Factors Influencing Chinese Adolescent Moral Behaviors

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Abstract. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the moral development of adolescents and the influence of peers on their moral behavior. Good peer relationships promote social development and acquisition of social skills; poor peer relationships may lead to maladaptive behavioral problems. moreover, other factors influenced the relationship between peers and adolescent moral behavior, including gender differences, peer closeness, and the influence of family economic status. Specifically, adolescents are more influenced by close friends than by friends in general; boys may be more involved in physical and verbal aggression and girls more involved in relational aggression; family socioeconomic status significantly affects adolescents' peer relationships, with more affluent families having more friends and peer relationships; while disadvantaged family socioeconomic backgrounds make adolescents more likely to experience peer rejection or be marginalized. Due to regional and cultural differences, adolescents in different environments and cultures may be influenced differently, which needs to be further explored in future research. This paper will help parents and schools to understand the psychological and behavioral characteristics of adolescents, and to assist and teach adolescents' education and healthy growth.

Keywords: Adolescents; Peer influence; Behavior influence.

1. Introduction

Teenagers are becoming more and more likely to choose their peers over their families as time goes on. In general, parental and peer influences work in concert to benefit adolescents by preparing them for healthy interpersonal connections in the future. Childhood family interactions lay a solid emotional basis for adolescent peer relationships. The actions and beliefs that children acquire from their parents are frequently imitated and reinforced by peers. A crucial setting for adolescent social development is friendships. Teenage friendships differ from those of younger kids in a number of ways. As a result, this essay will go into more detail regarding how peers affect teenagers' noncognitive behaviors.

This essay describes and examines the personal traits and cognitive behavioral traits of adolescents, contrasts the behavioral differences between adolescents and children, and analyzes the influence of adolescents' peers on their behavior from both positive and negative aspects, compensating for the singularity of research variables in previous literature.

2. Manifestations of Adolescent Ethical Behavior

2.1 Characteristics of Adolescents

Adolescent behavior is richer and more complex than that of children, growing and improving in all areas, but also posing some problems. Adolescents are transitioning from childhood to maturity, with a psychological tendency to "leave home" and "seclusion". Physiological development peaks, sexual functions begin to mature, sexual consciousness begins to awaken, and the second rebellious period begins. The intellectual activity completes the transition, abstract logical thinking gradually becomes the main way of thinking. Thinking begins to take on a dialectical nature and challenges the adult perspective. Emotional development is paradoxical, more sensitive to the external environment, less able to control themselves, and lacking social experience, so there are more mood swings. The emergence of a "sense of adulthood" and the initial formation of a worldview. Adolescents develop self-awareness and are strongly concerned about their appearance and poise, deeply value their abilities and academic performance, and strongly care about their personality growth.

When adolescents face moral conflicts at the "rule-life" level, they mainly make moral choices based on the closeness of the relationship between the conflicted life and the enforcer. The value judgment concept that adolescents ignore the value of the rule itself but care whether the outcome of the behavior is beneficial to them will become more prominent as they grow older [1].

2.2 Characteristics of Adolescent Moral Behavior

The moral status of young people in general shows a high level. First, moral standards have been gradually improving with the development of the times. The imbalance in the family environment and the merit-based evaluation system tend to neglect moral education for young people. The form of noble education and "teaching" rather than "education" often makes young people lack a sense of identity [2].

However, the form of education often makes young people lack a sense of identity. The Internet culture and entertainment culture are so prevalent in young people's lives that it is difficult to create a positive moral education environment.

3. Peer Influence on Adolescents

Adolescents struggle to escape parental control as their autonomy and independence soar as they enter adolescence and actively seek out emotional and social support from peers [3]. Teenagers are becoming more and more likely to choose their peers over their families as time goes on. In general, parental and peer influences work in concert to benefit adolescents by preparing them for healthy interpersonal connections in the future. Childhood family interactions lay a solid emotional basis for adolescent peer relationships. The actions and beliefs that children acquire from their parents are frequently imitated and reinforced by peers.

Peer relationships have a significant impact on individuals' social and cognitive development as well as how well they operate as adults, according to a growing body of studies. In fact, the ability of children and adolescents to get along with their peers is the best early indicator of adult adaptation—rather than IQ, academic performance, or classroom behavior [4].

3.1 Positive Influence of Peers on Adolescent Behavior

Good peer interaction can promote adolescents' behavior and help to promote adolescents' socialization development, and peer interaction influences adolescents' pro-social behavior, and good peer relationships result in more pro-social behavior. Among the pathways of peer effects, there are mainly social compliance and social. Some studies have also found that "the closer the better", such as Wang who found that the increase in the number of cadres at the front and back tables positively. The dominant theories are social compliance and social comparison. Social compliance theories suggest that individuals in their social networks invariably conform to the values and behaviors of their peer groups, and that even if they do not agree with their peers' behaviors or values, they choose to conform in order to maintain their belonging to the group in order to prevent rejection by the social group they are in [5].

3.2. Negative Influence of Peers on Adolescent Behavior

Youth risk-taking behaviors, also known as antisocial behaviors, problem behaviors, delinquent behaviors, normative violations, or deviant behaviors, refer to behaviors that cause direct or indirect damage to an individual's health and quality of life, such as smoking, drinking, drug use, sexual behavior, dangerous driving, peer aggression, stealing, lying, gambling, and criminal activity [3].

There are also negative effects of peers on adolescents. Belsky [6] recruited a 6-year follow-up sample of 1364 children from 10 regions of the United States found that the proliferation of habits such as inability to concentrate and weak self-control among peers in preschool had a negative effect on children's noncognitive development affected students' openness due to the high openness of class cadres in three elementary school in China. While all of these studies validate the existence of social compliance effects in adolescents' non-cognitive interactions, some studies have found different

findings. A study based on the identification of classroom nominations in two junior high schools in China showed that self-efficacy decreased as the academic efficacy of significant peers increased for students with high academic achievement or low self-efficacy, a finding that validates the social comparison theory of peer effects.

The influence of peers on juvenile delinquency is significant. Socially idle juvenile delinquency is prominent. In China at present, the majority of delinquent youths are dropouts, lost students, and some young farmers who blindly go out to work. Most of them are idle in society, have nothing to do, and are very prone to delinquency. School students commit crimes year by year, among which junior high school students are the majority, accounting for about 18-22% of the number of juvenile crimes. The types of crimes are complex, they are either extortion, or theft and robbery, or mob fights, or mutilation of relatives, or drug addiction, and some are even computer crimes. During adolescence, adolescents' need for social relationships with peers increases, and peer influence gradually replaces parental influence. Adolescents fear rejection by peers and collective rejection, so many crimes arise in situations of group pressure [6].

The proportion of crimes committed in schools is increasing. The reason why "school violence" is becoming a hot issue in society is because of the fact that youths have a strong ability to imitate, gang up, and incite to commit violent crimes in the school environment [2].

Peer acceptance (good peer relationships) and peer rejection (bad peer relationships) were the main effects of peer relationships on adolescent risk-taking behaviors. It was found that peer rejection positively predicted negative risk-taking behaviors, i.e., the more rejected by peers, the more adolescents engaged in negative risk-taking behaviors. As individuals enter adolescence, they spend more time with their peers and pay more attention to their peers' perceptions and evaluations. Rejection by the peer group may affect adolescents' self-perceptions and lead to negative emotions, resulting in more negative risk-taking behaviors. These risk-taking behaviors in turn lead to poorer peer relationships and higher probability of peer rejection, which in turn leads adolescents to engage in risk-taking behaviors, leading to a vicious cycle. Peer acceptance, as a protective factor for adolescents' risk-taking behaviors, did not significantly predict negative behaviors. In other words, adolescents with higher levels of peer acceptance were less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors. In the process of interacting with peers, adolescents who are liked and supported by their peers have the opportunity to acquire social skills and develop productive problem-solving strategies, thus exhibiting less risk-taking behavior in their lives [3].

4. Adolescent Behavioral Influence

4.1 Peer Relationships

Peer influences on student development are diverse, and there are complex and uncertain relationships in the influence of peers on adolescents' noncognitive development. Adolescents are more influenced by close friends than by friends in general. Hodges et al. showed that friendship quality was a significant predictor of adolescent loneliness, that the harm suffered and loneliness experienced by bullied adolescents was reduced by having a supportive friend, and that good or bad peers influenced the level of development of problematic psychology and the level of healing [7].

4.2 Gender Differences Impact on Adolescent Behavior

At the individual level, girls' peer acceptance exceeds that of boys [8]. Girls may be more involved in relational aggressiveness whereas boys may be more involved in physical and verbal hostility. Boys are more impacted by social networks than girls. The impacts of having mutual friends are favorable and significant for both sexes, although boys statistically experience these effects at a larger rate [7]. Similar to this, the effects of the average quality of reciprocal friendships are favorable and statistically significant for both sexes, but the average quality of other friendship types, with the exception of the second circle of reciprocal friends, is favorable and statistically significant only for

boys. For example, the average quality of followers is favorable and statistically significant for boys, and the average quality of rejecters is also statistically higher for boys than for girls [5].

Girls' peer relationships were found to be relatively better than boys' by Liu [5]. It's in their study of peer relationships and psychological quality in secondary school students. This may be because "boys and girls have different social expectation roles, with boys showing more independence and emotional introversion and girls showing more tenderness and understanding, and this difference makes girls' peer relationships more favorable than boys'," they speculated. Girls may be more considerate of each other's sentiments as a result of this difference when it comes to interpersonal relationships [6].

4.3 Influence of Family Economic Status on Adolescent Behavior

The term "family socioeconomic status" refers to a person's or a group's standing in society based on the social resources they have. It is frequently quantified objectively by factors like family economic income, parental education, and parental occupation. It is a central concept in the study of adolescent development and has a direct impact on all aspects of adolescent development. Studies based on Western societies have found that family socioeconomic status significantly affects adolescents' peer relationships, with more affluent families having more friends and high-quality peer relationships; while disadvantaged family socioeconomic backgrounds make adolescents more likely to experience peer rejection or be marginalized. In terms of mechanisms, family socioeconomic status can have both a direct effect on adolescents' peer relationships and an indirect effect through factors such as family residence, cultural capital, and parenting style. For example, families of the same ethnicity and with similar income levels are more likely to live in close proximity and have children who are more likely to form friendships. Parental concern, understanding, and educational input such as time spent with the child can also affect the child's peer relationships [9]. Rejecters may decrease students' grades by reducing students' willingness to study, especially if rejecters are from a low social-economic background [8]. Most of the "left-behind children" grow up in economically underdeveloped areas, where the quality of education is often low and family education is lacking, and when the basic emotional needs of youth are not met for a long period of time, it can lead to mental health problems, which may lead to crime [2].

In terms of the transmission path of the effect of family socioeconomic status on peer acceptance, the study showed that part of the effect was transmitted through academic performance (cognitive ability), i.e., students with higher family socioeconomic status also performed better academically and had higher levels of peer acceptance. Family socioeconomic status had an impact on students' peer acceptance, with students whose parents had college education or higher having significantly higher peer acceptance than students whose parents had high school, middle school, or less education (the difference between the latter two types of families was not significant). In terms of statistical estimates, the number of peers who nominated students with parents with college education or higher as friends was approximately 8.5% and 7.8% higher than those with parents with middle school or lower education or high school education, respectively [8].

However, household socioeconomic status is both subjective and objective. National representative sample surveys show that subjective household socioeconomic status is a more direct reflection of a household's relative position in the local economic level than objective household socioeconomic status [9].

According to research, teenagers' moral behavior can be influenced by psychological capital both directly and indirectly through self-control, indicating that psychological capital is crucial for the formation of adolescents' moral behavior [10].

Self-control is one way in which psychological capital can affect adolescents' moral behavior; this suggests that psychological capital is crucial in the formation of adolescents' moral behavior.

Psychological capital, which consists of optimism, hope, resilience, and self-efficacy, influences behavior in the following ways as a positive psychological ability and resource: people with

optimistic tendencies exhibit higher levels of positive emotionality, higher levels of positive emotionality, and higher levels of self-efficacy [11].

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the moral development of adolescents and the influence of peers on their moral behavior. This paper first described the manifestation of adolescent moral behavior, which is richer and more complex than that of children, and the moral status of young people in general shows a high level. It then explored the influence of peers on adolescents' pro-social behavior as well as delinquent behavior. Peer relationships can be divided into good peer relationships, which facilitate social development and the acquisition of social skills, and poor peer relationships, which can lead to maladaptive behavioral problems and have a negative impact on an individual's development. Further, other factors influenced the relationship between peers and adolescent moral behavior, including gender differences, peer closeness, and the influence of family economic status. Adolescents are more influenced by close friends than by friends in general. Boys may be more involved in physical and verbal aggression and girls more involved in relational aggression. family socioeconomic status significantly affects adolescents' peer relationships, with more affluent families having more friends and peer relationships; while disadvantaged family socioeconomic backgrounds make adolescents more likely to experience peer rejection or be marginalized. This paper can provide some reference for teachers and parents to educate and provide appropriate guidance to adolescents by understanding the mechanisms by which their moral behavior operates. Understanding the importance of peer relationships, gender, and family economic status in influencing their behavior can lead to individualized instruction. However, there are limitations in that the educational environment and cultural differences in different countries and regions may have an impact on the study results, and with the development of the times, online socialization and friendships may also have an impact on adolescents. Further research can therefore be conducted in the context of specific national cultures and the general online environment.

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