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Is “*Doing The Month*” Harmful Or Scientific To Women? Cultural Postpartum Practice and Gender Inequality: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Chinese Digital Journalism

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Abstract

In Chinese society, the synchronic understanding of ‘*Doing The Month*’ as the ‘*scientific and reasonable*’ postnatal recovery is held in parallel with notions of ‘*women vulnerability*’, articulated with discourses of gendered, sexualised body, identity and power, yet its ramifications on physical and psychological health of postnatal women has polarized Chinese social consensus in recent years. The increasingly debate on defining “*Doing The Month*” is either harmful or scientific, that in particular found in Chinese society from the emergence of Digital Journalism coverage. Previously research on “*Doing The Month*” mostly focus on cultural and medical fields and thus very few scholars have explored women’s experience in everyday postnatal life and related public discourses from the intersection of communication and sociology. Using selected three reports’ views as text base, critical discourse analysis was applied in this article to provide an insight into the public discourse on culture, power, identity, and bodily experience of women and the comparison. The text criticises the irrationality of postnatal confinement, as a sign of conformity to gender equality and human rights, but the dominant tone is to endorse the cultural tradition through dissecting its scientific facets. The nature of gendered public discourse about ‘doing the month’ and the demand of gender justice and bodily identity topics in the discourse of digital journalism are studied.

Keywords: Chinese cultural practice, digital journalism, critical discourse analysis, postpartum, gender equality