

Discussion on Juvenile Addiction to Online Games and Its Supervision Policy

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Abstract: With the popularization of the Internet and smart phones, online games have become an important part in minors' entertainment. But at the same time, online games also cause harm to teenagers mentally and physically. It has turned out that teenagers immersed in online games tend to have real-life emotional problems, academic problems, social problems; in the long run, they are unable to build healthy, having difficulty in obtaining pleasure in real environments, and their resilience can become worse. In this regard, parties relevant must guide minors who like online games, for which, it is of importance to develop sound relevant regulatory policies. In order to clarify the current social policy supervision status of online games for minors, this public policy report takes China as the research object, in-depth analyzing its regulatory policies for online games for minors through different research methods such as literature and research, investigation and research, so as to clarify the current situation and at the same time while making reference for the governments of China and other countries across the world to formulate proper policies, and to jointly build a sound and healthy environment for minors playing carry out online games.

Keywords: Online games, juvenile, policy.

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Status

In recent years, with the development of the Internet, a variety of different types of games are increasing, which makes people addicted to them, especially minors, teenagers are in the growing stage, easy to be influenced by the outside world. According to the report, as of December 2023, the number of Internet users in China has reached 1.092 billion, and the Internet penetration rate has reached 77.5%. Therefore, online games have a great impact on them, resulting in some minors due to excessive addiction and academic decline, physical and mental health damage and other problems [1]. The largest group of online game players is the youth group, this group is the family, society, the future of the country, parents, teachers, society, the government placed great expectations on the youth [2]. The violent elements in online games make teenagers deviate from traditional values. In online games, especially competitive online games, there are inevitably some violent elements. Therefore, the Chinese government continues to strengthen supervision, aiming to reduce minors' addiction to online games through a number of measures, so as to reduce the occurrence of such problems.

1.2. Literature Review

With the rapid development of network technology, online games have become one of the main entertainment methods for minors. However, long-term addiction to online games not only has a negative impact on the study and life of teenagers, but also further makes them addicted. In order to deal with this problem, after researching the effectiveness of the current online game regulatory policy and its influencing factors by reviewing the following relevant literature. Yu Qingqing proposed coping strategies from four aspects by studying the negative impact of online entertainment on the values of young people: strengthening online literacy education; Enhance the ability of teenagers to

use the internet rationally; Establish a sound mechanism for the protection of young people; Standardize the online entertainment market [3]. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasizes: "We must adhere to the rule of law in governing the country, governing the country, and administering the country, and building a country, government, and society under the rule of law. We must comprehensively promote scientific legislation, strict law enforcement, fair judiciary, and universal compliance with the law".

Han Tiansi discussed and analyzed the reasons why middle school students are addicted to the Internet, the series of harms caused by the Internet environment on their mental health, and the implementation of mental health education [4]. The thinking of middle school students is in the stage of immaturity to maturity, and the Internet will have a huge impact on them. Therefore, it is necessary to guide students to use the Internet correctly [resulting in unsatisfactory policy implementation. Through the case study method, Wang Zhe analyzed the effect of different policy tools in practice, especially the implementation of real-name system, time limit, payment limit and other measures and their impact on the behavior of teenagers' online games. The study found that although the number of policies is increasing year by year, the implementation of the policies is still insufficient, and there is a lack of specific implementation rules and regulatory measures [5]. Liu Fuyuan's research adopts the social governance model of co-construction, co-governance and sharing, emphasizing the policy of multi-party cooperation and common governance [6]. Through the multi-dimensional analysis of management path, technical path, law enforcement path, teaching path and value path, studies have made on how to achieve an effective online game anti-addiction mechanism through multi-party collaboration.

2. Countermeasures for families, school and society

It has turned out that online games can absolutely cause a series of negative effects on the mental health of juveniles, including social isolation, academic pressure, sleep problems, and violence [7, 8, 9]. As a matter of fact, there are many countermeasures to mitigate the negative effects.

First of all, family and school to providing a favorable environment or a staunch carrier for the young to grow up, should jointly assume the responsibility of preventing online game addiction, or exactly the potential harm online games does to the mental health of minors [10]. In enhancing their awareness of supervision, parents should rationally guide children to arrange their time spent online, strengthening communication with children, and understanding their needs and confusion [11]. On the one hand, it's suggested that parents should work with their children to make a reasonable game-play schedule to ensure the learning and daily activities of the juvenile are not intervened by setting rules and limits. For instance, it is of incredible significance to make it clear how much time a child can spend playing game one day or one week, clarifying that a child can only play games after completing study tasks and other important activities. On the other hand, parents should increase the companionship between their children and them, perceiving psychological needs of the children through good communication and interaction while offering more emotional support to children and reducing their dependence on games. To this end, parents can cultivate interests out of children, encouraging them to participate in diverse activities, such as sports, art and music in order to enrich their life experience; children should be guided to how to manage them set clear goals, and rationally allocate time for study, play and rest; also, they had better be enlightened to make to regularly reflect on their own behavior, instantly recognizing the harm of addiction to games and timely adjusting the game time.

For schools, it is necessary to do something in the following aspects [12]. First of all, they are expected to incorporate network literacy education into daily education to raise students' awareness of network security and capacity of information screening so as to improve their rational understanding of online games. In this process, schools need to regularly invite psychologists, network security experts and other experts to hold lectures to help students understand the potential

impact online games can make on mental health, and learn how to properly conduct self-management and protection.

Then, schools need to implement time management reasonably by establishing rules and regulations to clearly limit the time when students can use mobile phones or computers to play games during school, especially during class and self-study time [13]. In effect, time management training can be carried out through themed class meetings, psychological counseling, in which students can be taught how to reasonably arrange learning and entertainment time, forming a good habit of effective time management.

In order to reduce students' dependence on online games, schools should also enrich campus cultural life by organizing a variety of extracurricular activities, such as sports competitions, artistic performances, science and technology exhibitions, to attract students to participate in them, and by building up interest groups: according to students' interests and hobbies for them to be inspired to develop personal strengths and interests, and cultivate a positive attitude towards life [14].

Likewise, schools should also strengthen home-school cooperation, for which a communication mechanism should be refined constantly, so that attention can be paid jointly when children play online games by children in order to timely find and solve problems. There are more convenient tools or channels which are available for home-school cooperation, but such forms as parents' meetings and family-education lectures can not be ignored. Compared with those online tools, the traditional ones can more effectively overspread the sound concepts and methods to parents for them to educate and guide children more scientifically.

It should be pointed out that a watchful eye should be kept on individuals and strengthening the guidance and supervision of the whole cannot be ignored. For students who have shown a tendency to addiction to online games, schools should lose no time to conduct psychological intervention and provide personalized support; for the specific situation of different students, personalized support programs should be developed, like psychological counseling, academic counseling, and family support to help them out of dilemma or trouble. For the whole, it needs to strengthen supervision and guidance. To ensure the rationality and legitimacy of online games and prevent the harm of bad games to students, the school should strengthen the supervision of the campus network environment; to implant a correct concept into students for them understanding the balance between games and study and life, a healthy, civilized and moderate way of games playing should be advocated.

It is indispensable to improve social environment to prevent juveniles being addicted to online games in slowing down or fundamentally eliminating the negative impact caused by online games. The government should bear the brunt of strengthening the publicity to improve the whole society's awareness of online-game problem of minors while the media should play a more positive role in guiding public opinion, spreading mainstream morals and virtues energy, but avoiding over-exaggerating the entertainment of games; all sectors of society should work together for the creation of an environment conducive to the healthy growth of minors. Also, the government and relevant departments should strengthen the supervision of online games by taking a package of measures, promoting the development of game content to be beneficial to the physical and mental health of young people, limiting the spread of bad information, and exploring more innovative measures to prevent minors from becoming addicted to the Internet, for which a rich variety of extracurricular activities are more preferred to encourage diversified development of young people. So does the implementation of an anti-addiction system to ensure that limiting the game time and consumption of minors is effective.

3. Existing Regulatory Policies

The Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors (revised in 2021): a new chapter on cyber protection is added, which requires major entities to establish a system to prevent minors from becoming addicted to the Internet, analyzes the impact of power relations in policy implementation, and emphasizes rebalancing power relations to achieve effective governance.

Regulations on the Internet Protection of Minors (2023): specifies the governance subjects and governance paths for the prevention and treatment of Internet addiction in detail.

In recent years, China has continuously introduced and optimized policies to include:

Real name authentication: All game users are required to have real name authentication to prevent minors from using adult accounts to play games.

Time limit: the daily game time of minors shall not exceed 1.5 hours, and the holiday shall not exceed 3 hours, and the game shall not be allowed from 22 PM to 8 PM the next day.

4. Policy Recommendations

To tackle the problem of minors' addiction to online games, legal governance measures should be multi-pronged. In recent years, the concern about the addiction of minors to online games has been on the rise worldwide; governments of different countries and regions have issued relevant laws and regulations that are specifically aimed at protecting the physical and mental health of minors. A combination of special legislation and decentralized legislation has been adopted in Japan to address relevant issues, where a series of legal norms formulated includes Law on the Prohibition of Child Pornography, Law on the Prohibition of Unauthorized Computer Access, Law on the Limitation of Liability of Internet Service Providers and Law on Specific Emails. The United States has also enacted a number of relevant laws, such as Children's Online Protection Act, Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and Children's Internet Protection Act. China has promulgated laws, regulations and policy documents as Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors, Interim Measures for the Administration of Online Games and Notice on Preventing Minors from Becoming Addicted to Online Games. These all provide a legal basis and guidance for the management of online game addiction among minors. Regulations on the Protection of Minors Network is the first specialized comprehensive legislation on the protection of minors surfing internet, whose content covers points as below:

In Regulations on the Protection of Minors Network, the system and mechanism of online protection for minors should be improved. Particularly, all-level departments of Internet and Information should be responsible for coordinating the Internet protection of minors in order to do a good job. The internet literacy of minors should be promoted, for which, it is decidedly needed to be include high-quality literacy courses and required to improve the internet conditions. With the responsibility of schools and guardians enhanced, the management system of students' access to games should be established when they are at school. With more software and smart terminal products specifically developed to protect minors, service providers of different kinds should fulfill the obligations to minimize the impact games make on minor users. The security construction of minors online should be further emphasized. The online information conducive to the healthy growth of minors should be produced, reproduced, publicized and disseminated in succession. No organization or individual is allowed to cyberbully minors. The regulation gives special emphasis to the protection of minors' personal information, stipulating that guardians should educate and guide minors to enhance their awareness and improve ability to protect personal information and exercise relevant rights. The emergency-handling requirements are clarified when minors' personal information is leaked, tampered or lost. Personal information processors shall strictly set rights to take access to minors' personal information which should be regularly audited based on laws and regulations.

The regulation contains special instructions on the prevention and treatment of minors addicted to online games with a total of 11 articles. From Articles 39 to 49, each is aimed at a different aspect. For example, Article 43 point out that network service providers shall adhere to the principles of integration, friendliness, practicality, and effectiveness, and set up certain models in view of the characteristics of minors. Services of duration, functions and content must be provided in accordance with the relevant national regulations and standards in an eye-catching and convenient way for the guardian to perform guardianship duties to provide time management, authority management, consumption management and other functions.

According to Article 48, social departments concerned shall regularly strengthen publicity, supervising and inspecting the performance of online products and service providers to prevent minors from becoming addicted to the Internet, for which families, schools and social organizations should be guided to cooperate with each other and adopt approaches scientific and reasonable to prevent minors from being addicted to surfing the net and playing games. Different authorities shall, in accordance with their respective responsibilities, guide relevant institutions to conduct basic researches on screening, assessment, diagnosis, prevention and intervention of mental disorders and behavioral problems caused by internet addiction. Based on Article 49, no organization or individual is allowed to interfere with minors' addiction to the internet by infringing upon their legitimate rights and interests, and abusing them or coercing their physical and mental health.

Compared with previous laws, Regulations on the Protection of Minors Network cements the regulation oriented toward online gaming and other online products or service. When integrating the requirements of its antecedents in a more systematic way, Regulations on the Protection of Minors Network further proposes that providers of online game products and service shall not provide account rental and sale services for minors. Besides, legal responsibilities of different parties have also been clarified in Regulations on the Protection of Minors Network. If schools or communities, violate the provisions or fail to perform their duties, authorities concerned shall order them to make corresponding corrections; on the condition that the circumstances are serious, the leading personnel and the persons directly responsible shall be given sanctions according to law; if the guardian don't obey the regulations, they will be criticized and admonished. Those who violate the circumstances seriously, whether units or individuals, need to bear civil liability.

5. Conclusion

The problem of minors addicted to the Internet has been a topic of great concern, and after the timely introduction of the policy, it has indeed achieved certain results. Many parents and educators report that the amount of time minors spend on the Internet has indeed decreased. But some problems also appear, first of all, although the real name authentication allows minors to control the game time, but some minors will buy false information through a third party or use the identity of the elderly to log in to the game. This phenomenon shows that although the policy has played a certain limiting role, there are still some shortcomings that need to be continuously improved. In addition, the blanket policy leads to the lack of normal entertainment needs of minors, and excessive restrictions will lead to other unhealthy entertainment ways for teenagers or to obtain game time through other bad ways. So our research shows that appropriate restrictions can make the policy side relatively balanced. Therefore, to sum up, in the future policy formulation, the government needs to continuously improve the policy, optimize the setting of online platforms for minors, and make use of the continuous development of science and technology to achieve a relatively balanced policy point. This can not only reduce the addiction of minors, but also allow them to get proper relaxation.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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