The Impact of Short Video Viewing on the Socialization of Children in Grades 1–3

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Abstract. With the rapid proliferation of short videos among younger demographics, children's socialization faces emerging challenges in the digital media landscape. This study examines the impact of short-video usage on multiple dimensions of children's socialization by conducting questionnaire surveys with 1st–3rd graders from two primary schools in Xinxiang, Henan Province. Grounded in Jean Piaget's and Lev Vygotsky's theories of child development, the study assesses socialization levels and analyzes data through descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests. Based on the findings, the paper proposes tripartite guidance strategies involving families, schools, and society, advocating for collaborative efforts to promote responsible short-video consumption and harness its potential as a positive medium for socialization.

Keywords: Short Video; Early Childhood; Socialization; Family Education.

1. Introduction

The Sixth National Survey Report on Minors' Internet Use in China reveals that in 2023, China had 196 million underage internet users, with an internet penetration rate of 97.3%. Short video platforms, known for their brevity, diverse content, and accessibility, have attracted a vast number of young users, with over 80% (82.9%) of minors having used them[1]. The phenomenon of "head-down tribes" (mobile-addicted individuals) and "screen slaves", once associated mainly with teenagers and adults, has now expanded to preschoolers and primary school children. Given that these children are at a critical developmental stage—physically, cognitively, and emotionally—short videos, as a pervasive mass medium, may subtly yet significantly shape their socialization processes[2]. The Encyclopedia of Psychology defines child socialization as the process through which children, within a specific sociocultural environment, develop personalities adapted to societal norms and acquire socially accepted behaviors. This process not only fosters their growth into competent members of society but also, through continuous social interactions, molds their social identity and individuality, enabling them to act with autonomy and dignity in collective settings. As noted by American psychologist Watt, the socialization of children—once primarily driven by families and schools—is increasingly being replaced by media influence[3].

To address the new challenges posed by the digital era to child socialization, this study examines Chinese primary school students (Grades 1–3), employing a questionnaire-based approach to analyze the impact of short video consumption on their socialization. The research seeks to identify strategies for guiding children's responsible use of short videos, mitigating potential adverse effects, and harnessing their benefits in social development.

2. Research Design

This study adopts a questionnaire-based survey for empirical analysis, aiming to investigate the impact of short video viewing on the social development of primary school children in grades 1 to 3. The study was conducted in two primary schools in Xinxiang, Henan Province, China. Online questionnaires were distributed to the Parents of children in grades 1 to 3 via the Wenjuanxing App. A total of 431 questionnaires were collected, and after excluding 15 invalid responses, 416 valid responses were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 96.5%. The data were processed with SPSS Pro software, and empirical analysis was performed on children's short video usage behaviors and socialization outcomes through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and t-tests.

The questionnaire consists of three main sections: basic information about the children, short video usage behaviors and their impact, and the children's socialization development status. The basic information section includes data on the children's gender, residence, family structure, primary caregivers, as well as the caregivers' education level and occupation. This section examines short-video consumption patterns, including frequency, duration, viewing timeframes, parental mediation, and associated effects. The socialization development section, based on the socialization dimensions proposed by Feng Xiaotian, includes items designed to assess multiple dimensions such as personality and behavioral traits, social norms, life skills, social interactions, role identity, life goals, and self-awareness. A five-point Likert scale was used to quantify the children's socialization levels.

To ensure the scientific rigor of the data and the stability of the instrument, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were systematically tested. The Cronbach's α coefficient was 0.879 (as shown in Table 1), and after standardization, it was 0.896, which is greater than 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire is within an acceptable range. In terms of validity, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO value) was 0.931 (as shown in Figure 2). A KMO value above 0.9 is considered very suitable for factor analysis. The KMO test indicates that there is a correlation among the variables in the questionnaire, which meets the requirements for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed a significant p-value of less than 0.001 (as shown in Table 2), confirming that there is a strong correlation among the variables, which supports the structural validity of the questionnaire[3].

Table 1. Cronbach's α coefficient table

Cronbach's α	Standardized Cronbach's α	Number of items	Sample size
0.879	0.896	47	416

Table 2. KMO test and Bartlett's test of sphericity

KMO test and Bartlett's test of sphericity		
KMO		0.931
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate chi-square	12953.956
	df	1081
	P	0.000***
Note: ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.1.		

3. Data Analysis

(1) Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

The sample exhibits a balanced gender distribution, with boys comprising 50.12% and girls 49.88%. Geographically, 53.83% of participants reside in urban areas, while 46.17% are from rural regions, ensuring representation from both settings. Regarding family structure, 57.77% of children live in multi-generational households (three or more generations), 38.75% in nuclear families (parents and children only), and 3.48% in other family arrangements. These structural differences may impact the educational support and media oversight available to the children.

As for the primary caregivers, mothers serve as the primary caregivers for 80.51% of the children, significantly higher than fathers (10.9%) and grandparents (5.8%), indicating that mothers still play a dominant role in daily child-rearing, consistent with the situation in China. Regarding the education level of the primary caregivers, 57.08% have a high school education or lower, 27.38% hold an associate degree, 14.39% have a bachelor's degree, and only 1.16% have a master's degree or higher.

In terms of occupation, the largest group is freelancers and self-employed individuals, accounting for 34.8%, followed by ordinary employees (23.67%). Professional technicians, civil servants, and other groups are more dispersed.

Overall, the primary caregivers in this sample exhibit relatively low educational attainment, with the majority holding a high school diploma or less. Occupationally, freelancers and self-employed individuals constitute the largest proportion. These demographic characteristics align with the

region's level of economic development and distribution of educational resources, reflecting the study's real-world context. The sample's regional and socioeconomic representativeness strengthens the relevance and practical significance of the findings while also supporting the validity of the questionnaire design and data collection methodology.

(2) Analysis of the Current Situation of Children's Short Video Viewing

Survey data shows that only 3.48% of children never watch short videos, while 47.33% watch occasionally (1-2 times per week) and 34.11% watch frequently (3-5 times per week). Additionally, 15.08% of children watch short videos every day, indicating that short video viewing is a common behavior among children in the sample. Regarding viewing duration, 46.39% of children spend no more than 30 minutes per day watching short videos, while about 19% of children watch for more than one hour daily. As for the timing of viewing, most children watch short videos during weekends or holidays (76.92%), followed by after school (29.81%) and after dinner (23.08%). This suggests that children's short video viewing behaviors are subject to certain constraints.

In terms of supervision of viewing behavior, 74.52% of parents reported setting limits on the duration of their children's short video viewing. However, only 14.66% of children watch with parental supervision, while nearly 70% watch independently. Regarding content regulation, only 22.84% of parents reported "strictly limiting" the content. Overall, while most parents impose some level of restrictions on short video viewing, the intensity of these restrictions and the quality of supervision remain inadequate, reflecting a relatively weak awareness among parents in this region regarding the regulation of children's short video consumption.

(3) The Impact of Short Videos on Children's Behavior

This questionnaire section comprised ten items assessing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. It examined the influence of short videos on children’s daily lives, covering aspects such as behavioral imitation, knowledge acquisition, interests, social interactions, consumption tendencies, and emotional fluctuations.

In terms of knowledge acquisition, children showed a positive response to learning new information, such as scientific facts and life skills, through short videos, with 53.85% of parents selecting "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree." Regarding behavior imitation, 42.54% of parents indicated that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that their children imitate internet slang, gestures, and other behaviors, showing that short videos have a direct influence on children's language and physical actions. As for learning interests and outdoor activities, 47.79% of parents reported that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" that their children have lost interest in learning or outdoor activities due to watching short videos. Regarding emotional fluctuations, 53.63% of parents noted that their children exhibited significant emotional changes (such as laughing, anger, or fear) due to short video content, and 48.91% of parents believed that children became irritable or cried when their access to short videos was limited or unavailable. This suggests that some children may exhibit dependency on short videos.

In conclusion, while short videos, as a highly pervasive medium, have expanded children's cognitive horizons to some extent, they also present challenges in areas such as emotional regulation, value orientation, and social interaction.

(4) Descriptive Analysis of Children's Socialization Levels

The questionnaire data from Section IV were analyzed according to Feng Xiaotian's seven-dimensional framework of child socialization. The results indicate generally positive socialization outcomes across multiple dimensions within the sample population.

Regarding social interaction skills, most parents reported that their children are eager to engage with peers, quickly make new friends, and are good at communication. In the three indicators, over 65% of parents selected "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree," indicating that children exhibit initiative and confidence in establishing interpersonal relationships.

In terms of rule awareness and moral behavior, the three items—"able to follow public order and rules," "respect elders and teachers," and "take care of classroom property"—had the highest

percentage of "strongly agree" responses among all the items, with the highest at 56.6%. This reflects the children's strong sense of normative awareness and moral inclination in their daily behavior.

The ability to participate in groups and cooperate is also noteworthy. The scores for "actively participating in group activities" and "able to cooperate well with peers" were generally high, indicating that children have developed an initial awareness of group participation and teamwork, possessing a basic cooperative spirit.

In terms of self-management and life skills, children can complete learning and daily tasks well. For example, the "strongly agree" response rate for "attending class on time without being late or leaving early" and "completing homework on time" exceeded 50%. Additionally, more than 60% of parents "somewhat agree" that children can "organize their school bags and wash their clothes" and "help with household chores," indicating that children have some degree of independent living skills.

In terms of responsibility awareness, items such as "having a strong sense of responsibility," "willing to help family members," and "setting examples based on role models around them" received high scores. Most children have a basic understanding of the consequences of their actions and have begun to develop a sense of responsibility and role modeling.

Emotional expression and regulation represent critical dimensions of socialization in early childhood development. In this dimension, "able to express their feelings" and "understanding others' emotions" received higher scores, while the ability to "control their own emotions" was slightly lower, suggesting that there is still room for development in emotional regulation. This requires focused attention from parents and schools in the education process.

Finally, in terms of learning motivation and exploration, over 60% of parents reported that their children "can complete tasks independently" and "are willing to express their career aspirations," and that they have a notable curiosity about new things. This indicates that the children in the sample possess awareness and interest in self-directed learning and future planning.

Overall, the socialization development of children in grades 1 to 3 in this sample presents a relatively positive trend, especially in areas such as rule awareness, self-care, and learning motivation. While social interaction and emotional regulation abilities have a solid foundation, there is still room for improvement in these areas.

4. Empirical Analysis

(1) Analysis of Gender Differences in Socialization Dimensions

To explore the gender differences in socialization development, this study used gender as the independent variable and the six socialization dimensions as dependent variables, conducting an independent samples t-test. The results (Table 3) show that for the life skills dimension, the significance value (sig) is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant gender difference in this dimension. Specifically, the average score for girls in the "life skills" dimension was 3.940, while for boys, it was 3.762. This suggests that girls perform better than boys in life skills such as self-care, independent living, and time management.

No statistically significant gender differences were found in the other five dimensions. This result indicates that, for children in grades 1 to 3, gender does not significantly affect social order compliance, social interaction, personality traits, role identity, or life goals, except for life skills.

(2) Analysis of the Impact of Family Residence on Children's Socialization

This study employed an independent samples t-test to investigate the effect of family residence on children's socialization levels. The analysis results (Table 4) show that for the dimensions of social order compliance, life skills, and life goals, the significance values (sig) were all less than 0.05, indicating significant differences in these aspects based on family residence. Specifically, in the "social order compliance" dimension, urban children had an average score of 4.498, significantly higher than rural children's score of 4.336, suggesting that urban children have a stronger sense of rules and order.

In the "life skills" dimension, urban children scored 3.963, higher than rural children's 3.716, indicating that urban children perform better in self-care and daily behavior management. In the "life goals" dimension, urban children also scored significantly higher than rural children, suggesting that the urban environment may better stimulate children's sense of future planning and motivation.

In contrast, no significant differences were found based on family residence in the dimensions of social interaction, personality traits, and role identity, as the sig values in these areas were greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences in these aspects.

Table 3. Independent Samples T-test by Gender

	Levene's homogeneity of variance test		Independent Samples t-test						
								95% CI Diff	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error	LL	UL
Social order compliance	1.803	.180	1.077	414	.282	.07353	.06826	-.06065	.20772
			1.080	403.595	.281	.07353	.06807	-.06029	.20736
Social interaction	3.199	.074	1.213	414	.226	.0925	.0763	-.0574	.2424
			1.217	402.529	.224	.0925	.0760	-.0570	.2420
Personality traits	.914	.340	1.645	414	.101	.13377	.08133	-.02611	.29365
			1.648	409.145	.100	.13377	.08117	-.02580	.29334
life skill	.006	.937	2.131	414	.034	.17840	.08371	.01384	.34295
			2.133	413.176	.033	.17840	.08363	.01401	.34278
Role identity	.306	.580	1.883	414	.060	.150032751512352	.079673587506309	-.006582464949838	.306647967974543
			1.885	413.657	.060	.150032751512352	.079607182442444	-.006452312216331	.306517815241035
Life goals	.210	.647	1.545	414	.123	.12528	.08111	-.03415	.28471
			1.545	413.963	.123	.12528	.08108	-.03411	.28467

Table 4. Independent Samples T-test by Children's Place of Residence

	Levene's homogeneity of variance test		Independent Samples t-test						
								95% CI Diff	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error	LL	UL
Social order compliance	1.614	.205	2.369	414	.018	.16139	.06812	.02749	.29529
			2.345	381.995	.020	.16139	.06883	.02606	.29672
Social interaction	.002	.968	1.888	414	.060	.1441	.0763	-.0059	.2941
			1.886	400.917	.060	.1441	.0764	-.0061	.2943
Personality traits	.930	.335	2.705	414	.007	.21955	.08115	.06003	.37907
			2.684	387.904	.008	.21955	.08179	.05874	.38036
life skill	.305	.581	2.960	414	.003	.24736	.08357	.08310	.41163
			2.942	391.950	.003	.24736	.08407	.08208	.41265
Role identity	1.143	.286	2.612	414	.009	.208004653868529	.079620715591816	.051493368289737	.364515939447321
			2.602	395.854	.010	.208004653868529	.079947952093859	.050828992027917	.365180315709141
Life goals	.994	.319	2.270	414	.024	.18408	.08110	.02466	.34351
			2.255	390.594	.025	.18408	.08164	.02357	.34460

(3) Analysis of the Impact of Short Video Usage on Socialization Dimensions

To further explore the potential impact of short video usage behaviors on children's socialization development, this study used Pearson correlation analysis to examine the effect of "average daily short video watching time" on children's socialization. The results are shown in table 5. The average daily watching time of short videos was found to have a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level with six socialization dimensions: social interaction, social order compliance, personality traits, life skills, role identity, self-awareness, and life goals. Specifically, the shorter the average daily watching time, the higher the scores on the socialization dimensions, indicating higher levels of socialization in children. In other words, longer exposure to short videos significantly interferes with the development of children's daily self-care, behavioral norms, social interaction, personality traits, role identity, self-awareness, and the formation of life goals. Excessive use of short videos may weaken children's development of stable, focused, and self-controlled personality traits, and negatively affect deeper psychological development areas such as self-awareness and goal orientation. This serves as a warning about the growing trend of younger children being exposed to short videos in today's society.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

		The average daily duration of short videos	Social interation	Social order compliance	Personality traite	Life skill	Role identity	Life goals
The average daily duration of short videos	Pearson's *r*	1	-.153**	-.142**	-.188**	-.260**	-.208**	-.216**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Social interation	Pearson's *r*	-.153**	1	.679**	.619**	.588**	.614**	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Social order compliance	**Pearson's *r***	-.142**	.679**	1	.712**	.604**	.633**	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Personality traite	Pearson's *r*	-.188**	.619**	.712**	1	.808**	.754**	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Life skill	Pearson's *r*	-.260**	.588**	.604**	.808**	1	.808**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Role identity	Pearson's *r*	-.208**	.614**	.633**	.754**	.808**	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416
Life goals	Pearson's *r*	-.216**	.605**	.639**	.780**	.804**	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	416	416	416	416	416	416	416

**Significantly correlated at the .01 level (two-tailed)

5. Summary

This study assessed the socialization development levels of children in grades 1 to 3 from two primary schools in Xinxiang, Henan Province. The evaluation was based on six key dimensions: social interaction, social order compliance, life skills, emotional expression, responsibility awareness, and life goals.

Overall, children in the sample region showed a solid developmental foundation in early socialization, demonstrating strong abilities in areas like normative awareness, cooperation, and life management. However, there is still a need for extra attention and guidance in emotional regulation and future planning. The analysis based on residence revealed that urban children scored significantly higher than rural children in most socialization areas, which may be related to factors such as the distribution of educational resources and the quality of family support.

The study findings reveal a significant negative impact of short video consumption on children's socialization levels. Prolonged viewing time correlates with lower scores across multiple socialization dimensions, particularly in social order compliance, self-regulation, and life goals. These results suggest a clear inverse relationship between excessive short video usage and key aspects of children's social development. Consequently, a coordinated effort involving families, schools, and broader society is essential to promote responsible short video usage and harness its potential as a constructive tool for socialization.

As the primary caregivers for children's media exposure, parents should play an active and proactive guiding role. The study shows that children who watch short videos for more than one hour a day tend to have lower socialization scores. Therefore, it is recommended that parents set clear time limits to avoid excessive immersion. Additionally, parents should pay attention to the selection and guidance of short video content, ensuring that the videos children watch have educational value and do not contain risks such as violent imitation, vulgar language, or consumer manipulation[4]. The survey revealed that only 22.84% of parents reported "strictly limiting" content, indicating that most families lack sufficient media awareness and need to improve their content control capabilities. Moreover, parent-child activities can serve as an effective alternative to short videos. Parents should proactively create opportunities for interaction, encouraging children to participate in outdoor activities, household chores, reading, and games, helping them gain feedback and a sense of

achievement in real-life contexts, thereby reducing dependence on short videos. Parents should also lead by example, reducing the time spent on phones in front of their children, setting a good example for media usage [5].

As a key environment for children's socialization, schools should incorporate media literacy education into regular curricula. Through thematic courses and behavioral training, students can develop critical skills to evaluate online content, regulate screen time, and manage emotional responses. Additionally, educators must remain vigilant to behavioral shifts linked to excessive short video consumption—including diminished attention spans and social withdrawal—and offer timely interventions to mitigate these effects.

Society should also assume responsibility for content regulation and technical guidance. Short video platforms should improve their youth mode and content classification mechanisms, reduce algorithmic promotion of vulgar and violent content, and encourage creators to provide high-quality content, such as educational, scientific, and social simulation videos [6].Regulatory authorities should promote the introduction of more detailed "short video usage regulations for minors," establishing industry standards and ensuring children grow up in a healthy and controlled online environment.

This study provides a preliminary exploration of the relationship between short video usage and socialization development in children from grades 1 to 3 through a questionnaire survey. Although the study has gained some data support and analysis conclusions, it still has certain limitations.

This study's sample was drawn exclusively from two primary schools in Xinxiang, Henan Province, which imposes limitations on both sample size and geographical representation. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the socialization development patterns of children across diverse regional contexts. Notably, Xinxiang's socioeconomic status, educational resource allocation, and parenting practices differ significantly from those in first-tier or new first-tier cities – factors that likely influence children's socialization outcomes and constrain the generalizability of our results. Future research should (1) conduct content analysis of short videos, integrating media literacy, emotional regulation, and value formation dimensions for mechanism exploration; (2) employ behavioral observation and experimental designs to strengthen causal inference; and (3) expand sampling to enhance ecological validity and cross-regional applicability.

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