



HIERARCHICAL PRECARIETY: Dance Hosting, Labor Struggles, and Masculine Insecurities in China

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“I have a friend who amassed a fortune of nearly 70 million CNY (USD 9.8 million), indulging in luxuries like a Porsche 911 and acquiring properties. However, when the woman’s husband discovered the affair, he deliberately disabled my friend’s legs. Now, my friend’s life is in ruins, making us question the true value of wealth in such circumstances. I also fear being discovered by the client’s husband.” Xiaosun lit a cigarette, sighed deeply, and fell silent. It was in a quiet dance hall during its midday lull, with the afternoon session still one hour away. Leaning back on the sofa near the door, Xiaosun shared his life and the subdued gossip of other hosts with me in a weary, resigned tone as we waited for the session to begin.

I first met Xiaosun in Fujian province in 2017 while conducting research on the profession of dance hosting—young Chinese male migrant workers who partner with middle-aged women in dance halls, sell intimacy, and form romantic relationships with female clients in everyday locations. Like other dance hosts, Xiaosun frequently expressed his desperation to leave the profession: “This has no future. Life becomes very unstable.” “People look down on us and think that I don’t want to be a real man, get a proper job, work hard, and earn money with dignity. Instead, I’m just a sex worker and waiting for food like beggars.” Yet many hosts frequently switch between various jobs and dance hosting, leaving

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and returning, highlighting their struggle to endure the precarity and emasculation of dance hosting, as well as the lack of financial prospects elsewhere. As Xiaosun, who had been a dance host for seven years, succinctly explained, “I’m not fond of feeling dependent on women because there’s no need to live in such a cowardly and incompetent manner [*wonang*, 窝囊]. However, a wealthy, middle-aged woman is my only chance to improve my life. Every dance host returns with the same dream of hitting the jackpot.”

Over the years, when I return for follow-up fieldwork during the holidays, I continue to see the same, familiar faces of hosts in the halls. The hosts kept saying they would leave, yet they never did. I kept saying that I would finish my research, yet here I still was. They would teasingly remark, “Why haven’t you finished your research yet? My child has already grown up!”

* * *

This article illustrates that the recurring contradictions of entering, leaving, and returning to dance hosting underscore the tensions between gender, labor, and economy in contemporary China, while also uncovering a form of agency within a specific social structure. Much like Rio’s *catadores*, whose work on garbage dumps is seen as a dead end yet draws them back (Millar 2014), many dance hosts long to leave their profession, only to return months later and continue their precarious existence. While frequently stigmatized, precarious, unmasculine, and dismissed as informal and illicit work, dance hosting offers an alternative to stable yet low-wage labor, opening up alternative ways for shaping self, work, and life.

This article explores the relationship between precarity as a labor condition and precarity as an ontological experience among dance hosts, with gender playing a pivotal role in shaping this dynamic. On one hand, masculinity proves central to the hosts’ identity—they aim to embody its ideal; on the other, their entry into the profession inherently undermines it, as the work involves precarious and emasculated labor starkly at odds with normative Chinese masculinity. Here, I use the concept of “displaced masculinity” (Nayak 2006) to understand how masculine insecurities shape the everyday experiences of migrant hosts. Hosts experience dominant ideals of masculinity as disrupted, undermined, or rendered unattainable because of social and economic changes, a condition that Anoop Nayak (2006) calls “displaced masculinity.” Nayak employed the concept to explain how single migrant men in Britain grappled with a loss of masculinity during the deindustrialization and globalization of the early 2000s, necessitating efforts at reparation. Similarly, in China’s restructured economy, many low-wage

factory or service jobs are stigmatized as weak and failed, forcing migrant men to grapple with societal perceptions of them as feminized (Choi 2018; Tsang 2020a). In their quest to reclaim dignity and overcome emasculation, the male migrants turn to dance hosting. However, dance hosting disrupts gender hierarchy in patriarchal Chinese society, leaving these men feeling especially emasculated, as their performance of dancing and providing intimate services continuously underscores their displaced masculinity. So why do they choose to join and remain in the profession and perpetuate their emasculated existence? I argue that engaging in such deeply emasculating and precarious work becomes the most viable option for addressing insecurities within their lived realities. For these men, poverty represents a more severe form of precarity and poses a greater threat to their masculinity than the precarity and emasculation associated with dance hosting.

My analysis draws on the anthropological literature on precarity. As a labor condition, precarity reflects the economic and employment realities of neoliberal capitalism under post-Fordist production, marked by the erosion of long-term job security and the decline of welfare state provisions, affecting a significant portion of the global population (Kasmir 2018; Han 2018; Federici 2008; McRobbie 2011). Many anthropologists have expanded the concept of precarity to include vulnerable forms of both work and living conditions, while critically engaging with the strategies of political organization (Campbell 2018; Millar 2014, 2018). Precarity has always been a feature of capitalist societies, affecting all workers—employed or unemployed—across both the global North and the global South (Kasmir 2018; Millar 2017; Ferguson 2015). However, how people experience and respond to precarity differs, shaped by specific historical and social contexts (Allison 2013; Prentice 2020; Millar 2018). In the context of China, in promoting and sustaining economic development, the post-Mao state created a precarious labor force through the mass layoff of guaranteed state employees—holders of “iron rice bowls”—and the creation of short-term contract workers, a labor force stratified into rural and urban populations through the household registration system (*hukou*, 户口) (Choi 2018). Since 1978, economic reforms have spurred migration from inland provinces to coastal cities for factory or service jobs, where disciplinary practices shaped rural bodies into desirable labor but an undesirable presence, with limited access to state welfare (Ngai 2005). Most dance hosts, who originate from rural areas with low-income backgrounds and only a middle school education, belong to the “surplus population” (Tsang 2020a) and are limited to precarious labor. Low wages, poor conditions, long hours, high turnover, and temporary status define migrant workers’

precarity, disrupting traditional masculinities (Choi 2018; Tsang 2020a). Among dance hosts, precarity extends beyond labor conditions, intertwining with subjectivity, gender, sexuality, bodies, emotions, affect, and desire.

My discussion contributes to anthropological literature around the relationship between precarious labor and precarious life across different historical periods, geopolitical contexts, and social positions (Allison 2013; Campbell 2018; Millar 2014; Schierup and Jørgensen 2017; Paret 2016). Anne Allison (2013) highlights the relationship between precarious labor and precarious life, noting that unstable work destabilizes daily living. In contrast, Kathleen Millar (2014, 2018) argues that unstable living conditions undermine work stability and that unstable work stabilizes daily living. Here, I argue that while precarious work may stabilize daily living, it paradoxically generates new insecurities that destabilize people's lives. This article draws attention to how hosts navigate precarious labor, the new insecurities, and the existing insecurities in life. I introduce the concept of "hierarchical precarity" to explain labor motivation and capture how people prioritize and rank different forms of precarity. People engage in and remain within precarious labor even when it destabilizes their daily lives, because it enables them to address what they perceive as their most urgent instability, which is more immediate and pressing than the additional precarity of unstable work.

This article begins by providing key characteristics of dance hosting in China, followed by an analysis of the motivations driving young men to enter the profession. It then explores the various aspects of job precarity, along with the additional insecurities inflicted by normative notions of masculinity within Chinese patriarchal society. Finally, I explore why hosts perpetuate the dance hosting profession and their precarious existence.

FROM NEIGHBOR TO ETHNOGRAPHER

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Fujian province, China. My interest in this topic dates to my childhood, as there was a social dance hall located right next to my home. Growing up, I frequently glimpsed a variety of people coming and going from the venue. My parents often remarked that those who frequented dance halls were not respectable, as many ordinary Chinese often equate "nightlife" with prostitution (Farrer and Field 2015). The hall became a hosted dance hall in 2013. My parents' comments only had the effect of sparking my curiosity as an ethnographer, and I was introduced to dance hosts and female clients through the dance hall owner. I also closely followed some hosts to different dance halls across China between 2017 and 2024, during which they grew to see me as a friend and often sought advice on study tips for their children or

their clients' children. The participants were self-identified heterosexual Chinese males between the ages of twenty-two and forty, all of whom had a minimum of six years' experience working as dance hosts. Each participant had engaged in at least four paid relationships with female clients in different cities. I conducted participant observation over the course of several years, complemented by many in-depth, face-to-face interviews and daily conversations involving thirty dance hosts, several dance hall managers, and eleven female clients at a dance hall located in Fujian province. I began learning to dance to better understand my informants. Not being a particularly skilled dancer, I initially paid the hosts to dance with me, asking them to demonstrate how they led dances with various types of clients. However, the hosts largely avoided dancing with me, knowing that I was a poor scholar rather than a wealthy woman capable of supporting their aspirations. They were also cautious not to give middle-aged women the impression that they preferred younger women. Thus, I mostly observed how hosts interacted with clients in dance halls and in daily locations when they allowed me to join.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES: Dance Hosting Ballrooms

As China underwent a post-socialist transition that reshaped its social structure, economy, and culture, nightlife—going out at night—flourished. Initially introduced to Shanghai in the 1930s under the influence of Western colonialism, ballroom dancing had gained nationwide popularity by 1949, but was subsequently banned as a “bourgeois” practice during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (Farrer and Field 2015). During the reform era, privatized nightlife spaces like bars, discos, and dance clubs reemerged. In the mid-1990s, commercial social dance halls flourished, offering a lucrative space with beauty, sex appeal, and entertainment, while staying within legal boundaries, many of which evolved into singing and dancing halls (*gewuting*, 歌舞厅).

Melody Li (2022) describes *gewuting* in the early 1990s as a “real-and-imagined place” where people of diverse social backgrounds meet, express private desires, stretch social constraints, seek individuality, reexamine what they need, and redefine themselves. James Farrer and Andrew David Field (2015) portray them as spaces where salaried classes could enjoy small pleasures, experience physical eroticism, engage in extramarital affairs, and escape work and family chores. At present, most dance halls continue to serve similar functions. Yet with economic restructuring, social dance halls have rapidly declined in popularity among the youth, who have shifted to clubbing practices, while female hostesses have largely moved to karaoke bars. To sustain dance halls and generate profit, dance-hosting ballrooms have emerged, primarily catering to middle-aged female clients.

The first dance-hosting ballrooms appeared in Hunan province in 2004, and they have quickly spread nationwide. Most hosted dance halls are adorned with rows of sofas circling the dance floor, ceiling-to-floor mirrors, shimmering disco balls, strobe lights, and mirrored pillars that reflect the ambient lighting (Chen 2020). They typically operate in two sessions: an afternoon session from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and an evening session from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A wide range of dance styles is available, including the rumba, samba, “slow three” (waltz), “fast three” (Viennese waltz), “slow four” (blues), jitterbug, “fast four,” cha-cha, and international styles.¹ During night-time sessions, the lighting changes (from dimmed hues to bright, flashing effects) to reflect the dance music style, ranging from classics to popular contemporary tracks with lyrics about unattainable love and the joys of love. A hosted dance hall typically employs at least fifty skilled male hosts, aged sixteen to forty, whom female clients can hire as dance partners by selecting their preference and placing an order at the front desk. Each order costs 200-300 RMB (USD 30-40), depending on the state of the economy, with the dance host receiving half as commission and the other half retained by the hall owner. The price typically varies within a range of 20 dollars in first-tier cities such as Shanghai.² Hosts do not receive basic salaries and enjoy the flexibility of determining their own working schedule, with income tied to the number of bookings. While the dance hall bosses make a profit from hosts’ bookings, the bookings hosts receive are a minor aspect of their work—their main focus is on developing ongoing, romantic, and sexual relationships with female clients who can provide regular, ongoing financial support outside the hall.

The hosted hall operates within legal boundaries, yet it serves as a platform for hosts to showcase their desirability as prospective long-term companions for female clients outside the hall. The clients visiting dance halls were mostly married women—aged thirty-five to sixty—with diverse occupational profiles ranging from business, medicine, teaching, and the civil service. Their sartorial elegance exudes confidence and status, but heavy makeup also makes them appear younger. While most clients come for the dancing, some also seek intimate relationships. Hosts, however, aim to secure financial sponsors. If a woman likes a host, she may repeatedly hire him for dance sessions and invite him on “dates” involving dinner, karaoke, or shopping, to build a lasting relationship. To maintain the relationship, she is expected to “sponsor” his lifestyle by providing substantial financial support, often including monthly payments and gifts such as a car or a house. Without such support, the host typically declines further bookings to avoid giving other clients the impression that he already has a “sister.” Unlike most forms of nightlife—such as bars, discos, karaoke clubs, and saunas—that provide spaces for forming temporary social and sexual ties often

unacknowledged during the day (Farrer and Field 2015), dance hosting blurs the boundaries between daylight and nightlife, play and work, work and life—dancing and dating.

THE PROMISE OF BECOMING A HOST: *Becoming a Good Man*

The economic changes in post-reform China had a negative impact on masculine identities, shaping the motives and desires of migrant hosts. Many hosts recounted their experiences of toiling long hours for the stable yet meager wages in factories, on construction sites, or in the service sector, which fostered a profound sense of failure as men and insecurities—displaced masculinity—in life. These insecurities stemmed from their perceived inability to pursue life projects—marrying, providing for family, buying a home, and continuing the family line—which resonate with the cultural narrative of being a good son and a good man (Tsang 2020a). Furthermore, increasing social stratification, consumerism, and the symbols of prosperity associated with the “China Dream” exacerbate rural migrants’ sense of failure, as unskilled workers struggle to achieve upward mobility, a cosmopolitan identity, and consumer freedom (Rofel 2007). As one host commented, “This is what society is now. This era emphasizes money-making. Nobody will respect you as a man if you are poor.” The hosts’ emphasis on wealth as essential for the good life, the good person, and the good man reflects the dominance of economic pursuits in China and the construction of ideal hegemonic masculinity (Liu 2019; Tsang 2020a). Consequently, hosts strive to seek alternative work to address their emasculation—swiftly acquiring financial resources.

Hosts learn about the profession by word-of-mouth. Typically, a male dance host would inform his male friend about the job’s ease, profitability, and potential for wealth. Particularly, every host harbors the dream of “hitting the jackpot” by winning over a wealthy client who can provide substantial financial support. This allows them to address their insecurities, fulfill familial responsibilities, attain consumer freedom, and acquire symbols of prosperity. The hosts’ longings and aspirations for improving their lives through the pursuit of wealth via dance hosting resonate with Millar’s (2014) observation that unstable living undermines work stability, as well as Lisa Rofel’s (2007) concept of “desiring subjects,” oriented toward ideals of consumption, class-inflected desires, and the ability to display them in postsocialist China. While dance hosting offers a way to address life insecurities, hosts face substantial precarity, including job precarity and masculine insecurities that destabilize their everyday life, as I will elaborate below.

PRECARIOUS DANCE HOSTING

Dance hosts face job precarity characterized by intense competition, frequent job transitions, limited career-advancement opportunities, and inadequate compensation, aligning with Allison's (2013, 349) observation that "unstable work destabilizes daily living." First, as dance hosting has low entry requirements—proficiency in various ballroom dance styles and a minimum height of 1.65m—many young men join annually, leading to intense competition and instability.³ Many spent an average of three to six months learning various dance styles from friends or ballroom training programs in their hometowns before moving to cities.⁴ They often hone their dancing skills independently in the hall, as it is the key to attracting clients in the first place. Due to the high cost of living and intense competition in most metropolitan areas, such as Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Shanghai, some hosts without client support can only sustain themselves briefly and must move to another city. One boss I interviewed remarked, "The turnover rate is exceedingly high, with many leaving as soon as they fail to secure any bookings. I recruited seven hosts this week, but five or six of them have left simultaneously. You have to quit if you have no income." Further, the host-client relationship is itself unstable, and this instability contributes to the instability of the hosts' lives. This situation often arises from various factors, such as conflicts with clients, waning novelty, or the client's decision to return to her husband. Hosts have to move when their relationship with a client ends, because local clients rarely pursue so-called second-hand hosts. As a host explained, "If you spend a lot of time with one client, other clients would feel that your hand has been touched by someone, and a new client touches your hand again, it is a different feeling. Women are meticulous about this." By relocating to a new place, hosts create the impression of being pure newcomers to the field, with no prior romantic relationships, reversing the fetishization of "virginity" often seen among male clients of female sex workers (Zheng 2009).

Hosts' job precarity is also closely intertwined with the absence of career-development opportunities. First, a dance host has a relatively short occupational lifespan. Devoting their youth to the dance halls, hosts complain about the lack of time to acquire alternative skills that could serve as a fallback option in the future. Second, hosts know all too well that their intimate relationships with clients cannot last indefinitely, as clients have their own families. Hence, hosts often contemplate their future prospects and consider their life's possibilities. Moreover, dance hosts lack a fixed and quantifiable form of income commensurate with their efforts. Hosts often compare their earnings to display masculinity

among peers. They demonstrate varying levels of success through their attire, social connections, accommodations, lifestyle, and the extent of their business opportunities. Successful hosts feel most manly when they can flaunt luxury items such as watches or rings in the dance hall, while unsuccessful hosts often exhibit moments of inferiority, envy, timidity, and a loss of confidence. Success depends on winning the favor of female clients. Clients revealed that they are attracted to a wide range of personal attributes in hosts, including dance skills, physical appearance, the ability to create romantic feelings, and personalities, ranging from assertive to gentle. Most hosts adjust their personas to accommodate the varying demands and preferences of their clients. However, their earnings are contingent more on the capricious element of luck in encountering exceptionally wealthy clients than their performance, as clients' wealth varies. One host candidly articulated, "It's just like winning the lottery—sometimes others win 5 million CNY, while some only win 5 CNY."

Although hosts' current earnings surpass the wages they used to earn in factories, their desires are driven by class and influenced by wealthier, more masculine peers. However, since wealth depends largely on luck, it remains uncontrollable. This reality fosters a sense of insecurity and instability, leading hosts to experience a sense of emasculation and emotional draining—such as dejection, envy, inferiority, and distress—alongside their expressed physical exhaustion. As one host shared, "Although we outwardly display consideration and gentleness towards our clients, deep down, we feel like undeserving victims. Sometimes, when I witness others living a luxurious life and being able to afford many things, I'm filled with envy, questioning why it can't be me instead. This leads to immense distress." These emotions reveal how hosts embrace ideals of consumption, hyper-materialism, and class-driven desires (Rofel 2007), while work profoundly affects their personal lives, including their emotions, masculinity, and sense of self.

The precarious dance hosting—characterized by unstable working conditions, financial insecurity, and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life—undermines male workers' sense of self and disrupts traditional masculinity, echoing the displaced masculinity of single migrant men in Britain (Nayak 2006), as well as the experiences of precarious laborers worldwide (Federici 2008; McRobbie 2011). As I will demonstrate in the next section, dance hosting generates additional masculine insecurities that further intensify precarious subjectivities and destabilize hosts' daily lives.

THE INSECURITIES OF MASCULINITY

Stigmatization

Dance hosting bears a significant social stigma, which undermines the hosts' masculinity. Hosts view themselves not as sex workers passively consumed for sexual services but as providers of dance and romantic companionship, exercising agency, embodying ideal masculinity while ensuring financial security, as I will illustrate later. However, as the profession involves intimacy, hosts are often seen as “toy boys”—lazy, fragile, and reliant on affluent women (*bang fupo*, 傍富婆). In Chinese society, sex work is linked to femininity, passivity, and submission (Kong 2009), contrasting with traditional masculinity, which values toughness, dominance (Song and Hird 2014), and being the primary provider for women (Liu 2019). Almost all the hosts I interviewed told me that they have to hide what they do for a living from their friends and families back home, to avoid bringing shame on themselves and their families. As Joseph commented, “Yes, I earn some money, but dance hosting isn't a decent profession, and people look down on us. Being a dance host hurts my pride a lot.”

Physical Risks

Dance hosts risk physical harm because of the moral stigma of their work, as their clients are often married women, and thus their extramarital relationships are potentially a source of disgrace for their families. Amid fierce competition, hosts often face hostility from rivals seeking to steal wealthy clients through sabotage—spreading gossip, bad-mouthing, or even tipping off a client's husband. Hosts often shared instances of their friends suffering violent attacks and severe injuries from vengeful husbands, including cases where their legs were deliberately disabled. One host shared a personal experience, stating, “My client was generous, but it triggered jealousy in my colleague, who was subsequently rejected by the client. In retaliation, he informed the client's husband about our relationship, and I never saw her again.” Here, jealousy, much like *song* (justifiable anger) on Ifaluk in Micronesia, spreads through gossip and becomes an “ideology of practice” (Lutz 1988). The anticipation of jealousy from others prompts most hosts to fear sabotage and physical harm, causing them to follow an unspoken rule of keeping a low profile and exercising caution in everyday life, despite enjoying flaunting their wealth as men. This undermines their masculinity, as living in fear reveals vulnerability and contradicts masculine ideals of bravery, confidence, assertiveness, and physical strength.

Feminized Labor

Hosts' insecurities and emasculation are closely tied to their feminized labor, marked by subordination in serving women and performing various forms of gender labor. Gender labor refers to the relational, affective, emotional, physical, mental, intimate, and sexual labor—long associated with women's work—that people perform to help others attain the form of gender recognition they desire in both intimate and social interactions (Ward 2010). As femininity requires specific masculine labor to sustain it, hosts' gender labor involves not only embodying ideal masculinity but also acknowledging, encouraging, and validating their clients' femininity. By deploying various forms of gender labor through dancing and developing romantic relationships with clients, hosts aim to evoke emotions such as comfort, romantic sentiments, companionship, wellness, satisfaction, excitement, and passion, both within and beyond the dance halls. These services enable clients to cultivate women's affective qualities—what Harriet Evans (2012, 121) refers to as “the feminization of intimacy,” reinforced by state campaigns—and to construct the emotional meanings of femininity, such as feeling protected, cared for, and caring for others.

To impress clients and increase their chances of creating a potentially ongoing romantic relationship, hosts must excel at dancing and evoke powerful, cathartic, romantic, youthful, and affective experiences in the dance hall. As the dance halls require all hosts to dress in standard formal attire (usually a white shirt and black trousers), the hosts try to distinguish themselves through a well-groomed hairstyle and dancing skills. Hosts say that bodily communication is more effective than verbal communication. They deploy body capital and modify their embodied performance of masculinity to cater to female desires. Hosts are judged based on their controlled dexterity, dance steps, movements, coordination, ease, stamina, aesthetic appeal, musicality, and facial expressions. During a dance, the host and client hold hands, maintain eye contact, and move their bodies in sync. Dance hosts typically perform a combination of standardized routines and improvised movements, tailoring their performance to match the client's dancing abilities while ensuring flexibility, fluidity, coordination, and the showcasing of their masculinity. For example, a host might perform a dance move where a woman “falls” into his hands, only to be lifted back to her feet in one powerful motion—showcasing his physical strength while evoking feelings of care and protection. In the quickstep, hosts execute rapid, precise, and continuous turns to light, cheerful music, radiating vigor and stamina. Their joyful and exciting expressions inspire clients to feel younger and more energetic. During slow dances, hosts gaze into clients' eyes, allow clients to touch and hold onto

their strong, upright posture, feel their sweat and scents—showing effort in dancing—and engage in small talk, deepening the sense of romance, intimacy, and connection. When waltzing, hosts and clients turn and rotate, with the host displaying graceful posture and using uninterrupted, lively, fluid movements to lead the client. In these fleeting moments, hosts execute different emotions, dancing skills, and their exceptional control as central to their masculinity. Using the male body to create a particular kind of spectacle in the dance hall, they resemble highly trained sportsmen: “fast, powerful, occupying and traversing large amounts of space, and exhibiting conspicuous prowess” (Gard 2006, 74).

The hosts’ dance performance, agility, managed emotions, physical contact, facial expressions, scents, small talk, and displays of masculine prowess under the glittering lights engage clients sensually and evoke their obsessive attention. According to clients, skilled hosts are adept at guiding them into a state of ecstasy, leaving them feeling light, enchanting, and exhilarated, while evoking a sense of flow and correspondence. They praise the hosts’ movements as elegant, powerful, and aesthetically perfect, noting how their dancing radiates seduction, happiness, joy, fearlessness, and authenticity, evoking feelings of passion, youthfulness, and energy in them. One client vividly remarked, “Every muscle of his limbs is moving and attracting you.” Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2006) has shown that graceful and powerful athletic movements create an effect that emanates from the athlete to the audience, evoking emotions, admiration, or a sense of awe in those watching. Similarly, in the dance halls, clients feel mesmerized by the hosts’ outstanding dancing skills, experiencing moments of transcendence that lead to rapturous appreciation, as if they were attending a spectacle. Many clients described their dancing experiences as “in high spirits,” “passion,” “falling in love,” and profoundly “liberating.” One client shared, “When dancing with the host, it felt like everyone’s eyes were on me, and I truly felt beautiful.” Here, we can see that the hosts’ dancing reveals the affective labor involved, providing clients with physical sensations and a fulfillment of the emotional meanings of femininity.

Likewise, such gender labor is also evident in the creation of a potentially ongoing romantic relationship following the dances. The laborious practice of doing gender for female clients requires hosts to actively work on themselves, transforming into what is desirable to women. Studies on women workers’ sexualized and gendered labor often reveal how it reinforces customers’ social status (Hanser 2005) and masculinities (Zheng 2009). Similarly, hosts draw on their cultural capital, masculinity, aesthetic bodies, and sexuality to elevate clients’ sense of entitlement and femininity. Hosts strive to equip themselves with

knowledge about what women like, discern clients' preferences—such as favorite colors, foods, or activities—through both direct and indirect means, cultivate themselves, and meticulously fine-tune their interactions to foster a sense of intimacy and connection. As a host said to me, “This is a form of unseen, in-depth kind of homework, much like that of a diligent student. It requires learning, observation, and the ability to tailor interactions to suit the client's tastes.”

Hosts explained that their clients are looking for men who are physically attractive and well cultivated. Hosts strive to engage in aesthetic labor (Warhurst and Nickson 2009) and work on themselves to become sophisticated, desirable, modern men. By dancing regularly, they have developed an upright and sturdy physique that conforms to the masculine body ideal. Further, hosts learn to look clean, handsome, civilized, stylish, and urbane through men's fashion magazines. They buy suitable clothes, a variety of cosmetics, including skin care and hair-styling products, and cologne to enhance their appeal. Further, through online tutorials such as “How to act like a gentleman,” hosts develop non-verbal communication skills (such as attentiveness and the emotionally expressive use of their bodies, including gesturality and facial expressions), and verbal communication skills (i.e., flirtatious and playful conversation, and articulated responsiveness to the personal needs of their clients). By embodying cultivated urbane qualities, hosts level the playing field by distancing themselves from the working class, maximizing their desirability, and giving clients a sense of status and entitlement when accompanying them in and outside the dance hall.

Furthermore, hosts engage in intimate labor by assuming the roles of caretaker and boyfriend, offering attention, support, and interest in every aspect of the woman's life. As Jane Ward (2010) illustrates, intimate labor often involves offering authenticity, “faking” or giving someone what they want, even when both participants implicitly recognize the lack of realness. When clients invite hosts to dinner, a movie, or shopping, hosts carefully cultivate an atmosphere of admiration and affection to make the client feel special, desired, loved, and cherished. For example, they soothe women's egos and express their love explicitly by praising her youthful, elegant, and slender appearance, expressing how much they long to be with her, how her presence brings them happiness, and how she occupies their thoughts. Hosts' comments reflect the Chinese conceptualization of desirable feminine beauty—how women are expected to cultivate their feminine sexuality for men (Otis 2011; Yang 1999)—shaped by global consumer culture, the mainstream media, and state discourse (Brownell 1998). Even if these sentiments are not genuine, hosts recognize the power of repeating passionate words that resonate deeply with their clients—phrases women long to hear—to

affirm their self-worth, celebrate their feminine beauty, and bring them joy, all while crafting a sense of emotional femininity.

In addition, dance hosts work to cultivate a romantic atmosphere, making their clients feel protected and fully at the center of their attention. They achieve this through small yet meaningful actions, such as frequently sending polite and considerate text messages, speaking with a kind tone and warm smile, offering a napkin after a meal, listening attentively to her problems, consoling clients in moments of sadness, finding creative ways to make them laugh, planning surprises, giving small, thoughtful gifts, and purchasing medicine or accompanying her to the hospital. They are expected to cater to clients' late-night food cravings, often at the expense of their own sleep. Moreover, clients constantly monitor their hosts' activities through their phones and often prohibit them from pursuing other romantic relationships, insisting that hosts remain solely with them. As one host stated, "You cannot turn off or put your phone on silent mode. If you voice your concerns, she won't be happy anymore." While hosts often complain about how work intrudes into their personal lives, they reconstruct ideal masculinity by fulfilling women's desires for heterosexual monogamy and embracing the role of a superior, faithful, romantic, and committed man who protects and loves "the one."

Hosts' intimate labor fosters meaningful connections. Clients shared that they feel fortunate to have hosts who appreciate and care for them with such dedication. They highlight how the hosts embody qualities they desire in men, such as attentiveness, warmth, and an intuitive understanding of their needs, making them feel loved, touched, happy, and beautiful. One client remarked, "The moment a woman feels loved is when she is most beautiful. Even if I'm being conned by him, there are times when I'm happy just being with him. I feel truly beautiful." This statement suggests that the emotional fulfillment provided by the host outweighs the importance of authenticity in the client's experience, playing a crucial role in shaping women's recognition and realization of their emotional femininity.

Lastly, hosts strive to meet clients' sexual desires despite experiencing emotional distress and physical harm. The sexual labor emasculates hosts, as accompanying older women contradicts their inner desires and challenges the masculine norms of attracting younger, sexually desirable women (Zheng 2009). Hosts describe how middle-aged women, who may initially appear well dressed, become less appealing on undressing because of sagging breasts, poor hygiene, and unpleasant body odors. They harbor concerns about the impact on their sexual potency due to clients' sexual demands. However, gender work requires

them to validate their masculinity by fulfilling the clients' sexual desires. Given that these clients are not young women, hosts resort to techniques such as imagining clients as celebrities and enhancing their own libido and stamina through gym workouts and conventional remedies like bull's penis or Viagra. As one host articulated, "This wealthy woman asked me to lick her. The persistent foul smell that lingers even after a shower is truly repugnant. I cope by envisioning her as a movie star." Another host recounted an experience, stating, "The frequency of their demands can reach up to four times a day. It feels like my waist is on the brink of breaking, and my kidneys are no longer functioning properly." In addition, hosts must endure sporadic instances of physical abuse from clients. One host shared a distressing encounter, explaining, "When a female client reached orgasm, she'd pinch me. I detest this behavior, and no matter how many times I tell her to stop, it doesn't work. She always says the discomfort is so pleasurable that she could die." The comments suggest that hosts do not genuinely enjoy the sexual activities but instead view them as part of their labor to satisfy their clients. Techniques like imagining clients as celebrities are highly scripted, routinized, and hierarchical. The better hosts can instinctively view clients as celebrities and perform sexual acts as though with them, the more effectively they make clients feel desirable, authentic, and emotionally valued.

While most women feel reluctant to share details of their sexual experiences with hosts, subtle sharing and nonverbal cues during daily conversations—such as the slight curl of their lips or an uncontrollable smile—reveal their satisfaction. A few women, however, openly boasted about their sexual prowess, claiming they could engage in sex multiple times a day and insisting it was the hosts who were unable to leave them because of their allure and skills in bed. Some even offered to share their "secrets" with me once I married, asserting that it was their techniques—not their wealth—that kept the hosts attached to them. As one woman confided to me, "I really want to give him my first time." Virginitly is closely linked to Chinese notions of ideal femininity, representing a blend of sexuality and innocence (Tsang 2020b). The clients' desire to give their virginity to the host—which is impossible—reveals their affection and longing to be recognized by him as more desirable, sexualized, special, and pure. The various comments suggest that hosts' sexual contributions are not solely about physical pleasure but, more importantly, about affective pleasure by making women feel seen as attractive, capable of captivating men, and rendering the hosts dependent on them, thereby offering emotional satisfaction and validating the clients' emotional meanings of femininity.

Hosts' gender labor navigates, manipulates, and ultimately overwhelms the emotions of their female clients, proving, in the process, their power and control over women. This creates a sense of "bounded intimacy" (Bernstein 2010), as clients develop an obsession and dependence on hosts and willingly offer financial security, care, and even a home in return. Clients frequently express that, during the relationship, they simply wish to live with their hosts forever and enjoy taking care of them. As one client said, "There's this feeling. How great would it be if he had a home here, so we could dance together and never be separated. Even just looking at him brings comfort." Hosts often express their gratefulness for the care clients provide, including financial security, care-laden domestic work, and emotional offerings of comfort. As one host noted, "She thinks everything through and takes care of all the household needs, doing chores, buying whatever is necessary. I get a lot of satisfaction and joy when I feel like I am an important part of her life." This illustrates hosts' emotional satisfaction and the clients' fulfillment of idealized emotional femininity, as they willingly assume the role of dutiful nurturers, displaying traits such as care, emotionality, attentiveness, and gentleness toward the hosts (Evans 2012). Simultaneously, their support bolsters the hosts' masculine honor and social status, reinforcing a traditional gender hierarchy that positions men as superior and women as subordinate.

Dance hosting demonstrates gender as a relational and interactional construction, shaped significantly by the effort and labor of others (Ward 2010). It also shows how hosts' labor, as deeply affective, shapes women's emotional fulfillment, central to realizing gender ideals. Hosts are acutely aware of their displaced masculinity, as their various forms of gendered labor stigmatize them, undermine their sense of masculinity, and intrude on their personal lives in everyday contexts. However, this precarious and emasculating work allows hosts to embody some forms of the ideal masculinity, reversing power dynamics and achieving financial stability. Nevertheless, hosts frequently describe the fragility of such security at work, noting a shift from wielding power over women to losing control—an issue that represents the most profound emasculation and insecurity, as the next section will explore.

The Loss of Dominance

Hosts shed light on the power dynamics inherent in the client-host relationship, where their financial security and dominance depend on the depth of the client's affection. If the client harbors deep feelings of love, hosts tend to gain increased dominance and financial support. However, as a relationship moves beyond its romantic phase and nears its end, hosts face the loss of both, resulting

in a deep sense of precarity and emasculation. The recurring narratives of hosts failing to secure (additional) financial support evoke their deepest experiences of precarity and emasculation. A host shared moments of frustration:

In the past, she went along with whatever I wanted. But now, when I ask for additional financial support, I sense that the client also has her own thoughts, as if I'm deceiving her for money. It makes me feel diminished, unable to hold my head high in front of her. These situations often indicate that the relationship is nearing its end because I genuinely feel that she is constantly wary of me, and I find it difficult to meet her gaze.

Another host remarked on his emotional trauma:

A female client once promised me an apartment and monthly payments, and wanted to cook for me. That night, I acted impulsively and slept with her, as she wore very revealing sleepwear and had no panties on. Afterward, she ignored me and only engaged me as a dance partner occasionally. Since then, I've vowed to wait at least two months before becoming intimate with a client. Acting hastily is forbidden.

The two narratives underscore the hosts' vulnerability that arises from transitioning from a position of power and control over women to powerlessness, and from financial security to insecurity. It also shows how hosts rationalize their agency in navigating insecurities, the new forms of precarity, and emasculation in dance hosting. Hosts are willing to endure significant job precarity alongside additional emasculation within the profession—such as stigmatization, potential physical risks, and feminized labor—in exchange for affection from clients and a degree of dominance within the relationship, which are ultimately tied to financial gain and the ability to overcome insecurities and displaced masculinity. However, the loss of financial security renders their endurance meaningless, further exacerbating their sense of failure and displaced masculinity, leaving them feeling especially precarious. Thus hosts unable to secure financial gain often feel shame, humiliation, and embarrassment, seeing themselves as cowardly, incompetent, and failed men. This is particularly evident in the hosts' narratives of self-resentment for “acting hastily”—as if [they were] sex workers, the struggle to “meet her gaze,” and the inability to “hold [their] head high in front of a dance partner.”

Whether dance hosting subverts gender norms or reinforces them depends on the power dynamics between hosts and clients. Before beginning the relationship, both hosts and clients appear to subvert Chinese gender norms. Hosts from low-income families experience a loss of masculinity by engaging in precarious, stigmatized, and emasculating labor, lacking control, power, and dominance, in the hope of winning their clients' affection. By contrast, their wealthy female clients, by behaving in ways culturally engendered as masculine, wield social and economic power and have the ability to choose and purchase the hosts' attentive companionship. However, within intimate relationships, both parties conform to and reinforce traditional gender norms. The hosts strive to embody the male "superman" while the clients seek experiences enabling them to develop a feminine reliance on the hosts' gender labor and to enjoy emotional meanings of femininity. Such dependent femininity aligns with Evans's (2003, 341) analysis of public discourses from the 1980s, which depict the ideal wife as emotionally reliant on a man and dependent on his presence and approval to fulfill the feminine ideal. By analyzing the feelings experienced by women, we can see that forms of male power are taking shape with the willing cooperation of Chinese women (Brownell 1998). Nevertheless, when a relationship deteriorates, hosts again face a loss of dominance and masculinity, leading to a subversion of the gender norms. Despite the significant precarity and emasculation associated with dance hosting, most hosts choose to remain in the field, perpetuating their endurance of precariousness, as I elaborate below.

PERPETUATING PRECARITY

The embodied experience of precarious labor in contemporary capitalism entails the transformation of desires, values, and ways of life (Millar 2014). Similarly, dance hosting reshapes hosts' inner dispositions and mind-set, reinforcing their belief that dance hosting is the most viable path to overcoming insecurity and emasculation given their rural origins, low-income backgrounds, and middle school-level education.

Dance hosting reinforces the importance of financial means for men, as successful hosts serve as exemplars of prowess, embody masculine ideals, and address profound insecurities in their lives. Conversely, those lacking financial resources are often subjected to disdain and contempt from their peers, even within the dance hall. Hosts assert that, while relying on a woman's financial support emasculates them, being in the company of affluent women elevates their sense of masculinity and grandeur. The quality and richness of the woman are not solely perceived as rewards for successful men but also serve as significant

indicators of their own social status, class privilege, capability for consumption, virility, and desirability as romantic partners. Once they amass wealth, hosts are able to fulfill social obligations, such as providing financial support to their parents. As one host said, “Because of dance hosting, I was able to cover my sick grandfather’s medical expenses, and he lived for nine more years.” Moreover, they boast of starting a business with clients and embodying a new identity. They express the freedom to engage in unrestricted consumption and to enjoy cosmopolitan lifestyles (Rofel 2007)—such as consuming luxurious commodities, renting a nice apartment, dining at expensive restaurants, traveling overseas with clients, and having a tightly knit circle of friends and young women who accompany and serve them. One host poignantly expressed, “I feel most manly when I spend money. I treat my friends and buy things for young, beautiful women, so why wouldn’t they hang out with me?” These narratives illustrate the simultaneous fulfillment of masculinities and desires enabled by dance hosting and shaped by social and economic forces, consumption ideals, and heteronormativity. This wealth earns them the admiration of numerous hosts and their acquaintances back in their hometowns as they keep their profession concealed. As such, they attain social esteem and personal dignity both within and outside the profession.

In addition, dance hosting potentially provides temporary life stability—including a home, care, and financial support provided by clients—enabling migrant hosts to overcome poverty, cope with displacement and feelings of loneliness (Ngai 2005), and reclaim hegemony during the honeymoon period of the relationship. The comfort often lulls hosts into losing sight of their goals, making the profession ever more alluring and difficult to leave. Some hosts reflected that the constant engagement with female clients resulted in detachment from the external world, a dearth of enthusiasm and contentment within this lifestyle, and a disregard for the pursuit of a conventional life, including seeking marriage and starting a family. Instead, they become fixated on dancing with middle-aged women and indulging in illusions of having already established a family. Some hosts thus lament that this way of life can prove deceptive, as they entertain thoughts of continuing in this occupation while admitting that dance hosting has no future. They anticipate that once they lack power and their current relationship ends, a new encounter will provide a fresh and different experience, satisfying their yearning for masculinity, life stability, and financial gain, despite the profession as a whole being precarious and unmasculine.

Finally, much like single migrant men in northern England who turn to crime to cope with displaced masculinity (Nayak 2006), many migrant hosts navigate their anxieties, stress, and sense of emasculation through addictive

behaviors, often ones tied to traditional notions of masculinity—such as alcohol abuse, gambling, and the services of prostitutes. Several hosts openly shared their addictive experiences with the consumption of alcohol, crystal methamphetamine, or ketamine, in the company of other men. One host recounted how the financial support from clients enabled him to treat others to expensive cocktails, showcasing his wealth among his friends and asserting his masculinity with other males. This experience aligns with scholarly research underscoring how masculinity is enacted through homosocial interactions, wherein men often engage in shared activities with their male peers and seek validation from other men to affirm their manhood (Allison 1994; Kimmel 2006).

Further, some hosts become seriously addicted to gambling, and quitting proves to be an exceedingly daunting task, even in the face of substantial losses and active efforts to combat the addiction. They perceive gambling as a means of emotional release and, more significantly, as an opportunity to amass wealth, akin to the gamble they took when entering dance hosting. One host shared his experience with ketamine while gambling, which initially heightened his focus but ultimately resulted in deception and the loss of his assets. Interestingly, as the host recounted these stories, his eyes sparkled rather than displayed sadness, as he considered these acts to be bold and emblematic of true masculinity. Like for the crack dealers described in Philippe Bourgois's (1995, 141) study, engaging in drugs brings status, respect, and an affirmed masculinity utterly lost in "the humiliating interpersonal subordination of service work."

Likewise, some hosts openly acknowledged their engagement with young prostitutes to release pent-up frustrations, seek normative male sexuality, and restore a semblance of balance in their lives.⁵ This narrative aligns with Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang's (2020b) study, which reveals how migrant peasant men in China's factories turn to sex to assert their masculinity. In their quest to actively resist displaced masculinity, the hosts unwittingly create a vicious cycle as they rely on readily available cash to fuel their addictions, which, in turn, makes it increasingly difficult for them to break away from working as dance hosts.

HIERARCHICAL PRECARITY

This article examines the relationship between precarity as a labor condition and precarity as an ontological experience among dance hosts. I begin this article by arguing that while precarious labor may stabilize daily living, it also causes new insecurities that destabilize people's lives. Many scholars show that in many parts of the world today the laboring poor decide to work irregular jobs or perform precarious work for different reasons, such as escaping hard labor (Gregory 2014), a strategy of survival (Davis 2004), a form of resistance

to low-waged labor (Bourgois 1995), the earning potential and freedom (Choi 2018), upward mobility, cosmopolitanism, freedom, entrepreneurship (Liao 2016), or relational autonomy (Millar 2014, 2018). However, how laborers understand the new insecurities brought by precarious labor alongside the existing insecurities in their lives remains unaddressed. This article theorizes the concept of “hierarchical precarity” to explain labor motivation and captures how people prioritize and rank different forms of precarity. It can be interpreted that different groups of people in the literature are willing to endure the inherent risks of precarious work to address what they perceive as the most pressing and precarious insecurity in their lives, one that outweighs the additional precarity caused by unstable work. This conceptualization highlights workers’ everyday agency in navigating precarious labor and precarious life, while offering insight into the motivations underlying precarious work, imbuing actions and practices with significance.

Many critiques of precarity idealize full-time, wage-labor employment as the standard for a “good life,” associating it with stability, middle-class aspirations, rewards for hard work, and upward mobility (Millar 2017; Weeks 2015). Resonating with Millar’s (2014, 2018) insights, this article argues that different forms of work beyond wage labor might open up other ways of shaping self, work, and life. Critiques of precarity often assume the expectations and privileges of those already secure (Millar 2017), such as post-Fordist workers or “iron rice bowls” in China, who fear losing their stability and social standing. Eli Thorkelson (2016) conceptualizes this as “elite disappointment,” a phenomenon shaped by the anxieties of the privileged over the erosion of their advantages. Yet the lived experience of precarity differs greatly across class, culture, and context, further intersecting with factors like gender, race, ethnicity, and religion. For the poor migrant hosts of rural, low-income backgrounds and limited-education in my study, access to stable wage labor is often restricted to low-paying factory or service jobs, which fail to meet their social obligations and subject them to emasculation. Lacking access to resources like education or social capital, migrant workers have to turn and return to even more precarious forms of labor that promise to address their most urgent life instabilities. This practice is less about resistance and more about finding ways to make life livable and bearable through alternative forms of living within systems that often fail them. Dance hosting, commonly regarded as informal and illicit work, reflects an act of withdrawal from full-time wage labor and embodies what Millar (2014, 49) terms “a politics of detachment,” contrasting it with what Guy Standing (2011, 19) identifies as the precariat’s “four A’s—anger, anomie, anxiety, and alienation.”

This article also highlights how gender relates to different forms of labor struggles and how both precarity and masculinities are interconnected and hierarchically ranked. Male migrants in post-reform China face layers of

emasculatation and insecurities shaped by economic shifts, as they fail to meet traditional masculine expectations (Choi 2018; Tsang 2020a). In their quest to resist displaced masculinity, male migrants become dance hosts. Yet this work intensifies their emasculatation, as their masculinity becomes perpetually undermined by job precarity, stigmatization, potential physical harm, feminized labor, and the ultimate loss of dominance. Thus displaced masculinity, or masculine insecurity, constitutes a central aspect of the precarity within dance hosting. Despite these losses, hosts can momentarily gain other forms of masculinity, such as financial wealth, which they perceive as more significant, shoring up their key motivation of turning and returning to the profession, echoing the narratives presented in the opening of this article. By consciously sacrificing some masculinity to attain wealth—which subsequently reconstructs their masculinity—the masculinity gained through this precarious labor outweighs the associated losses. This phenomenon argues against Raewyn W. Connell’s influential concept of “hegemonic masculinity,” which is grounded in “the combination of the plurality of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 846). Niko Besnier and colleagues (2018) argue that dominant forms of masculinity in some contexts can be precarious in others. Similarly, hosts believe that wealth alone can secure hegemonic masculinity, even at the expense of other forms.

The concept of “hierarchical precarity” for migrant hosts is rooted in masculinity. Men’s motivation for entering a profession is deeply tied to their masculinity (Nixon 2009; Choi 2018). Scholars frequently highlight that men experience emasculatation when their labor is feminized (Choi 2018; Tsang 2020a). This study suggests that men prioritize and rank forms of masculinity, consciously enduring the loss of some to achieve the ones they value most. Thus, rather than focusing solely on the loss of masculinity in precarity, it is crucial to consider the dynamic changes in masculinity and how men value these changes. Examining changes in masculinity and its hierarchy helps explain why men remain in jobs that seem to undermine their masculinity, as well as how men make sense of their work and sense of self. Hierarchy precarity provides a lens to understand how agency is exercised within a particular social structure and how people make sense of their struggles and strivings toward work and life that remain endlessly precarious.

ABSTRACT

Young Chinese male migrant workers partner with middle-aged women in dance halls, and sell intimacy and romantic relationships in everyday locations as “dance hosts.” Dance hosts experience considerable job precarity and masculine insecurities. While frequently expressing a desire to leave, most hosts remain in the profession

and perpetuate their precarious existence. This article explores the relationship between precarity as a labor condition and precarity as an ontological experience among dance hosts. I argue that while precarious labor may stabilize daily living, it also causes new insecurities that destabilize people's lives. This article theorizes the concept of hierarchical precarity to explain labor motivation and suggests that the decision to engage in precarious labor hinges on its capacity to address one's most pressing insecurities, outweighing the additional precarity it creates. I conclude by highlighting how gender relates to different forms of labor struggle and workers' agency in navigating the hierarchically ranked precarity and masculinities. [precarity; masculinity; sexuality; migrant labor; dance halls]

摘要

中国年轻的男性劳工作为舞厅教练，为中年女性提供陪舞服务，并在日常的场所中售卖亲密关系和浪漫情愫。舞厅教练经历着严重的职业不稳定性和男性气质危机。尽管他们经常表达想要离开这一职业的愿望，但大多数人仍然留在这一个行业里，继续着这种不稳定的生活状态。本文探讨了舞厅教练在工作中的不稳定性和在生活中的不稳定性之间的关系。我认为，虽然不稳定的工作或许能够在一定程度上维持日常生活的稳定，但它同时也会带来新的不安全感，从而加剧生活的不稳定性。本文提出了“等级化的不稳定性”的概念，用以解释人们的工作动机，并指出，人们是否选择从事不稳定的工作取决于其能否解决自身最紧迫的不安全感，而且这种不安全感远超这份工作可能随之带来的不稳定性。最后，我强调了性别如何影响不同形式的劳动挣扎，以及劳工在应对等级化的不稳定性和男性气质时所展现出的能动性。 [不稳定性；男性气质；性欲；流动劳工；舞厅]

NOTES

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1. Fast Four, also known as Beijing Pingsi (北京平四) is characterized by a faster tempo, often aligning with upbeat, modern, or disco music, with four beats per measure.
2. The hosts added me to several WeChat groups where dance hall managers from various cities post recruitment notices for hosts, share videos of dance halls, and provide details about booking prices and commission rates.
3. While hosts above 1.75m are considered more attractive, dancing requires coordination, making it challenging for very tall hosts to pair with shorter clients.
4. Hosts are meant to partner with clients for dancing rather than to teach; therefore, a diploma is not required.
5. Hosts hide this reality from their clients and, if married, their wives.

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