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Original Paper

The Micro Communication Mechanism and Characteristics of Health Rumors among the Elderly Group——Take WeChat Official Account as an Example

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Abstract

The high-frequency spread of health rumors among the elderly in the WeChat field has become a prominent social problem. In order to better control rumor, it is necessary to clarify its micro dissemination mechanism. The paper relies on the MOA theoretical framework to clarify the motivational factors, opportunity factors, and ability factors of the spread of health rumors among the elderly people, and uses interview methods to study the micro dissemination mechanism of health rumors. Research has found that the spread of health rumors among elderly people mainly follows the path of "getting health rumors → health rumors diffusing within peer groups → health rumors overflowing from the circle of elderly people → family members contained", and forms a "Four Point Dissemination" mechanism that connects peer groups and primary groups, including origin, nodes, fulcrums, and endpoints. From the perspective of communication characteristics, the spread of health rumors has a strong closeness, inter-generational, and situational nature, presenting a double-layer communication structure that intersects within the circle and connects outside the circle, and has a prominent Pareto effect.

Keywords

Elderly Group, Health Rumor, Rumor Spreading Mechanism, Rumor Spreading Characteristics

1. Research Origins and Literature Review

In the era of electronic media, social media has made rumors a "digital wildfire", and the spread of rumors has been greatly enhanced, health rumors are the most prominent. Health rumors are a collective concept that refers to all false or erroneous information, including food, medicine, health preservation, hygiene, medical treatment, and health knowledge, etc. The 2019 Report on the Governance of Internet Rumors pointed out that healthcare, food safety, and social sciences are the three high incidence areas of online rumors. In the field of health rumors, the elderly have become the main target of infringement, playing both the role of "prey" and "setters", becoming the "main force" of health rumors. The proliferation of health rumors can cause cognitive confusion and anxiety among individuals, which in turn affects their sense of happiness and can also cause social anxiety among groups. The 2009 H1N1 virus rumors in Japan caused a widespread crisis of trust among the authorities. During the 2014 Ebola pandemic in Africa, a large number of online rumors sparked public panic and overreaction. Research has shown that health rumors may even undermine public health undertakings. In China, the rumors of health have become a prominent social problem that urgently needs to be faced and dealt with, infringing on the safety of the lives and property of the elderly, exacerbating group panic, and disrupting family and social stability.

To effectively respond to the spread of rumors, anti-rumor actions should be carried out, and a clear understanding of their dissemination mechanism and characteristics is a prerequisite. In early research on the mechanism of rumor transmission, it was often likened to the spread of viruses due to its high similarity with the spread of infectious diseases. Researchers used the SIR model of infectious diseases to study the spread mechanism of rumors, proposed the DK model and MK model, discovered the dynamic mechanism of rumor propagation, clarified the critical value of rumor propagation, and clarified the distribution scale and propagation law of online rumors. Regarding the dissemination mechanism of health rumors, some scholars believe that the same health rumor may have different effects on different people, as individuals are screened and filtered based on their own cognition and experience. Information dissemination media can have an impact on users' search for health information. During this process, the authority of the author and the use of language can affect the credibility of online health information. Authoritative clues, conformity clues, and information source proximity clues all have an impact on the credibility of health information, and there is a significant tripartite interaction effect. In addition, additional information such as images, authentication, and links can have an impact on user trust and sharing of health rumors. Therefore, online rumors have an information mechanism that amplifies health risks, causing ripple effects in risk propagation.

Through the above literature review, it can be found that there are several issues with existing research. Firstly, these achievements are all studies on the spread mechanism of rumors from a macro perspective, lacking a micro research perspective and failing to analyze the micro propagation path and mechanism of rumors; Secondly, the research process ignored the issue of subjective initiative of individuals in rumor

dissemination, and failed to introduce the subjectivity and initiative of individuals in rumor dissemination into the scope of investigation, which is suspected of mechanization. In fact, rumor information processing and rumor dissemination behavior have strong subjectivity and situational nature. Whether to spread rumors, what rumors to spread, to whom to spread rumors, and under what conditions to spread rumors and other practical behaviors are not passive and mechanized processes for individuals. Therefore, this article will focus on the above issues, taking health rumors as the research object, incorporating situational and subjective factors of individual rumors into the scope of investigation, conducting research on the micro dissemination mechanism of health care rumors, and analyzing the dissemination characteristics and strategies of such rumors.

2. Research Design

2.1 Interviewee

This article selected 20 elderly people from five communities in Chongqing as core interviewees, and 37 relatives and friends as derivative interviewees. The selection of core interviewees is based on the following considerations: firstly, the age dimension. The elderly referred to in this article are based on the age classification standards of the United Nations, which define people aged ≥ 60 as elderly people. Among the 20 interviewees, the oldest is 81 years old and the youngest is 60 years old; The second is the educational dimension. Due to the fact that the use of smartphones and WeChat requires a certain level of cultural and media literacy, the educational status of the interviewees was examined and certain requirements were made for their cultural foundation when establishing interviews. Among them, 3 elderly people have a bachelor's degree, 5 have a college degree, 6 have a high school degree, and 6 have a junior high school degree; The third dimension is communication ability. When establishing the interviewee, their communication and thinking abilities were examined to ensure that they were able to express themselves clearly and fluently during the interview process. The establishment of derivative interviewees is to conduct cross validation or side examination of the interview content of elderly people, all of whom have high media literacy.

2.2 Research Methods

Based on the particularity of health rumors, this article will conduct research through interview methods. Interview method is a common method of data collection and a research method that mainly involves face-to-face conversations to understand the psychology and behavior of interviewees. The interview method has freshness, interactivity, and a sense of liveliness, making it a survey method that can directly reach people's hearts. The interview method can not only conduct factual investigations but also collect opinions from interviewees, making it a research method that combines both subjective and objective aspects. Interview methods are generally divided into structured interviews and unstructured interviews. In unstructured interviews, interviewees are able to delve into the core issues in depth and detail, uncover dynamic and specific information, and have strong flexibility. Additionally, interviewees have a greater

degree of freedom and can better utilize it. Non structured interviews are more casual and adaptable, and a relaxed atmosphere is conducive to unleashing the initiative and creativity of both interviewees and interviewees. This article conducted unstructured interviews with 20 elderly people and 37 relatives and friends. The interview mainly involves the elderly's living conditions, family structure, smartphone use, WeChat use, WeChat official account article preferences, focus, content understanding, forwarding, engine, etc. We hope to clarify the micro communication path and mechanism of the elderly's WeChat official account articles from the micro level through these problems. During the interview, the following three questions were always focused on: confirm whether the rumor article forwarded by the elderly is an autorotation or a diversion (autorotation means that an individual actively forwards the article after reading the article on the official account, while diversion means that the article is forwarded from others); If it was forwarded, where (who) did it come from; Who is the next recipient of the article? In addition, out of respect for the interviewees, they were not informed during the interview that the health and wellness information they forwarded was actually a health and wellness rumor. Therefore, the "health and wellness information" mentioned in the following text all refer to health and wellness rumors.

2.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this article are twofold: firstly, theoretical objectives. The theoretical objectives of this article will focus on the mechanism of the role of elderly individuals in the spread of health and wellness rumors, clarify the main nodes of health and wellness rumors, and clarify their micro communication mechanisms; The second is the practical goal. This article aims to enhance the ability of the elderly group to identify rumors and reduce the risk of rumor infringement, better integrate and enjoy digital life, and provide precise targets for rumor governance on social media platforms and online information departments.

2.4 Research Ideas

First, we counted and read the forwarding of 20 elderly people's WeChat friends circle official account from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022, and anchored rumor articles through "WeChat rumor dispelling assistant", "Tencent truer platform" and other rumor dispelling software and programs. Secondly, focus on conducting interviews with elderly people around these articles to obtain authentic materials on their health rumor dissemination behavior; Once again, we will analyze the motivation factors, opportunity factors, and ability factors of the spread of rumors about elderly health and wellness; Finally, on the basis of the above research steps, clarify the micro propagation path and mechanism of health rumors on WeChat official account.

2.5 Theoretical Analysis Framework

To clarify the micro propagation path and mechanism of health rumors among the elderly population, it is first necessary to examine the willingness of the group to share health information. This article will use MacInnis and Jaworski's MOA model to analyze the willingness of elderly people to share health and wellness information. The MOA model originates from the research on information reception behavior in the fields of communication and marketing, and is mainly used to explain individual information processing behavior. It is an explanatory model of information behavior dynamics. Among them, M refers to motivation, O refers to opportunity, and A refers to ability. Motivation is the foundation that drives individuals to implement information behavior. Without motivation, an individual's information behavior will not occur; The realization and effectiveness of motivation depend on opportunities and abilities; Opportunity and ability are the conditions that drive the occurrence of individual information behavior. Without ability or opportunity, information behavior will not occur. The three variables of motivation, opportunity, and ability are complementary, and they interact with each other to jointly promote the occurrence of individual information processing behavior. The MOA model provides a complete analytical framework for explaining the driving force behind individual information behavior from three aspects: subjective possibility, objective possibility, and subjective likelihood of objective cognition. The use of this model can clearly clarify the willingness and motivation of elderly people to share health and wellness information.

3. MOA Analysis of the Willingness of Elderly People to Share Health and Wellness Information

3.1 Motivational Factors (M)

Health rumor producers have identified two major communication strategies at the beginning of rumor information production: firstly, spreading panic, and using exaggerated negative effects such as pathogenicity and lethality of food, drugs, and health preservation methods to psychologically deter the audience; The second is to convey hope, that is, by exaggerating the effectiveness and usefulness of food, drugs, and health preservation methods, to induce clicking and forwarding. Allport once pointed out that whether rumors are accepted and spread by individuals is related to their importance to themselves. For elderly people, in their later years of life, life and health have become a priority for individual survival, and they have a strong motivation to consume health information. Social psychology believes that motivation is the internal drive to stimulate and promote individuals to carry out actions, a psychological process or subjective factor in the form of desire, interest, ideal, etc., which encourages individuals to initiate and maintain actions and guide them to a goal, and is the direct cause of individual actions. In the MOA model, motivation (M) is a complex of individuals' willingness, interest, etc. to engage in a certain information behavior, which is the internal driving force of individual behavior. The interview found that there is a relatively obvious "double transfer phenomenon" in the processing of health and wellness information among elderly people: if a health and wellness information is forwarded by the elderly in

their social circle, it is highly likely to be forwarded to their family and friends at the same time, and it is hoped that these information can be known by their family and friends. When answering the question "Why do you want to forward this (some) information", 3 elderly people answered "It may be useful in the future", 8 elderly people answered "For family", 4 answered "For friends", and 5 "answered" For family and friends'. From this, it can be seen that the forwarding behavior of health and wellness information for the elderly group is based on the motivation of care: it includes both care for self health maintenance and care for family and friends. This is a selfish and altruistic behavior.

3.2 Opportunity Factor (O)

The opportunity in the MOA model refers to the effective components of the external objective environment perceived by the subject in a specific time and space that contribute to stimulating their specific behavior. In information processing, the opportunity factor has characteristics such as objectivity, subjectivity, advantage, and contextuality. The information that is exposed and received, as well as whether it can be received, is objective and depends on the information production and individual survival environment. Whether or not to accept this information depends on the individual's subjectivity. Whether an individual accepts certain information and makes corresponding processing actions depends on whether it is beneficial to oneself. In addition, under the premise of favorable information, whether individuals make corresponding information processing behaviors is also subject to the situational moderating variable. Different situations can lead to vastly different information processing behaviors among individuals. The opportunity in MOA theory refers to the situational factors that individuals face when executing their behavior. In order to clarify the opportunity factors for the forwarding behavior of elderly health rumors, the interviewer focuses on several issues such as their activity venue, information forwarding time, and information forwarding conditions. Through these issues, the opportunity factors for elderly people to forward health rumors are indirectly determined. The interview found that there are two ways for the elderly to obtain health care information: one is through the actively concerned official account, and the other is through peer group exchanges and mutual recommendation. There are two prerequisites for triggering the elderly to implement health and wellness information forwarding behavior: one is to identify with the information content, and the other is to recognize that relatives and friends have relevant information needs. Fifteen elderly people mentioned that some of the health and wellness information they forwarded was provided or recommended by their peers, accounting for 75%. Another prominent phenomenon discovered during the interview is that group gathering increases the chances of spreading health rumors. When elderly people gather in groups such as gatherings and square dances, health and wellness information is a key topic of communication. Seventeen elderly people mentioned that they exchanged a lot of information during gatherings, while 11 of them reported having engaged in on-site information forwarding. It can be seen that the gathering of elderly people is an important situational and opportunity factor for the spread of health and wellness rumors, which will promote the closed-loop circulation of health and wellness information among peers.

3.3 Ability Factor (A)

The ability in the MOA model refers to the inherent possibility possessed by individuals as subjects to engage in targeted activities within a certain social relationship. According to MOA theory, ability factor refers to an individual's ability and proficiency in understanding information in information processing behavior. Specifically, ability factors include information cognition ability, information manipulation ability, and social interaction ability. For an individual's information processing behavior, information cognitive ability is the most important of the three abilities. Information cognitive ability includes two aspects: firstly, the level of understanding and understanding of information; One is the ability to judge information quality. The cognitive and operational abilities of information are prerequisites for individuals to engage in information processing behavior. Interviews have found that elderly people tend to engage in two types of information manipulation behaviors after making "useful" judgments about certain health and wellness information: firstly, conveying the information to family and friends through oral communication; The second is to forward to social media or family groups. In the information processing process of the elderly, social skills play a catalytic role. Through interviews, it was found that the likelihood of elderly people forwarding health rumors is positively correlated with their frequency of participating in collective activities or individual communication behaviors. That is to say, the more activities and exchanges one participates in, the greater the likelihood of forwarding and spreading health rumors. Most health rumor forwarding behaviors occur after group gatherings or exchanges. The reason is that the main audience for health information is middle-aged and elderly people, many of whom lack questioning and rational thinking about the source and scientific nature of the content, blindly sharing information with friends, and even unable to detect that they are spreading rumors.

4. The Micro Communication Mechanism of Health Rumors

Through interviews, we found that health rumors have a relatively fixed circulation field and clear dissemination path. It mainly flows between primary groups and forms a micro communication path of "getting health rumors → health rumors diffusing within peer groups → health rumors overflowing from the circle of elderly people → family member contained", forming a "Four Point Communication" mechanism that connects peer groups and primary group diffusion, including origin, nodes, fulcrums, and endpoints.

4.1 Origin: Imbalance in the Supply Structure of Health and Wellness Information

In the interview, we found that from the perspective of health care information supply, the media channels for the elderly to obtain health care information mainly include two channels: television and official account. Because of its convenience and rapidity, the official account has become the first channel for the elderly to obtain health care information. As of January 2021, China's WeChat official account have reached 360 million, of which a considerable number of official account are concentrated in the field of health care information. We can't know the specific number of health care information

WeChat official account, but we can see through the cases in Shanghai. In 2018, the overall release volume of Shanghai health official account was 16277 times, 34785 articles, and the total number of reading was nearly 132 million times. This is only data from Shanghai, and if viewed nationwide, the data scale is even larger. From the perspective of information consumption, the reason for the prevalence of health care rumors is that on the one hand, there is a deviation in the information supply side. The health care information literacy of official account operators is uneven, producing a large number of health care information with both good and bad. On the demand side, elderly people have a strong demand for health and wellness information consumption. However, elderly people have weaker ability to distinguish health and wellness information due to their low information cognition and media literacy. Among the 20 elderly interviewed, 13 paid attention to the health care information official account, of which 6 paid attention to 1-2 health care information official account, 5 paid attention to 3-5 health care information official account, and 2 paid attention to more than 5 health care information official account. Their attention has made it easier and more accessible to health and wellness information, increasing the risk of infringement and dissemination of health and wellness rumors.

4.2 Node: Health Rumors Have Crossed Circles

After actively searching for health and wellness information and confirming its usefulness, elderly individuals will actively recommend and spread it to their peers, achieving cross fertilization within the elderly community. This is also an important step in the spread of health and wellness rumors. Individual behavior is to some extent influenced by the social network to which they belong. In the interview, it was found that the elderly population has already regarded health information as a “social currency”. Jonah Borg proposed the term “social currency” in his book “The Legend of Madness”. The so-called social currency refers to the information that highlights the ideal and unique selves in communication with others. If sharing something can increase your value in the eyes of others, then it will be like currency and can be bought from the outside world to impress you. Social currency exists because sharing information content can enhance one’s own value in the eyes of others. Social currency has five functions, namely helping others, chatting with materials, enhancing one’s own image, expressing ideas, or showing off. During the interview, 13 elderly people mentioned that health and wellness information is an important “conversation tool” for their communication. By sharing health and wellness information with peers, one can express their care for them, narrow their psychological distance, create a warm, harmonious, and lively atmosphere, and enhance one’s sense of status and value within the group. Why are middle-aged and elderly people eager to forward such rumors and information? From their own psychological perspective, they are a group that has lost the authority of social discourse to explain their existence, hoping to earn more social currency to align with their own role positioning. The social connections of the elderly have formed a phenomenon of stratification, and the spread of health rumors is actually a kind of stratification. Circle based communication has the characteristics of member homogenization, high consistency of information preferences, high group identity, and weak differentiation among members

within the circle. The disadvantage of information circle lies in the closeness of information circulation, the solidification of value cognition mode and the extreme of thinking mode. Peer group transmission is an important part of the chain of health and wellness rumors, and the elderly themselves have become important communication nodes, promoting the further spread of health and wellness rumors.

4.3 Fulcrum: Targeted Diffusion of Health and Wellness Information in A Differential Pattern

WeChat is a platform for social stratification, and the phenomenon of social stratification can be traced back to Fei Xiaotong's theory of differential pattern. Our social structure itself is different from the Western pattern. Our pattern is not a bundle of clear bundles of firewood, but rather the ripples that occur when a stone is thrown onto the water. Everyone is the center of the circle pushed out by their social influence. What is pushed by the ripples of the circle is connected. Fei Xiaotong believes that the relationship between people in China's rural society is a network relationship with kinship as the main axis, which mainly connects communities through geographical and blood ties. The differential order pattern creates identity or similarity between the internal logic and action mechanisms within the circle. The internet has changed the way communities are connected, allowing individuals to connect through their karma and interests. The layering of social networks has contributed to the proliferation of rumors. Through interviews, it was found that after the cross diffusion of health and wellness rumors among the elderly population, they enter the stage of targeted diffusion, which is also the most important step in achieving a significant leap in the arrival rate and coverage rate of health and wellness rumors. At this stage, the targeted spread of health rumors mainly targets the primary group with whom they have intimate relationships. The primary group is a concept proposed by American sociologist Cooley, which refers to a social group with intimate interpersonal relationships. The primary group exhibits a strong relationship state in four dimensions: interaction frequency, emotional strength, intimacy, and reciprocal exchange. According to Granovett's social network analysis, strong relationships often lead to homogenization of information between the two parties involved in communication; Weak relationships can serve as information bridges and provide more diverse information. The interview confirmed Granovett's viewpoint that all 20 elderly people have shared and disseminated health information to their relatives and friends. At this stage, the health rumor sharing behavior pierced through the barriers of the elderly user community, achieved rumor spillover, and expanded the audience.

4.4 End Point: Family Members Become the Blockers and Terminators of the Health Rumor Transmission Chain

After elderly people forward health rumors to primary groups such as relatives and friends, although the micro dissemination chain of health rumors has achieved maximum coverage and dissemination, they may encounter questioning, disregard, and even resistance style refutation behavior from their offspring or young groups. At this stage, the transmission heat begins to decline and the transmission chain breaks. In the interview, we found that there are three feedback modes for the health rumors spread by the elderly as family and friends: first, click to read and make a simple response; Secondly, selective disregard; The

third is to immediately refute rumors. The above-mentioned information processing behavior will hinder the spread of health rumors. Communication scholar Cross proposed his formula for rumor circulation: rumor circulation=importance of the problem × The ambiguity of evidence ÷ public critical ability. This formula has strong explanatory power for the spread of health rumors among the elderly. Among the 20 elderly people we interviewed, 23 members from 13 families stated that they had previously corrected and refuted rumors forwarded by the elderly, 11 members from 3 families stated that they would choose to ignore them based on respect and care, and 6 members from 4 families would provide simple feedback and responses, such as expressing gratitude or making simple comments on the information content. But no family members have carried out secondary dissemination of health rumors spread by the elderly.

5. The Micro Communication Characteristics of Health Rumors

Due to the unique characteristics of the dissemination subject, motivation, audience, and chain of health care rumors, their dissemination mechanism is completely different from other types of rumors, presenting different dissemination characteristics.

Firstly, the spread of health rumors has a closed nature. From the origin, nodes, fulcrums to the endpoint, health rumors mainly spread among primary groups with intimate relationships, and information hardly overflows the scope of the primary group. The formation of primary groups is based on social networks such as blood, geography, and industry. When the social network of the primary group is virtualized into WeChat groups and friend circles, it correspondingly becomes family groups, colleague groups, friend groups, etc. The interaction between members of the primary group is based on intimate emotional exchanges, mutual care and comfort, shared psychological support, and high integration. Although the communication of health care information is a kind of scale-free network communication, and the elderly individuals are the important nodes of the network, the flow of health care rumors has always been a relatively solid circle of primary groups. As a form of emotional connection for the elderly, the scope of health rumors' information radiation has never exceeded the network of relationships such as blood, geography, and industry, and is a relatively closed form of dissemination.

Secondly, the rumor of health and wellness is presented as a two-layer communication structure of intersections within the circle and connections outside the circle. The spread of health rumors has a strong emotional connection. One important reason why health rumors can circulate periodically is due to the motivation of caring. Care has become an important factor in the widespread spread of health rumors. The primary group has become the target audience for the spread of health and wellness rumors, and the motivation for spreading care is the fundamental force driving the spread of health and wellness rumors. The spread path of health rumors has formed a double-layered communication structure of cross communication within the circle of the elderly population and rumor spillover within the circle. As mentioned earlier, when information exchange and emotional connection occur in the elderly population, health rumors have become an important medium, an emotional bond between group members, and

partially play the role of "social currency". The rumor of health and wellness is communicated among the elderly population, which is the first level of spread of health and wellness rumors among the elderly population. If elderly individuals determine that a certain health and wellness information is "useful" or "effective", they will enter the second layer of health and wellness rumor information dissemination structure, and they will forward the information to their friend circle or WeChat group where the primary group is located, achieving information overflow.

Thirdly, the spread of health rumors has distinct intergenerational and situational characteristics. The famous German developmental psychologist Paul Bartz proposed the SOC theory to explain individuals' coping strategies when encountering a loss of physical and mental resources. S refers to selection, O is optimization, and C is compensation. Choice refers to an individual choosing a portion of their life tasks as development goals or directions; Optimization mainly refers to the continuous strengthening of available resources or abilities by individuals; Compensation refers to the compensatory adjustment of the loss of a certain resource or ability. The spread of health rumors is not simply information dissemination, but rather has a distinct intergenerational color of aging. In old age, people may experience anxiety and knowledge deficits, and basic cognitive abilities such as memory, reaction speed, spatial orientation, and reasoning ability will show a downward trend and process. Elderly people need to release certain signals to the outside world in order to demonstrate their sense of existence. Forwarding and sharing health and wellness information represents the sense of value of the elderly. The elderly are concerned about altruism and prefer to believe what they have. In addition, they have low information literacy, so they become the setters of rumors. The situational aspect is mainly reflected in the structure of information consumption. From the perspective of information supply and demand structure, the elderly have a large demand for health and wellness information, but the relevant authoritative information is scarce, the supply capacity is insufficient, and they are in a structural imbalance state. This objectively increases the risk of elderly people encountering rumors.

Fourthly, the spread of health rumors has a distinct Pareto effect. The Pareto effect is also known as the 80/20 rule, or key minority rule. The Pareto effect is a social wealth distribution theory proposed by Italian economist Pareto in 1906. This theory holds that in the distribution of social wealth, 20% of the population controls 80% of the wealth. Later, this theory was widely applied in various fields of social sciences, meaning that there is an inexplicable imbalance between causes and outcomes-the main outcome of things depends on a small number of factors. According to statistics from the official WeChat backend in 2016, middle-aged and elderly people have sent WeChat messages 44 times a day, becoming active users of WeChat. At the same time, they are also becoming a major fan of rumors on WeChat's social media. A survey shows that 80% of users who forward more than 5 rumors every month are middle-aged and elderly people over 50 years old. This survey conclusion is consistent with our interview, The elderly play a major role in the spread of health rumors.

6. Conclusion

Lewin put forward the theory of "field theory" from the perspective of social psychology. The core viewpoint of this theory can be expressed by a formula: B=f (P * E)=f (LS). This formula suggests that Life Space (LS) includes individuals and their psychological environment. A person's behavior (B) depends on the interaction between their individual (P) and their environment (E). In other words, the core viewpoint of Lewin's field theory states that behavior is influenced by both the individual and the environment (together known as the living space). The spreading behavior of health and wellness rumors in the WeChat field of the elderly population is the result of the joint action of individual living environment and social information environment. The micro dissemination mechanism and characteristics of health and wellness rumors also exhibit distinct situational characteristics. Elderly people have motivation to consume health and wellness information, as well as the opportunity and ability to spread health and wellness rumors. The rumor of health and wellness has formed a waterfall of rumors through the elderly population. The governance of health rumors is a comprehensive issue involving society, families, and individuals. Clarifying its micro dissemination mechanism and characteristics is only the first step in carrying out rumor governance.

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