Studying from Sociological Research: The Relationship between Network Stratification and Real Social Desire

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Abstract

With the development of the internet society, people's lives and ways of communication have undergone tremendous changes. In recent years, network social has become increasingly common, and there has been an emergence of stratification in network socializing. At the same time, there is a certain degree of interaction between network socializing and real-life socializing. This article will be based on existing literature and use a series of sociological survey methods to study the relationship between the degree of network social stratification and real-life social desire, and explore the possible reasons behind it by analyzing the survey results.

Keywords: network social stratification, stratification, social-layer, real-life social desire

Introduction:

The phenomenon of "stratification" refers to the formation of small groups within a specific area of interest or social occasion. People of the same group often show same values and behavioral patterns and the group evolved into a circle or a layer. Mr. Fei Xiaotong proposed the concept of "the differential mode of association" in his book From the Soil: the Foundations of Chinese Society, which is used to describe the interpersonal relationship structure of traditional Chinese society, that is, the circle form centered on the individual and pushed outward according to the distance of the relationship. With the development of modernization and the advancement of social networking, the theory of the differential mode of association can still explain the way of social interpersonal communication. This kind of circle or social-layer has gradually been extended to the internet. As users of online social media, we also clearly perceive the stratification of network socializing. Based on known research, scholars have conducted various forms of research on the real-world circle and the network circle, A large number of scholars believe that the popularization of network social stratification will lead to people's excessive dependence on the internet, thereby affecting interpersonal relationships in real life. Their research has sparked our thinking about the internet and real social interaction.

Based on their views, we explored the impact of network social stratification on social desire in

real life, starting from the actual situation of the people around us.

Our research question is: Will network social stratification weaken people's social desire in real life?

If our survey results are consistent with the conclusions of those scholars, our research can serve as supplementary evidence to better support their views; If not, our research results can provide new research conclusions for the study of network social stratification and social desire in real life, allowing us to better understand the relationship of them.

Literature review:

Most of the existing literature studies show that the network social stratification has played a hindrance to the socializing in the real society, and the emergence of the network social-layer has limited the social interaction in the real life to some extent.

The literature holds that the network social stratification is closed and unitary, and the differential pattern of the network social-layer will also lead to some phenomena such as individual indifference, verbal violence and rumor.

However, it is difficult for individuals in the circle to distinguish the truth and falsity of information, and there is a high probability that they cannot think rationally and objectively. Too much subjective factors may lead to some violent conflicts, which may rise to the whole network space and even in real life.

Another existing problem is that the privacy of individuals in the circle is not high. The network security management is not in place, the network order is not guaranteed, and information leakage is likely to occur.

In addition, the network social layer may also lead to the closure of offline social communication. It is mentioned in the literature that due to the network social-layer, some people have less offline social communication, lower social desire, over-dependence on the circle, and loss of balance between the network and real-life social communication.

In response to these issues discussed in the literature, we conducted research on the topic of network social stratification and real-life social desire. The results of our survey research will help us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of network social stratification, and to further understand the relationship of social interaction between the dimensions of network and reality.

Methods:

The main survey methods we used are: analysis of existing data, hypothesis, survey research, scale.

Analysis of existing data and literature: Analysis of existing data includes content analysis, analysis of existing statistics and historical-comparative analysis. What we mainly used was analysis of existing statistics. It involves using the data collected by government and other official agencies to provide the main data for a social scientific study. We searched for some data on internet usage, social media usage, and other aspects to reflect the current level of popularity of online socializing. It sparked our research interest and provided some background support for our investigation, laying a certain foundation. We also referred to some existing literature, drew on the views of other scholars, and expanded our thinking.

Hypothesis: In sociology, a hypothesis is a proposition predetermined by the researcher but not yet proven in practice. It is an indispensable part of designing social survey plans. Based on our survey question, our hypothesis: the degree of network social stratification will weaken people's social desire in real life. Hypothesis points the way for our subsequent investigation, making the logic of the investigation clearer and making our investigation more specific and targeted.

Survey Research: It is the most frequently used methodology in sociology. Survey Research can be designed to measure attitudes, beliefs, values, personality traits and behavior of participants. We mainly used the way of conducting telephone surveys. It is convenient and time-saving. Besides, the respondent has total anonymity which can increase the willingness for respondents to answer questions that are socially sensitive. We have raised some subjective questions regarding individuals' attitudes towards the network social stratification and their relationship with offline social, exploring people's true thoughts and attitudes. Questions of our survey research:

*4. 你是否加入过网络同好群或某圈层
○ 是
○ 否

*5. 加入同好群后，你是否更有兴趣和线下的同好社交
○ 是
○ 否

*6. 你所在的同好群是否会举办线下特定圈层活动，例如：漫展等
○ 会
○ 不会

*7. 你是否会选择参加线下圈层活动
○ 不会去
○ 几乎不会，很少去
○ 条件允许的情况下，有时会去
○ 经常去

*8. 同好群中是否有成功线下面基的例子
○ 有
○ 无

*9. 若你与聊得很好的网友，你是否会选择和ta线下见面?
○ 绝对不会，网上的人都不靠谱
○ 一般不会，防人之心不可无，除非认识时间非常长充分了解
○ 会，在保证自身安全的情况下

We have collected a total of 166 samples, from which we can infer information with certain reference value based on the answers and choices of specific questions, including the characteristics of social stratification in the online circle, the reasons or motivations for the emergence of social stratification in the online circle, and so on.

Scale: A scale is a measurement tool that attempts to determine the quantitative measurement program of subjective and abstract concepts. In sociological surveys, scales are mainly used to measure subjective content such as people's attitudes, opinions and personalities. The scale we used was summated rating scales, which measured the participants' attitudes by adding up their scores on a set of statements after. We referred to the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Unity of California at Los Angels) to design two scales: the degree of network social stratification and personal social desire in real life.

Question of our scales：

In this way, we can more intuitively evaluate an individual's level of network social stratification and their social desires in real life through the calculated scores, thereby helping us study the correlation between the two.

Findings:

Analysis based on age

Among the survey subjects, 4.82% were under the age of 18, 90.96% were between 18 and 25, and 4.22% were over the age of 25. Most of the subjects were undergraduates aged between 18 and 25.

Analysis based on frequency

社交欲望

网络圈层化程度
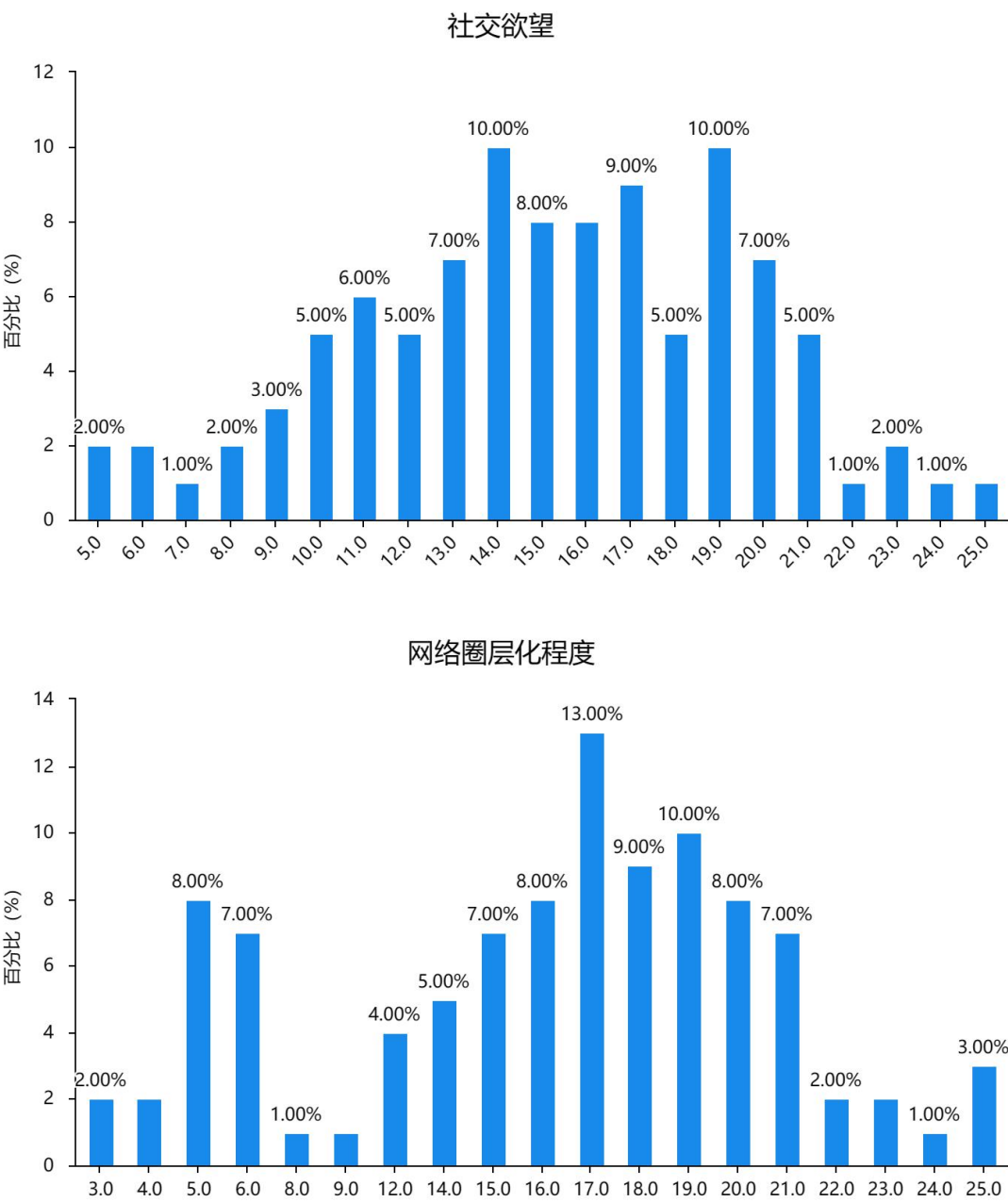
In the statistical data, the score between 15 to 20 accounts for the largest proportion. The sample

data is concentrated in 15 to 20. In extreme cases, such as complete negation or less hierarchical network dependency, the overall data is normally distributed.

Analysis based on scatter plot

Scatter plot is a statistical chart, a data visualization tool used to show the relationship between two variables. It shows the degree of correlation between variables by plotting data points on a coordinate plane.

Using scatter plots has the following advantages:

A scatter plot can tell us how two variables change between each other. If the data point is skewed to the upper right, it means that when one variable increases, the other variable also increases. If the data points are tilted to the lower right, it means that when one variable increases, the other variable decreases.

A scatter plot can show the correlation between two variables. If the data points are clustered in a straight line or have a distinct shape on the graph, then the two variables are likely to have a strong correlation. If the data points are scattered across the graph with no obvious shape or trend, then the two variables may not have a clear correlation.

Scatter plots can help us spot outliers in the data. Outliers are values that are significantly different from other data points and may result from measurement errors or special circumstances. By looking at the scatter plot, we can see if there are some points that are far away from other points, which may be outliers.

Correlation coefficient is a statistic that measures the degree of linear correlation between two variables. It ranges from -1 to 1, where -1 means completely negative correlation, 0 means no correlation, and 1 means completely positive correlation. Correlation coefficients can help researchers understand the relationship between two variables and thus better understand data and phenomena.

网络圈层化程度和社交欲望散点图
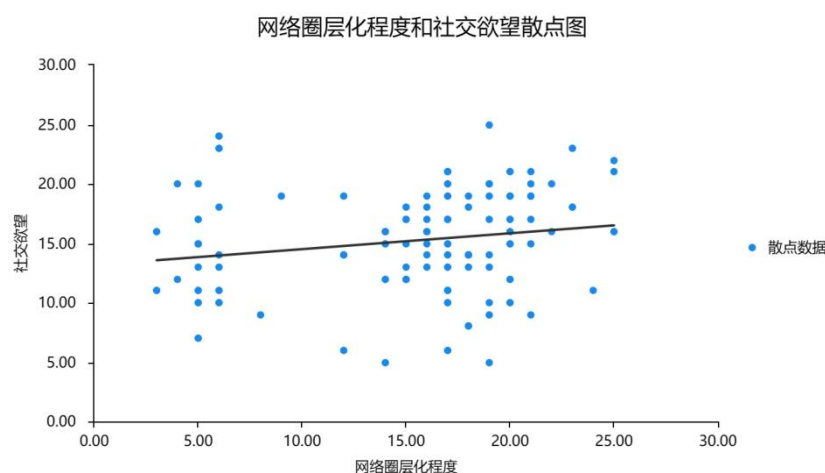
From the scatter plot, it is not difficult to see that the overall has a weak trend, indicating that the degree of network social stratification is related to social desire to a certain extent. Through further calculation, the linear fitting formula for scatter data is: social desire = 13.171 + 0.134* degree of network stratification, and the R-square value is 0.032, which shows that there is a weak linear correlation between them.

Through the analysis of the above data, we draw the conclusion that "the degree of network social stratification promotes the development of social desire to a certain extent", which is somewhat different from the conjecture that "network social stratification inhibits the development of social desire" in the current mainstream literature.

In order to further study the relationship between network social stratification and social desire, we first conducted statistics on "Do you think network social stratification has an impact on your offline social interaction?" 48.19% of the survey respondents believed that "the two do not interfere with each other", and 42.77% of the survey respondents believed that "network social stratification helps people to a better offline social interaction". Only 9.04% of the respondents believed that "network stratification will weaken social desire in real life", which indicates the view that network social stratification inhibits social desire has changed in today's environment.

The reasons for this change will be analyzed in the following sections.

Discussion:

1. The respondents were mostly college students. Our survey was conducted for the whole society, but due to the limited transmission path, it did not achieve the expected large-scale effect. In this survey, most of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25, and most of them were school students.

第2题　年龄　[单选题]

选项	小计	比例	
18以下	8		4.82%
18-25	151		90.96%
25以上	7		4.22%
本题有效填写人次	166		

2. The internet has been developing for a long time and is becoming more and more mature. By December 2022, the number of Internet users in China will reach 1.067 billion, an increase of 35.49 million over December 2021, and the Internet penetration rate will reach 75.6 percent, 2.6 percentage points higher than in December 2021.
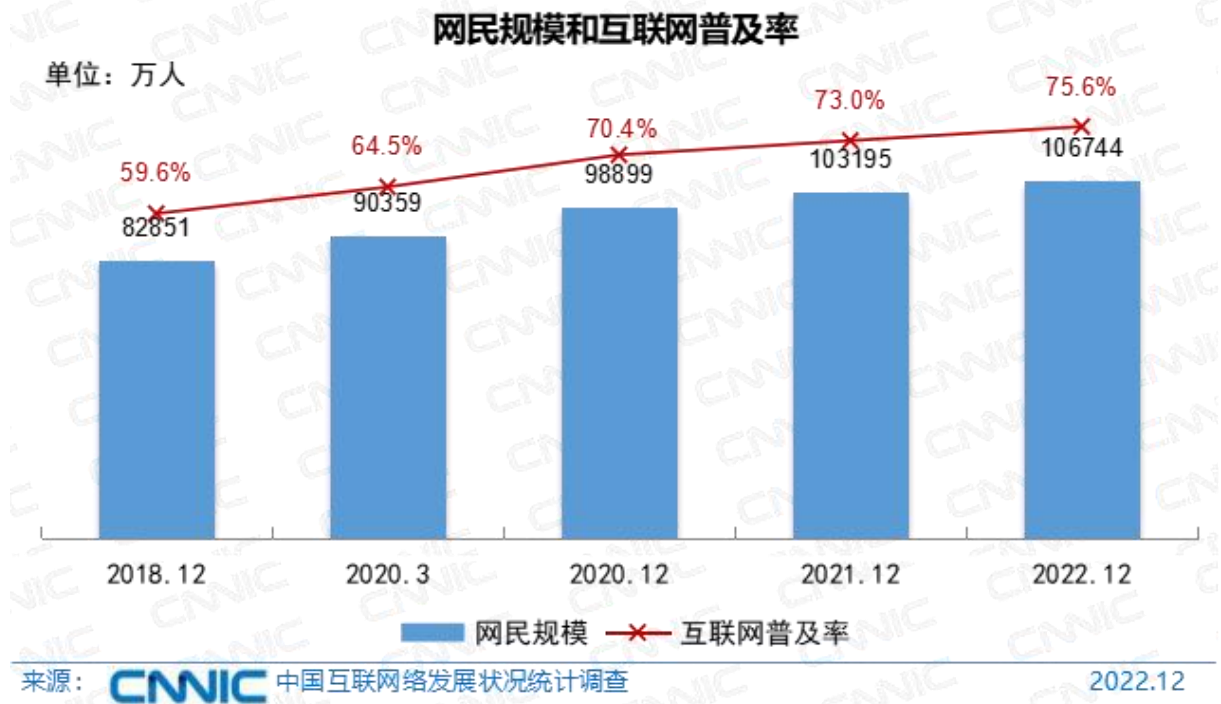

At present, China's Internet is in a stage of rapid development, the technical level is constantly improving, the social network is developing rapidly and becoming more mature, the scale of social netizens is gradually expanding. More and more people use the Internet as a medium for social activities, which also provides the social background for the emergence of network social-layer.

3. To a certain extent, the network social stratification strengthens the individual's self-identity and sense of belonging. In the interpersonal communication and information circulation of the Internet, the individual's self-identity and sense of belonging are the connotation expression and representation characteristics of the network social stratification.

In order to further study the connection of network social stratification and self-identity, we first made statistics on the question that "what do you think of the main reason for the stratification of network social is".We can see that 50.60% of the respondents chose "seek self-identity", 57.23% of the respondents chose "obtain their own spiritual and emotional satisfaction",which shows that to some extent, the network social stratification enhances the personal identity.
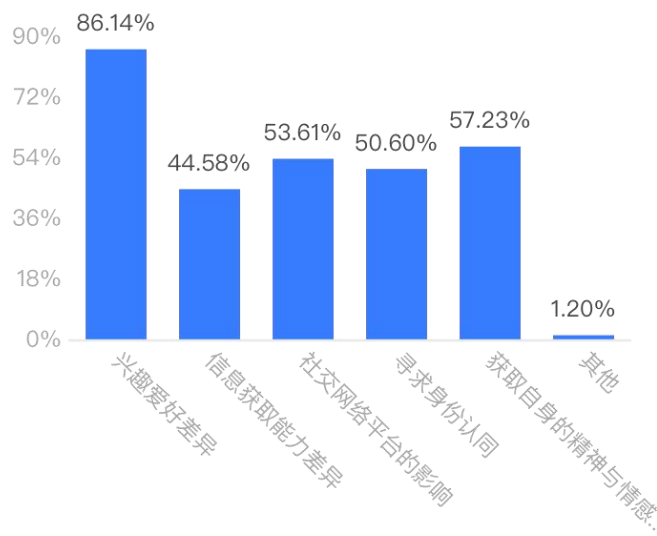
Network circle group internal pays more attention to the "commonality" between members, emphasizes the homogeneity of circle members in one aspect or some aspects, such as common feelings, common interests and goals, etc., so that people's hobbies, values, ways of thinking are similar, more likely to resonate in communication and get emotional satisfaction. Each circle group has its own certain entry threshold, so that each circle group has certain screening and filtering functions for its members. The members of the group are active in the discussion within the group, and can feel that they already belong to a certain group, so as to gain a sense of participation, belonging and being needed. Network socializing enables people to selectively present their self-image, get the self-identity, strengthen the confidence in socializing, and then promote the growth of people's social desire in real life, and carry out social communication with a more confident and open mind.

4. Social stratification not only exists in the network, but also exists in the real life. The network social-layer breaks the social-layer in the real society, that is, the limitation of blood, geography and business relationship, constructs a new pattern of interpersonal interaction in network socializing. Before the popularity of network socializing, people's ways of making friends are more dependent on the real environment they live in, and the gap between social status and economic strength is not obvious, But it's difficult to contact people from different classes and regions. For example, the neighborhoods in the school district houses are often the same school students and their parents, if they want to meet peers in other social status in the community, it will be very difficult. However, network social stratification tends to bring people together through a common attribute. People can get to know people who share the same interests with them, regardless of age, region, status, etc. Therefore, the network social-layer and the real-life social-layer are not independent individuals, there is a certain interaction between them. To some extent, the network social stratification can expand the scope of making friends.

5. Network social stratification and offline socializing complement each other and promote each other.

Network social-layer can serve as the foundation of real-life socializing. After joining a group, individuals can learn more about the attribute in the group. The communication among individuals in the circle becomes frequent, and people are likely to have social desire for those who share the same hobby in the real life, thus promoting real-life socializing. At the same time, some offline activities will be held in the group online. In our questionnaire, we conducted statistics on the question "whether your group will hold offline activities in the specific circle". 66.67% of the respondents chose "yes" and 33.33% chose "no", which indicates that the phenomenon of holding offline activities is relatively common in the network social-layer.

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第6题　你所在的同好群是否会举办线下特定圈层活动，例如：漫展等　[单选题]

选项	小计	比例	
会	76		66.67%
不会	38		33.33%
本题有效填写人次	114		

As for the question of "Will you choose to participate in offline activities", 51.57% of the respondents chose "sometimes if conditions permit" and 5.26% chose "often". It can be seen that more than half of the respondents are willing to participate in those offline activities.

第7题　你是否会选择参加线下圈层活动　[单选题]

选项	小计	比例	
不会去	19		16.67%
几乎不会，很少去	30		26.32%
条件允许的情况下，有时会去	59		51.75%
经常去	6		5.26%
本题有效填写人次	114		

Therefore, the network circle may enhance people's desire to participate in offline socializing to a

certain extent.

Real-life socializing can serve as the premise and purpose of the network social-layer. Sometimes people join online circles to actually help them socialize with others in real life. For example, when we have classmates who are close to us in school, we often set up online chat group. Network socializing is convenient and fast. When people cannot meet each other offline due to some necessary conditions, network social-layer can help people to have communication. In our questionnaire, for the question of "What motivates you to join this group", more than half of the respondents chose "socializing (communicating with classmates and friends)", indicating that a large part of people have online social-layer to help them make friends offline. This also proves that network social-layer is sometimes based on real-life socializing.

Disadvantages:

However, there are also some problems with the network social stratification. For example, the stratification can easily lead to the "information cocoon" effect. In our survey questionnaire, in response to the question "What do you think the impact of stratification on individuals and society is?", up to 77.11% of survey respondents chose "It may lead to the information cocoon effect, limiting the openness of vision and thinking."

Q18.你认为网络圈层化存在哪些问题?
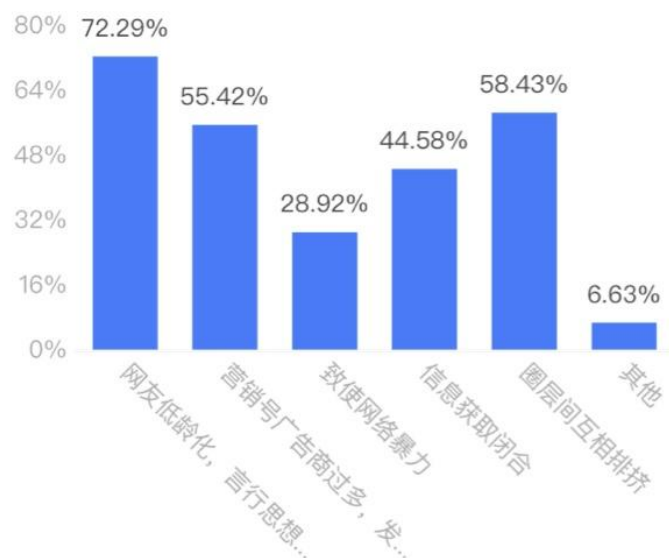
This indicates that network social users within the same circle receive information with centralized, singular, and homogeneous characteristics, and members within the same circle often have similar interests, cultural values, and orientations. Therefore, the diversity of cultural environment that people need is destroyed, and the direct result is that "circle" become "rampart",

becoming information barriers.

Conclusion:

The network social-layer and the real life social-layer complement each other, they are products of different periods in the development of society and times, they are not independent of each other. On the one hand, real life affects the choice and investment degree of individual network hierarchy; On the other hand, the expansion and spread of the network social-layer has a certain impact on individual psychology and behavior. Within the network social-layer, individuals in the network social-layer carry out communication with a more open and freer mind, which has an impact on the self-realization and self-identity of social individuals. To some extent, the network social-layer can promote the development of social desire in real life.

Indeed, our research is still immature. For example, the research object is too single (mostly undergraduates), the sample size is not enough, and the ability of researchers is limited.

In the process of scale design, we chose correlation rather than causation among study variables because there are many uncontrollable factors in sociological investigation and it is difficult to ensure the accuracy of research results.

The development process of things is a spiraling upward process, which always goes through a process from small to large, from imperfect to relatively perfect. The development of the Internet was not accepted by people at the beginning, but now it has gradually become a new social way and is accepted by the public. The emergence of new things is often accompanied by questioning, and the process is often tortuous. We should dialectically deal with the problems brought by network social stratification, and correctly guide its development with a positive attitude.

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