

# The Influence of Short Video Usage and Marital Expectations among Chinese Women: A Systematic Literature Review

Jin Yu, Sharifah Sofiah Syed Zainudin\* Farhana Muslim Mohd Jalis

<sup>1</sup>Department of Communication, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia  
Email: gs69379@student.upm.edu.my, sharifahsofiah@upm.edu.my, fafahana@upm.edu.my

**DOI Link:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v16-i5/28254>

**Published Date:** 14 May 2026

## Abstract

With the rapid development of digital media, short videos have become an important platform for emotional expression, gradually influencing users' marital attitudes. In recent years, phenomena of 'fear of marriage', 'late marriage', and 'non-marriage' have frequently appeared on short video platforms, gradually attracting public attention. Against this background, this study explores the influence of short videos on Chinese women's marital expectations. This paper employs a systematic literature review methodology to examine research on the relationship between short videos and attitudes towards marriage. Studies published between 2018 and 2025 were systematically screened and analysed. A total of 37 studies, including 30 English-language and 7 Chinese-language publications, were included in the review. The findings suggest that short videos influence marital attitudes through content exposure, cognitive processing, emotional responses, and relationship evaluations. On the one hand, negative marital narratives in short videos may heighten women's concerns regarding the risks associated with marriage. On the other hand, idealised romantic content may reinforce expectations of marriage and intimate relationships. However, existing research pays limited attention to generational differences. Overall, this review provides a systematic understanding of how short videos shape women's marital expectations and offers directions for future research.

**Keywords:** Short Videos, Marital Expectations, Chinese Women, Generational Differences, Systematic Literature Review

## Introduction

In recent years, social media has become an important force in global digital communication, significantly influencing interpersonal interaction, information consumption, and emotional expression (Bavel et al., 2024; Yin, 2024). The format of social

media content has also gradually shifted from the initial text and images, and long-form videos, to a focus on short videos (Chen et al., 2024). Compared with traditional media, short videos are characterised by shorter duration, faster viewing pace, and high interactivity, which increase users' frequency of information exposure and strengthen audience engagement (Li & An, 2025). In China, the popularity of short-video platforms has continued to expand rapidly. According to the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, 2026), the number of short-video users reached approximately 1.1 billion, accounting for 95.4% of all internet users. As one of the most widely used forms of online media, short videos have become important channels for information acquisition, social interaction, and entertainment consumption (Chen et al., 2023). Platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, Bilibili, and WeChat Video have together created a new media environment that increasingly shapes users' daily communication patterns and social perceptions (Xu et al., 2026). Beyond entertainment, short videos have evolved into important spaces for emotional expression, affective communication, and participatory social interaction (Ye & Huang, 2022; Cheng et al., 2023). Due to their powerful algorithmic recommendations and the repeated exposure to similar content, short videos have changed the way people access information and entertainment, and are gradually becoming influential channels that shape users' values, emotions, and attitudes (Li, 2023).

In recent years, attitudes towards marriage in China have been changing. Phenomena such as "fear of marriage", "late marriage", and "non-marriage" have increasingly attracted attention (Putri, 2025). At the same time, rising divorce rates further reflect changing perceptions of marriage and intimate relationships in contemporary society (Ottakkam Thodukayil et al., 2025). This trend is particularly pronounced among young women, whose attitudes towards marriage are increasingly influenced by social, economic, and media-related factors (Liu & Liu, 2024). As marital attitudes are closely related to social stability, family development, and demographic trends, understanding the factors that influence them has become an important social issue (Ma, 2025). In this context, social media has increasingly played an important role in shaping contemporary women's perceptions of marriage and intimate relationships (Jabali et al., 2024). Understanding these influences may provide useful insights for future research on women, family relationships, and digital media. It also serves as an influential channel for the dissemination of marital values and the guidance of young people's marital choices (Karim, 2024). In particular, Douyin short videos often promote more independent and equal views of marriage, encouraging female users to engage more actively with marriage and gender-related issues (Xu et al., 2025). Emotional content may further influence women's marital expectations by increasing their emphasis on marital quality and emotional satisfaction (Narayan & Anaz, 2021). Against this backdrop, scholars have increasingly examined the factors shaping marital expectations, with social media emerging as an important influence (Xie, 2024; Cherukut et al., 2025). With the widespread use of mobile internet, short videos have become deeply embedded in everyday life and are gradually influencing perceptions of intimate relationships and marriage (Cherukut et al., 2025).

Unlike traditional media, short videos repeatedly expose users to content with similar themes, reinforcing certain cognitive and emotional tendencies (Yin, 2024). For example, short videos focusing on divorce experiences or anxiety about marriage often use emotionally driven stories to create emotional resonance among viewers (Cheng et al., 2023; Yin, 2024).

Through repeated exposure to such content, individuals may gradually strengthen negative perceptions of marriage (Liu, 2023). Consequently, short videos have become increasingly influential in shaping emotional attitudes towards marriage and intimate relationships (Cherukut et al., 2025; Cao, 2025). Therefore, examining the relationship between short-video use and marital expectations is important for understanding how digital media may shape individuals' perceptions of intimate relationships and social values.

However, existing studies on short-video platforms and their social influence still have several limitations. Many studies focus primarily on single dimensions, such as media use behaviour, psychological effects, or content characteristics, while lacking a more integrated analysis of how these factors interact (Molem et al., 2024; Yin, 2024). In terms of research subjects, current studies mainly focus on university students, with relatively limited discussion specifically centred on women (Liu, 2023; Putri, 2025). Furthermore, previous research has largely examined marital attitudes or marital quality, while paying less attention to the more foundational concept of marital expectations (Keldal & Kılıç, 2021; Rasheed et al., 2021). Therefore, there remains a need for a more comprehensive understanding of how short videos may influence women's marital expectations within the contemporary digital media environment.

Marital expectations generally refer to individuals' expectations regarding roles, behaviours, and outcomes within intimate relationships (Sabatelli, 1984; Dunn, 1960). These expectations influence individuals' perceptions and decisions regarding marriage and intimate relationships (Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). Therefore, marital expectations are considered an important factor influencing individuals' perceptions of intimate relationships and marriage.

In addition, although existing studies have acknowledged individual differences in media engagement, limited research has examined how attitudes towards marriage may vary across different age groups in the context of short video use (Duan et al., 2023). Some studies suggest that generational differences may influence individuals' patterns of information access and value judgments. However, this issue remains underexplored in short video research. Consequently, this study aims to provide a more systematic understanding of the relationship between Chinese women's use of short videos and their marital expectations. The findings may also provide useful references for future research on social media, women, and marriage-related issues.

### **Objective**

Although previous studies have explored short video usage and its social impacts from multiple perspectives, existing findings remain relatively fragmented and lack systematic integration. As a result, it is difficult to fully understand how short video use influences individuals' perceptions and expectations of marriage based solely on single studies. Therefore, this study aims to systematically review and integrate existing research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between short videos and Chinese women's marital expectations.

Specifically, this study focuses on three aspects. First, it reviews existing research on the influence of short videos on marital attitudes, intimate relationships, marital quality, and

related psychological mechanisms. Second, it examines how short video exposure may shape women's marital expectations through cognitive and emotional processes. Finally, addressing the relatively lacking perspective on group differences in existing research, the study offers a supplementary discussion on potential variations among women of different age groups in terms of media usage, emotional responses, and perceptions of marriage, with a view to guiding future research. The findings may also provide useful references for future research on digital media, women's studies, interpersonal relationships, and marital values.

## **Methods**

### *Search Strategy*

This study employs a systematic review methodology to comprehensively collate and analyse existing research on the relationship between short video usage and Chinese women's marital expectations. The systematic review approach was chosen because current research on short videos, women's marriage, and romantic relationships is relatively fragmented, with a lack of systematic integration between research topics and conclusions. It is therefore necessary to systematically review existing research in order to gain a better understanding of future research trends.

In the research process, this paper has generally followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to enhance the transparency and traceability of the literature search and selection process (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA particularly emphasises maintaining transparency and logical consistency in the literature search, screening, and inclusion processes, which provides valuable guidance for reviewing existing research. Furthermore, given that this study spans multiple interdisciplinary fields, including communication studies, sociology, and gender studies. Meanwhile, during the literature screening process, in addition to considering the study design itself, greater emphasis was placed on the relevance of the research content to the research questions, to ensure that the included literature would effectively support the future analysis.

This approach has enabled us to enhance the credibility of the research process to a certain extent by drawing upon the PRISMA framework, while avoiding the limitations associated with an overly rigid adherence to fixed procedures, thereby ensuring that the literature review is better aligned with the practical requirements of this study.

### **Study Screening**

Firstly, all studies included in the review must contain original data to ensure that the findings are valuable for review and analysis. Secondly, all literature must have been published between 2018 and 2026, and the research must relate to short videos and attitudes towards marriage. Given the rapid growth in the number of short video users in China since 2018 and the fact that short videos have gradually become an important medium of communication, this study has set 2018 as the starting point for its literature search (China Netcasting Services Association, 2019).

Table 1  
The Search Strategy

Database	Search string
Scopus	( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "short video" OR "TikTok" OR "Douyin" OR "social media" ) )AND ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "marriage" OR "dating" OR "romantic relationship" OR "intimate relationship" ) ) AND ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( women OR female ) ) AND PUBYEAR > 2017 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "re" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) ) AND ( EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "MEDI" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "MULT" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "NURS" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "PHAR" ) OR EXCLUDE ( SUBJAREA , "BIOC" ) )
Web of Science	Results for (TS= ("short video" OR "TikTok" OR "Douyin" OR "social media")) AND TS= ("marriage" OR "dating" OR "romantic relationship" OR "intimate relationship") AND TS= (women OR female) and Article or Review Article (Document Types) and English (Languages)
CNKI	(Topic = ("short video" OR "Douyin" OR "TikTok" OR "social media") AND Topic = ("marriage" OR "romantic relationship" OR "dating") AND Topic = (women)) AND (Document Type = Journal Article) AND (Language = Chinese) AND (Timespan = 2018–2025)

As shown in Table 1. For literature retrieval, this study mainly conducted searches using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). These databases offer extensive coverage in the relevant fields and provide a relatively comprehensive reflection of research developments both nationally and internationally. The search terms were centred on three key areas: short video or social media terms (such as 'short video', 'TikTok', and 'Douyin'); marriage concepts (such as 'marital expectations', 'marriage view', and 'marriage attitudes'); and qualifiers relating to the research subjects (such as 'women' and 'female'). During the actual search process, different combinations of keywords were employed to maximise the scope of the search whilst simultaneously filtering the results appropriately to avoid literature with weak relevance to the research topic.

During the literature screening process, the search results were first organised, duplicates were removed, and an initial assessment of the research topics was made based on the titles and abstracts. Studies showing a clear association with short video usage, attitudes towards marriage, and the female demographic were retained, while those significantly diverging from the research topic were excluded from further analysis. On this basis, the full texts were then read in greater detail to make a more thorough assessment of the research content, such as whether it addressed marriage-related constructs, whether it illustrated the context of short video or social media usage, and whether the research subjects were relevant to the female demographic.

The literature search was completed in February 2026, while the publication years of the included studies ranged from 2018 to 2025.

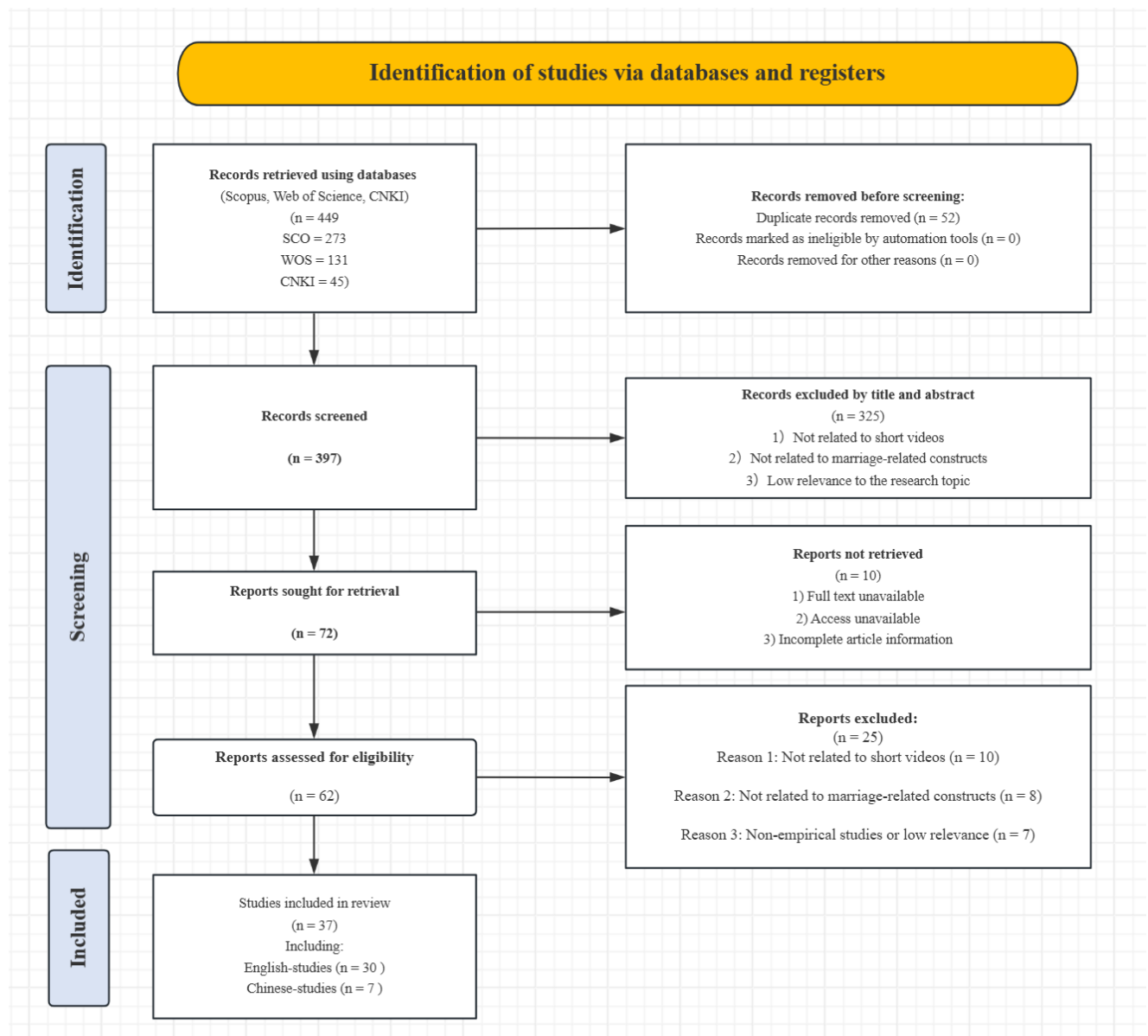


Figure1. PRISMA flowchart of literature screening and selection

Note: PRISMA=Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Based on the database search results (see Figure 1), a total of 449 relevant articles were initially identified from the Scopus, Web of Science, and CNKI databases. After removing 52 duplicate records, 397 articles remained for title and abstract screening. During the initial screening stage, 325 studies were excluded because they were not related to short videos, marriage-related constructs, or the research topic, leaving 72 articles for full-text retrieval. Subsequently, 10 articles were excluded due to unavailable full texts or incomplete article information, resulting in 62 articles being assessed for eligibility. During the eligibility review stage, a further 25 studies were excluded because they lacked sufficient relevance to the research topic or did not contain empirical research content. Finally, 37 studies were included in the qualitative synthesis, comprising 30 English-language studies and 7 Chinese-language studies.

## Results

As shown in Table 2, among the 30 English-language articles and 7 Chinese-language studies published between 2019 and 2025, the literature can be broadly categorized into several research themes. Many studies focus on the impact of short videos on marital attitudes (Liu, 2023; Xie, 2024; Abubakar et al., 2020; Han et al., 2024; Nabilah et al., 2024; Sari & Musyafa'ah, 2025; Fallahchai et al., 2019), as well as on intimacy and marital quality (Deng et al., 2024; Arikewuwo et al., 2020; Rasheed et al., 2020; Rosli et al., 2025; Sani'atin & Susan, 2025; Zhou et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020).

Table 2

### *Classification of the Reviewed Literature*

Classification dimensions	Study
The Impact of Short Videos on Marriage Perspectives	Liu (2023), Xie (2024), Abubakar et al. (2020), Han et al. (2024), Nabilah et al. (2024), Sari & Musyafa'ah (2025), Fallahchai et al. (2019), Liu & Liu (2024), Mei & Hu (2023)
The Impact of Intimacy and Marital Quality	Deng et al. (2024), Arikewuwo et al. (2020), Rasheed et al. (2020), Rosli et al. (2025), Sani'atin & Susan (2025), Zhou et al. (2023), Wang et al. (2020), Zhao et al. (2024).
Psychological mechanisms	Ding et al. (2024), Cheng et al. (2023), Zhang et al. (2024), Li & Wang (2024), Molem et al. (2024).
Emotional Communication and Content Mechanisms	Ye & Huang (2023), Jerin et al. (2024), Duan et al. (2023), Hao (2023), Xu & Shen (2021).
Media usage behaviour	Langlais et al. (2024), Lei et al. (2024), Keldal & Kılıç (2021), Ma et al. (2023), Ge (2022).
Media Content, Gender, and Values	Sihombing & Tambunan (2023), Hou (2022), Cao (2025), Xu (2020).
Cultural background	Zhong (2022), Li et al. (2021), Fallahchai et al. (2019), Zhou & Zhao (2024), Xu et al. (2024)

Several studies examine psychological mechanisms (Ding et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024; Li & Wang, 2024; Molem et al., 2024), emotional communication and content mechanisms (Ye & Huang, 2023; Jerin et al., 2024; Duan et al., 2023), media usage behavior (Langlais et al., 2024; Lei et al., 2024; Keldal & Kılıç, 2021), media content, gender and values (Sihombing & Tambunan, 2023; Hou, 2022; Cao, 2025), as well as cultural background factors (Zhong, 2022; Li et al., 2021; Fallahchai et al., 2019; Zhou & Zhao, 2024).

Firstly, some studies focus primarily on the direct impact of short videos or related media content on marital attitudes. For example, Liu (2023) and Xie (2024) examined the influence of Douyin short videos on the attitudes towards marriage and romance among female university students in China. Abubakar et al. (2020) and Han et al. (2024), on the other hand, analysed how media content shapes individuals' marital expectations and perceptions of relationships; Nabilah et al. (2024) and Sari & Musyafa'ah (2025) further pointed out that short video content, exemplified by the notion that 'marriage is scary', reinforces young

people's perception of the risks associated with marriage. Furthermore, Fallahchai et al. (2019) provided additional context for the changing marital attitudes from a values perspective. Such studies constitute a significant component of the current literature. In summary, research in this field has found that short videos have become a significant factor influencing dating and marriage, although different studies have reached varying conclusions regarding their impact.

Secondly, other studies examine the issue from the perspective of marital quality and intimate relationships. For example, Deng et al. (2024) found that short video addiction is significantly related to marital satisfaction. Arikewuyo et al. (2020) noted that the use of multi-platform social media may both foster relationship interaction and lead to conflict and mistrust. Zhou et al. (2023) examined the pathways through which new media usage influences individual psychological states via marital quality; Rosli et al. (2025) and Sani'atin & Susan (2025) further emphasised the mechanisms by which social media contributes to marital conflict. In addition, Wang et al. (2020) and Rasheed et al. (2020) provided supplementary analyses of marital quality issues from psychological and emotional perspectives. Overall, this research indicates that short videos not only influence individual cognition but also have a profound impact on marital quality by reshaping interactive patterns and emotional engagement, particularly as their influence can extend into real-life intimate interactions.

Thirdly, some studies focus on the pathways through which psychological mechanisms influence media effects. For example, Ding et al. (2024) analysed the relationship between short video usage and individual psychological states using the I-PACE model; Cheng et al. (2023) and Li and Wang (2024) explored the psychological impacts of short videos from the perspective of negative emotions and usage behaviour. Zhang et al. (2024) and Molem et al. (2024) further highlighted that emotional responses and cognitive processing play a crucial role in the media influence process, reflecting the 'emotion–cognition–behaviour' chain of effects.

Fourthly, some studies explain the impact of short videos from the perspective of emotional spread and content mechanisms. For instance, Ye & Huang (2023) proposed the concept of 'affective publics', highlighting how short-video platforms construct spaces for public discussion through emotional interaction. Jerin et al. (2024) and Duan et al. (2023) pointed out from a content analysis perspective that emotional expression and narrative styles play a significant role in enhancing user engagement and value identification.

In addition, there are studies in other areas. For example, Langlais et al. (2024) and Lei et al. (2024) examined how short video usage behaviour manifests within intimate relationships. Keldal & Kılıç (2021) analysed the relationship between social media usage and attitudes towards marriage. Sihombing & Tambunan (2023), Hou (2022), and Cao (2025) examined the role of short video content in shaping marital and family values from the perspectives of gender roles and sociocultural contexts. Meanwhile, Zhong (2022) and Li et al. (2021) provided a macro-level analysis of the social context underpinning shifts in marital attitudes; Zhou and Zhao (2024) further extended the research to fertility expectations, demonstrating that the influence of short videos has extended to broader areas of life decisions.

It should be noted that, as some studies cover multiple research dimensions, the above classification is primarily based on their research focus. Consequently, there may be some crossover between the different categories.

## Discussion

This study reviews the relationship between short videos, views on marriage, intimate relationships, and related psychological mechanisms, drawing on 30 core English-language publications and 7 Chinese studies. Overall, the impact of short videos on views of marriage is not one-dimensional. As platforms continue to push relationship-related content, users gradually form certain understandings and judgements regarding marriage and intimate relationships through prolonged viewing, interaction, and emotional engagement (Liu, 2023; Xie, 2024; Ding et al., 2024; Molem et al., 2024). However, this influence does not manifest exclusively as negative outcomes. On the one hand, certain short-form video content continually highlights marital conflicts, emotional pressures, and practical risks, causing some women to harbour greater reservations about marriage. On the other hand, the continued dissemination of a vast amount of content idealising intimate relationships may also further heighten individuals' expectations regarding marital happiness and emotional companionship. Following long-term exposure to such content, individuals' understanding of marriage, their expectations, and their judgments regarding relationships may gradually change in unconscious ways.

### *The influence of short videos on the formation of attitudes towards marriage*

Based on the studies included, short videos and social media do indeed exert a certain influence on individuals' perceptions of marriage. This influence is not typically formed directly in the short term, but rather tends to develop gradually through long-term exposure to such content. Existing research has found that different types of emotional content can influence users' perceptions of marital relationships to various degrees. For example, long-term exposure to certain marriage reality TV programmes reinforces audiences' expectations of the 'ideal marriage' portrayed by the couples in these short videos, and further shapes their attitudes and judgements regarding marital relationships (Han et al., 2024). Within the context of Chinese social media, emotional short videos on Douyin influence Chinese female university students' criteria for selecting a partner, their views on marital faithfulness, their level of trust in intimate relationships, and their understanding of emotional interaction (Liu 2023). Furthermore, the sharing of experiences, expression of viewpoints, and interactive discussions on short video platforms also shape university students' attitudes towards marriage and romance (Xie 2024).

At the same time, negative marriage narratives are gradually attracting attention. For instance, on the TikTok platform, content related to "marriage is scary" frequently focuses on marital conflict, financial pressure, loss of freedom, and emotional instability. As such content continues to circulate, it may further intensify young people's focus on the risks associated with marriage (Sari & Musyafa'ah, 2025; Nabilah et al., 2024). Marital expectations are not entirely positive in themselves, as excessively high or unrealistic expectations may be associated with relationship conflict, emotional detachment, and marital disappointment (Fallahchai et al., 2019; Rasheed et al., 2020). Consequently, when analysing the relationship between short videos and marital expectations, it is necessary to simultaneously consider the underlying issues behind idealised marital expectations.

Existing research suggests that the impact of short videos often originates not from any single specific viewpoint, but rather through long-term, continuous, and repetitive exposure and engagement. Users often develop a sense of immersion in the video content through the plotlines, character relationships, emotional expressions, and everyday life situations depicted in short videos. For example, videos dealing with marital conflicts may lead viewers to pay greater attention to the pressures of real-life marriages, while idealised depictions of intimate relationships may foster a greater longing for and expectation of future married life (Ye & Huang, 2023; Jerin et al., 2024).

At the same time, users interpret this content by drawing on their own life experiences while watching short videos. Platform algorithms also continuously recommend similar content to users, further strengthening certain emotional experiences and perceptions of relationships through repeated exposure (Molem et al., 2024). This sustained exposure to content may gradually influence users' understanding of marriage and intimate relationships. Some users may link the storylines in videos to their own lives, considering the marital issues they might face. Others may develop higher expectations of future partners and marital relationships due to long-term exposure to idealised content (Zhang et al., 2024; Molem et al., 2024). Some women may place greater emphasis on equality, emotional support, and personal space within marriage.

Furthermore, the impact of short video and social media use extends beyond the realm of marital imagination and may further influence real-life intimate interactions. For instance, issues such as relationship comparison, insecurity, and reduced communication may gradually emerge through prolonged media use (Arikewuyo et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2023). In this process, factors such as emotional responses, social comparison, and cognitive judgements all play a role (Ding et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2023).

Overall, the influence of short videos on views of marriage appears to be a gradual process rather than a simple, direct effect. Compared to traditional film and television content, short videos are updated more frequently, spread more rapidly, and are more likely to be viewed repeatedly through platform recommendations. Consequently, long-term exposure to such content may gradually shape individuals' understanding of and expectations regarding marriage and intimate relationships.

*Previous research has tended to focus on results rather than processes*

Current studies suggest that many research projects focus mainly on the results. That is to say, they often tell us whether short videos have an impact on attitudes towards marriage, but rarely go on to explain how this impact occurs.

For example, some studies have noted that following frequent exposure to certain types of short video content, individuals exhibit changes in their attitudes towards marriage or their partner selection standards (Liu, 2023; Nabilah et al., 2024). Although these studies offer valuable perspectives for understanding the relationship between short videos and attitudes towards marriage, many remain largely descriptive in nature. For example, they discuss the rise in 'marriage anxiety', heightened perceptions of the risks associated with marriage, or changing views on mate selection, but rarely go on to explain how these changes gradually emerge through sustained exposure to short video content.

At the same time, within the Chinese social context, issues surrounding marriage are themselves closely linked to factors such as gender roles, family responsibilities and social expectations (Zhang, 2024; Smith, 2025). Although an increasing number of women in modern society are beginning to emphasise personal development and self-fulfilment, traditional notions of marriage still hold expectations regarding women's roles within the family (Zhang & Wang, 2021; He et al., 2018). For instance, pressures relating to childcare responsibilities and household caregiving (Finch & Groves, 2022). Against this backdrop, the frequent appearance of marital conflicts, emotional pressures, or family disputes in short videos may further intensify some women's focus on the risks of marriage and the pressures of intimate relationships. This phenomenon is also linked to the rise in recent years of social trends such as 'marriage anxiety' and 'late marriage' (Gui, 2023; Mohd et al., 2020).

In contrast, some studies have begun to examine factors such as emotional responses and cognitive processing to elucidate how individuals gradually form specific views on marriage following exposure to short video content (Ding et al., 2024; Li & Wang, 2024). However, generally speaking, such research remains relatively limited at present, and no unified analytical framework has yet emerged across studies regarding the explanatory pathways involved.

Therefore, future research that focuses further on the relationships between different factors—particularly the interactive processes between media content, emotional responses, and socio-cultural contexts—may provide a deeper understanding of how short videos influence women's perceptions and expectations regarding marriage.

#### *Differing Impacts of Short Videos on Attitudes Towards Marriage*

Existing research suggests that the influence of short videos on attitudes towards marriage is not a singular phenomenon, but rather tends to manifest in two differing tendencies. On the one hand, a significant amount of short video content focuses on the problems within marriage, such as marital conflict, financial pressures, and emotional infidelity. Such content typically exhibits strong emotional tension and is more likely to resonate with viewers. Following repeated exposure, individuals may become more attuned to the potential risks within marriage, leading them to adopt a more cautious stance to some extent, or even develop a desire to avoid marriage altogether (Sari & Musyafa'ah, 2025; Nabilah et al., 2024).

On the other hand, however, a large number of short videos continually present idealised intimate relationships, such as constant companionship, romantic interactions, or the daily life of a happy marriage. Although this type of content appears more positive, it may also unconsciously raise individuals' expectations of marriage. When there is a gap between real-life experiences and these idealised depictions, it can actually lead to a sense of disappointment (Abubakar et al., 2020; Han et al., 2024).

If we examine these two types of content together, we find that they do not exist in isolation but frequently share the same media environment. Whilst using short videos, users may be reminded of the various risks associated with marriage, while simultaneously becoming more drawn to the prospect of a beautiful, idealised marriage. Over time, these

two messages become intertwined in the individual's perception, causing people to remain wary of marriage on the one hand, whilst harbouring certain expectations of it on the other.

From this perspective, short videos appear to enhance two different marital narratives simultaneously, rather than simply steering viewers in a single direction. It may well be one of the key reasons why some people today both desire and hesitate regarding marriage.

#### *The Role of Emotional Factors in the Influence of Short Videos*

Existing research suggests that emotion plays a significant role in the way short videos influence attitudes towards marriage. Compared to the mere conveyance of information, content with a distinct emotional tone tends to attract users' attention and be remembered more readily, while also being more likely to prompt further reflection. For example, short videos centred on emotional experiences typically use specific situations, interpersonal relationships, and narrative development to evoke empathy in viewers. In such cases, viewers do not merely remain passive consumers of content but become, to some extent, participants in the emotional experience. This emotional immersion may make individuals more receptive to certain views or value orientations expressed within the video (Ye & Huang, 2023).

At the same time, the platform's recommendation algorithms amplify this effect to some extent. Content with pronounced emotional tension is more likely to generate engagement, thereby being continuously pushed to users. Through repeated exposure, the content users encounter may gradually exhibit similar emotional tendencies, which may further influence their understanding of marriage and intimate relationships (Molem et al., 2024).

From this perspective, the influence of short videos stems not only from the content itself but is also closely linked to the emotional experiences it stimulates. Compared to the passive reception of information in traditional media, this process involving emotional engagement tends to leave a stronger impression on memory and judgment, and is more likely to gradually shape an individual's views through long-term engagement.

#### **Limitations and Future Research**

Based on the current literature, although relevant studies have examined the relationship between short videos and attitudes towards marriage from multiple perspectives, there remain some significant limitations. In existing research, some studies still rely primarily on quantitative methods, such as questionnaire surveys, to analyse the relationship between short video usage and individual psychological characteristics. For example, Ding et al. (2024) used a sample of university students to examine the relationship between short video addiction and subjective well-being, social support, personality features, and core self-evaluation. While such studies help to understand the link between short video usage and individual psychological states, as their focus does not lie on marital attitudes themselves, they struggle to directly explain how short videos might influence individuals' marital expectations in the long term.

Certain shortcomings are also evident in the research content. For instance, there remains relatively little discussion regarding platform algorithmic mechanisms and content distribution methods. A systematic explanation is currently lacking regarding how information is selectively accessed and how this selection process further influences

individual cognition (Molem et al., 2024). At the same time, some Chinese studies remain largely confined to the level of phenomenological description, with room for further development in terms of theoretical integration and quantitative analysis. Furthermore, regarding the research subjects, existing studies have largely focused on university students or younger demographics (Abubakar et al., 2020; Keldal & Kılıç, 2021; Liu, 2023; Xie, 2024). Although this group is representative in terms of short video usage, their life stage and marital experience are relatively limited, which may, to some extent, affect the applicability of the research findings.

Based on these considerations, future research could be further developed in several directions. Firstly, in terms of research design, the introduction of longitudinal data or tracking studies could be considered to better observe the process by which marital attitudes change over time. Secondly, experimental methods or platform data analysis could be integrated to enhance the explanatory power of the research from different perspectives. Furthermore, there remains significant scope for research into the role of platform algorithms in information dissemination. Further exploration is needed into how recommendation mechanisms influence the content users encounter, and how this process interacts with individual emotions and cognition. Additionally, extending the research context to include comparisons across different cultural backgrounds would aid in a deeper understanding of how short videos exert their influence.

## **Conclusion**

Through a review of the relevant literature, it can be observed that short videos have gradually become one of the key media influencing individuals' views on marriage. Existing research has explored this issue from various perspectives; however, overall, this influence is not singular but encompasses cognition, emotions, and an understanding of intimate relationships.

Specifically, short videos do indeed influence individuals' views on marriage and intimate relationships to a certain extent (Liu, 2023; Xie, 2024). Content centred on emotional experiences or relationship narratives provides users with a frame of reference for understanding marriage and romantic relationships; however, content focusing on marital conflicts, emotional betrayal, or real-life pressures may also heighten awareness of the risks associated with marriage, thereby generating feelings of uncertainty or even a tendency to avoid such commitments (Nabilah et al., 2024; Sari & Musyafa'ah, 2025).

In contrast, short videos also feature a large amount of idealised relationship portrayals, such as stable intimate relationships or the daily life of an ideal marriage. While such content attracts attention, it may also unconsciously raise individuals' expectations of marriage. When actual experiences differ from these expectations, it can easily lead to a sense of disappointment. Similar romanticised media content has also been found to potentially reinforce unrealistic marital expectations, and thus offers valuable insights into the impact of idealised relationship portrayals in short videos (Abubakar et al., 2020).

With continued use, short videos have gradually become part of individuals' daily interactions and exert an influence on intimate relationships. Existing research indicates that this influence is often not unidirectional. On the one hand, it provides new avenues for

emotional expression, while on the other, sustained exposure may lead to comparisons, overlooking, or even a lack of trust, thereby affecting relationship quality (Deng et al., 2024; Arikewuyo et al., 2020).

It is also evident that recent research has begun to shift its focus away from outcomes alone, gradually turning towards discussions of the underlying processes. Some studies offer explanations from perspectives such as emotional evocation, social comparison, and cognitive processing, suggesting that the impact of short videos is not immediate but is formed gradually through a series of psychological reactions (Ding et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024; Molem et al., 2024).

Furthermore, some studies have provided further clarification of this process from the perspectives of emotional resonance and content presentation. Short-video platforms enhance user engagement through emotional expression and interactive methods, making it easier for individuals to resonate on an emotional level and, on this basis, form an understanding of relevant issues (Ye & Huang, 2023; Jerin et al., 2024).

Overall, the influence of short videos on views of marriage appears to be a gradual process rather than a simple, direct effect. Types of content, individual usage patterns, and the social environment in which users operate all play a role. At the same time, this process is also linked to broader social contexts, such as shifts in marital attitudes and transformations in social structures (Zhong, 2022; Li et al., 2021).

However, based on the existing literature, explanations regarding how this influence develops step by step remain unsatisfactory. Should future research combine data from different time dimensions or employ a variety of analytical methods, it may provide a better understanding of the long-term role of short videos in the development of marital attitudes.

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