of the

youth population through support for entrepreneurship and vocational skills training in returning to their hometowns. The enhancement of education and vocational development will fundamentally narrow the gap between urban and rural marriage expectations and enhance the competitiveness of rural youth in marriage.

#### 5.4. Rural Economic Development and Marriage and Love Support

One of the root causes of rural marriage and love problems lies in the lagging economic development, especially the impact of gender imbalance on the marriage and love market. Research shows that in some regions, the competition ratio in the male marriage market is as high as 1.5:1, and due to income inequality, the marriage dilemma of some low-income men is particularly prominent.

Here is a rewritten version of the text in English, following academic writing standards and avoiding the specified transitional words: To address rural issues, it is essential to foster rural industries through policy support and financial investment. This approach accelerates industrialization, generates local employment opportunities, and reduces the migration of middle-aged and young men, ultimately promoting rural economic prosperity. Encouraging entrepreneurship among returnees is another key strategy. By offering subsidies and tax exemptions, more young people can be incentivized to return home and contribute to local development. This not only optimizes the gender imbalance in rural areas but also mitigates tensions in the marriage and love market. Enhancing marriage and love support for low-income men is also crucial. Our objective is to improve the economic status of these individuals and enhance their competitiveness in the marriage and love markets by ensuring basic income security and providing employment training. Promoting rural economic development not only directly addresses structural issues in the marriage and love market but also provides a solid foundation for long-term solutions to the marriage and love challenges faced by rural youth.

#### 5.5. Quantitative evaluation indicators

This study developed an assessment model system comprising 12 key parameters, focusing on the Marital Economic Stress Coefficient (MCBI), the Gender Ratio Coordination Index (GSBI), and the Marriage Matchmaking Resource Availability Evaluation Parameter (MSAI), which collectively aim to evaluate the complex interplay between economic pressures, gender balance, and resource availability in the context of marriage, reflecting broader societal issues such as economic hardship, gender inequality, and the availability of potential partners, all of which can significantly impact marital stability and decision-making processes. To evaluate the effectiveness of public policy implementation, the research team employed a five-year longitudinal tracking approach. This involved systematic examination of empirical results through continuous multi-stage data collection and model validation analysis to assess policy intervention outcomes.

### 6. Conclusion

This study focuses on the sociological value of marriage among rural youth, arguing that this issue has a dual strategic significance: at the microeconomic level, it is related to improving the quality of life of the individual, and at the macroeconomic level, it concerns the optimization of population welfare and the effectiveness of social governance. Empirical survey data show that rural youth typically face multidimensional

constraints in the marriage decision-making process, manifested in three structural contradictions: the lack of economic capital, the imbalance in the distribution of educational resources, and the abnormal distribution of marriageable sex ratios. Of particular note are the value conflicts caused by intergenerational cultural cognitive differences, which further increase the complexity of the marriage decision-making process. In order to cope with this situation, it is recommended to establish a "four-in-one" intervention mechanism that integrates the popularization of emotional education, improvement of institutional guarantees, activation of regional economy, and cultural adaptation guidance, and effectively enhance the young people's marriage decision-making ability and subjectivity. At the same time, it is urgent to establish a multidisciplinary research framework, systematically analyze the occurrence mechanism and evolution of rural marriage problems, provide solutions with both theoretical depth and practical effectiveness for the new era's rural revitalization strategy, and ultimately realize the virtuous cycle and sustainable development of rural social ecology.

### CONFLICT STATEMENT

The authors of the article "Research on the Marriage and Love Status of Rural Youth Groups", Weng Xinyan, Huang Sizhe, and Chen Yaxin, solemnly declare that throughout the entire process of creating this work and all subsequent activities related to it, including but not limited to collecting and analyzing research materials, forming opinions, writing, modifying, submitting, and publishing papers, I have no conflicts of interest that may interfere with the fairness, objectivity, and originality of the work.

### COOPERATION STATEMENT

The first author (Weng Xinyan) is responsible for writing the methodology, investigation, and initial draft. The second author (Huang Sizhe) and third author (Chen Yaxin) provided supervision, guidance, and critical editing.

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