Chinese online game content anomie and its Influence on teenagers

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Abstract: With the rapid development of online games in China, the impact of these games on teenagers has attracted widespread attention. This paper takes the disorder of some online game content as a starting point, and the influence on teenagers as a practical perspective, and by analyzing the manifestations and dangers of online game content disorder, it provides reference and insight for the improvement of the online game governance system in China and the promotion of the healthy development of the online game industry.

Keywords: Online Games, Content Deviation, Adolescents

1. Introduction

In recent years, online games have developed rapidly, and their user base is becoming increasingly younger, with the number of adolescent gamers on the rise. According to the "2013 Survey Report on the Internet Behavior of Chinese Youth," by December 2013, the usage rate of online games among underage netizens was 70.5%. In analyzing the internet application behavior of teenagers, middle school students are the group with the highest rate of online game usage, with a penetration rate as high as 75.2%. [1] Therefore, exploring the impact of online games on adolescents is a very important issue. First and foremost, we should recognize the positive contributions of online games in enriching the after-school lives of adolescents, broadening their horizons, enhancing their practical skills, alleviating academic pressures, and assisting them in understanding and utilizing the internet. At the same time, we have also observed issues with the content and operation of some online games, which conflict with and deviate from the cultural goals advocated by our society, such as their pornographic and violent content, and distorted values, which have had an immeasurable negative impact on the physical and mental health of adolescents. If the content of online games is not effectively regulated, they will continuously put our youth in danger. Cries like "Save our children" and "Who can help my internet-addicted child" are not just the pleas of a few parents.

The deviation of online game content refers to a conflict with the core socialist values of our country. The standards for evaluating the deviation of online game content mainly focus on the following aspects: whether the content of online games contradicts the core socialist values; whether the content of online games severely affects the physical and mental health of adolescents; and whether online games have or may have a destructive impact on social order. For this reason, this paper takes the deviation of some online game content as an entry point and the negative impact on adolescents as a practical perspective. By analyzing the manifestations and dangers of the deviation in online game content, the paper provides references and insights for improving China's online game governance system and promoting the healthy development of China's online game industry.

2. Online violent games and adolescents

Some existing online games attract players with intense fighting or war scenes and bloody, brutal content design, such as "Counter-Strike," "Grand Theft Auto," and "Resident Evil." These games, which are very popular among players, are all very violent. "Counter-Strike" is a large-scale first-person shooting game with the most direct pure confrontation gameplay as its core. The game contains frequent scenes of knife-wielding, shooting, sweeping, headshots, and explosions. "Grand Theft Auto" involves violent content, gang fights, grabbing territories, robbing guns, gunfights, killing, drug trafficking, and so on. If the

characters in the game can obtain a "crime code," they can rob equipment with impunity, attack opponents, and distinguish the status of players in the game through a "crime level." "Resident Evil" also has violent scenes such as shooting and explosions. These games make players feel as if they are in the scene through brutal and exciting storylines, realistic scene design, and exciting sound effects, keeping their nerves in a state of high excitement.

Research shows that bloody and violent online games often have the characteristics of inducing addiction. If teenagers are addicted to such games for a long time, they may confuse the "real self" with the "virtual self," which seriously threatens the healthy development of teenagers' physical and mental health and may even induce violent tendencies in behavior and speech in real life. It can be said that "online games are influencing teenagers in an imperceptible and scene-blending way, which is an undeniable fact." [2] In this regard, Dr. L. Rowell Huesmann, the director of the Social Research Institute at the University of Michigan, points out that after more than 30 years of research on the relationship between media violence and behavior: "Violent games can indeed cause a certain degree of aggressive behavior for two reasons: First, imitation. Children who watch violent media often form an idea in their hearts that the world is full of malice, and the only way to solve problems when there are contradictions and conflicts is to attack the opponent; second, after long-term exposure to violent games, children may become insensitive and be affected by it, which makes them more likely to be aggressive." [3] It can be seen that the violent elements in the game will affect the behavior and concepts of teenagers. Due to the large amount of violent and bloody content in online games, these contents constantly impact the originally weak cognition of teenagers, making them gradually accept the means of solving problems through violence. When they transfer the behavior of "fighting and killing" in the game to real life, it becomes one of the causes of juvenile delinquency.

In recent years, many scholars have begun to study the correlation between adolescents' addiction to online games and criminal behavior. According to the "2013 Survey Report on the Juvenile Delinquency in China" provided by the China Youth Crime Prevention Research Association, behaviors such as staying out all night, associating with bad company, truancy, smoking, playing violent online games, watching pornographic websites, engaging in gambling, and playing erotic games are considered to be precursors to juvenile delinquency. The rate of playing violent games is over 65%. Additionally, according to the "Foshan Court's Work Report on the Criminal Trial of Minors (2009-2013)" released by the Foshan Intermediate People's Court, cases caused by the internet account for 37.76% of juvenile criminal cases. [4] The report points out that juvenile crimes triggered by the internet mainly include two situations: one is to obtain money through criminal acts such as robbery, snatching, theft, etc., to meet their online needs; the other is to commit violent crimes under the influence of violent information on the internet.

Furthermore, there are classic case analyses of juvenile crimes in the "Guangdong Court's Work Report on the Criminal Trial of Minors (2008-2012)". In the analysis of the "Zhanjiang Student Shooting Case," it was pointed out that adolescents are influenced by the bad online environment around them, addicted to online games, and prone to committing crimes. The questionnaire survey of the "Online Game Regulation Research" team for teachers, students, and juvenile detainees also further confirms the correlation between addiction to online games and juvenile delinquency. In the questionnaire of 1,352 juvenile detainees interviewed by the team, 40.7% believe that addiction to violent games is more likely to be impulsive and irritable, which can induce violent crimes. 49.9% believe that there is a relationship between internet addiction and juvenile illegal and criminal behavior. In the questionnaire of 4,373 students, 40.8% believe that adolescents playing online games will have an irritable mood. It can be said that, on the one hand, addiction to online games induces violent crimes of adolescent players; on the other hand, violent content in online games provides feasible reference means and psychological hints for juvenile crimes. In addition, vivid cases can further confirm this correlation. According to the "Southern Daily," on April 28, 2014, a family of six in Pan Yu was killed. The cause of the tragedy was the murderer, Su, who was addicted to online games and lacked money to buy game equipment, so he broke into a house to rob and killed for money. "Sohu News" reported in October 2013 that Aqiang, addicted to online games, had the idea of kidnapping and extorting money because he lacked money for the internet. On November 14, he kidnapped and killed a 7-year-old boy and extorted 150,000 yuan from the boy's mother. "Tencent News" reported in February 2012 that a wounding case occurred in Zhenjiang City, Jiangsu Province. Xiao Hu, an 18-year-old student from a technical college, was very fond of playing a popular online game. He fought with his

teammates for a rare "trophy" equipment in the game and became enemies. Young and vigorous, Xiao Hu told the other party his address in the internet cafe, but he didn't expect the other party to come with a knife. Xiao Hu's palm was cut, his four finger tendons were ruptured on the spot, and his blood was dripping. Zhang and Wang, who injured people, were only 21 and 19 years old, respectively, and both were criminally detained. [5]

On March 25, 2010, the "Legal Daily" published an article titled "The Online Game Youth Chopped Over 100 Times Just Because He 'Feared the Other Party's Resurrection'." A 15-year-old boy, worried about being reported for stealing a classmate's mobile phone, chopped more than 100 knives on his classmate's mother. According to his own statement, he likes to play online games, and the characters in the game can be resurrected after death. His only thought when committing the crime was not to let the other party resurrect, because he thought that if the other party resurrected, he would be punished. It can be seen that the long-term addiction to online games has blurred the boundaries between reality and illusion. "Afraid that the other party will resurrect" has become the whole reason for his brutal murder of the victim with more than 100 knives.

The above data, cases, and research conclusions make us have to face the violent content in online games and the harm of online games to adolescents. To a certain extent, the high rate of violent crimes among young people in recent years is related to their addiction to violent online games: first, violent content has led young people to form a wrong moral cognition, believing that violent problem-solving is reasonable and legitimate; second, frequent violent behavior in the game has strengthened the aggressiveness of young people, while making young people have perceptual fatigue to violence; again, the violent plots in the game have a demonstration effect on the criminal behavior of young people.

3. Vulgar content misleads youth

Vulgar and poor-quality plot settings are prevalent in online and community-based online games, which mislead the behavior of teenagers. The specific manifestations are as follows:

First, the setting of pornographic plots. Mainly "incorporating obscene content into the game, gradually presenting nudity and other pornographic images through the game," [6] as the game level increases, the degree of pornographic design becomes stronger. This includes some violent games with character settings full of sexual temptation, such as "Resident Evil" and "God of War." It also includes specific pornographic games, such as the Japanese game "Desire Fight." These games with pornographic or violent content are eroding adolescent online game players.

Second, vulgar plot settings such as "stealing vegetables" and "cheating" that violate public morals or break the law. For example, the "stealing vegetables" plot, mainly found in online games like QQ Farm and Renren Farm. In the game, the prank of "stealing vegetables" is considered to be in accordance with the rules and valuable, and players can improve their own scores through similar behaviors.

Third, "gambling" plot settings. There are mainly two situations: one is gaming games, which tempt players to participate through "opening boxes" and "drawing for big prizes." In 2012, the "China Business News" published an article titled "Invisible Gambling: The 'Heroin' of Online Games," reporting players spending a lot of money participating in the "opening box" activity in the game "Sword and Fairy." The second is casino-style games, such as betting on size points, chess, and cards, where players use real money to exchange for virtual currency to participate in gambling activities. Tencent QQ Games' "Happy Landlord" is a card game that uses virtual currency as chips. Players participate in the game with Happy Beans as chips, and the losing side has to pay the winning side the corresponding Happy Beans. The game system will give players four gifts of Happy Beans every day, each time 1000 Happy Beans. After the players lose the gifted Happy Beans, if they want to continue to participate in the game, they must exchange Happy Beans with Q coins, and Q coins must be purchased with real money.

Fourthly, the settings of illegal and unlawful plots such as street racing and car collisions are mainly found in racing-type online games. In racing games, speed is the only criterion, with no rules to speak of. In the game, in order to seek the thrill and continuously challenge the speed limit, players are allowed to drive at high speed at will, allowing players to overtake and collide with vehicles at will. For example, "Test Drive Unlimited" is a racing game that emphasizes a sense of reality. There are special tips on the internet for

passing the game, including how to avoid the police. "Need for Speed Online" is a racing game where players can compete with other players in one-on-one or team racing.

The above plot settings of online games, to a certain extent, mislead the behavior of teenagers with incorrect values and challenge the real legal rules. First, erotic and violent games are prone to have a bad influence on the behavior and values of teenagers. In the "Online Game Regulation Research" group's electronic interview with college students, in response to the question "Do you think there are many erotic and violent games online?", out of 2586 valid questionnaires, 1939 people answered "there are many", accounting for 75%; 456 people answered "not many", accounting for 17.6%; 190 people answered "not clear", accounting for 7.4%. The survey of student groups showed that among the 4529 students surveyed, 28.4% have encountered sexual implications in online games. In the questionnaire for detained teenagers, the relevant questions showed that among the 1377 detained teenagers surveyed, for the question "Does the erotic content in online games have an impact on your thoughts and behavior?", 15.4% chose "it has an impact", and 50.6% chose "it has a certain impact". The above data indicates that the situation where online games in the Chinese market use erotic content or as a gimmick to attract teenagers not only exists but also has a significant negative impact on the physical and mental health of teenage players. Secondly, the superb driving skills in the game often inspire blind worship among teenagers and a desire to imitate certain stunts in reality. There are also illegal behaviors such as overloading, not wearing helmets, running red lights, and speeding in the game. Investigations have found that this street "real version" of racing activities has become a choice for some young people to seek excitement. Many racing online games, in order to attract the attention of teenage players, greatly promote the thrilling and shocking scenes of street racing. This strong sensory stimulation is very attractive to teenagers and can to a certain extent induce the curiosity of teenagers, leading to street racing behavior in reality. Again, the spread of incorrect values such as "stealing vegetables" and "gambling" is also not conducive to the formation of good behavioral norms and correct values for teenagers. Teenagers who are long immersed in such online games often ignore the legal and moral requirements of real society and choose to act according to the rules of the game, which can be serious and may escalate into criminal behavior.

Teenagers are in the period of forming their outlook on life, worldview, and values. Being long addicted to online games with gambling, pornography, and violence as the main content can easily lead to the loss of norms in teenagers' behavior.

4. Distorted values affect adolescents

The deviance in online game content also includes the wrong values spread in the game. It is specifically manifested in the following aspects:

4.1. The value concept of hedonism

The content and form of online games place special emphasis on players' sensory experiences. This includes the design of gorgeous and grand game scenes, exquisite and complete costumes and equipment, and intense and exciting game levels. Players experience visual and auditory impacts during the game, and they achieve a mental release, even becoming addicted to this kind of pleasant and relaxing sensory enjoyment, finding real life dull and weary.

4.2. The value concept of money worship.

Generally speaking, in the current online gaming market, many participants in online games need to invest money, such as "point cards," "gold diamonds," and so on. At the same time, in this virtual world of online games, there is a value propagation that money is above everything. For online game players, "currency" is extremely important. Money in the game is omnipotent; with "money," one can purchase a variety of equipment, costumes, props, and so on. The more wealth a person has, the higher the level and the better the performance of the items they can buy. Adolescents who are long immersed in such games are very susceptible to the influence of money-worshipping values.

For example, in the 3D massively multiplayer online game "Perfect World International," weapons, equipment, mounts, flying devices, and so on all require "money," and the more "money" one has, the better the performance of the props. In this game, Perfect coins are the recognized formal payment tools, and

players can use their Perfect coins to buy various equipment and weapons needed in the game. The prices of various flying devices in the game vary: Xuan Zhen is about 800 million Perfect coins, Shang Ming about 1.8 billion Perfect coins, Meteor about 2.8 billion Perfect coins, Meteorite about 8.8 billion Perfect coins, Black Hole about 16.8 billion Perfect coins, Fei sheng about 19.8 billion Perfect coins, Yao Guang about 22.8 billion Perfect coins, and so on. The mounts in the game are also graded according to price, such as the plum deer for about 6.8 billion Perfect coins, the Cambrian dragon for about 12.8 billion Perfect coins, the ground flying dragon for about 22.8 billion Perfect coins, and so on. In addition, the characters in the game can also use a huge amount of Perfect coins to prepare a luxurious wedding for themselves in the game. Some players even exchange real money for experience points to achieve the purpose of leveling up. The list goes on. Moreover, the "money" in the game needs the support of real money to some extent, that is to say, most of the Perfect coins in the game need to be exchanged for RMB. The exchange ratio of RMB to Perfect coins is about 100 RMB for 1 billion Perfect coins. That is to say, to maintain high configuration and high performance in the game for a long time, continuous financial investment is needed.

4.3. The value concept of individual heroism.

Online game developers, in order to attract more teenage players, often design a large number of heroic characters in the game. For example, "Dynasty Warriors" promotes the concept of individual heroism, advocating single combat and exaggerating individual "strength". In this game, the growth of the warriors is determined by the achievements in the virtual battlefield. The main way to level up is to gain experience points, and experience points are increased by "killing". As the number of "kills" increases, the level will also gradually improve. In the game, "upgrading" is the only goal, and players try their best to eliminate designated enemies within a valid time to achieve their own level enhancement. In this process, the more enemies a player "kills", the stronger his combat ability is. This strong combat ability is affirmed and recognized in the game, and may even be worshiped and sought after by other players. Long-term influence of this game atmosphere makes the players' "individual heroism" mentality expand. However, the standard for judging the "heroes" in the game is "strength", so it makes young players also advocate individual "strength" to a certain extent, and then form the value concept and the wrong concept of heroes that bully the weak and the strong eat the weak.

The distorted world view, outlook on life, and values in online games have a great influence on young players. First, the hedonistic values spread in online games are very harmful to teenagers. Many teenagers are addicted to online games, largely because they crave the spiritual enjoyment brought by online games, while they can escape real difficulties and setbacks. This makes addicted teenagers often weak in will and lack a sense of responsibility. Second, the "money omnipotent" concept advocated in online games also subtly affects the formation of teenagers' views on money. It makes some teenagers pay too much attention to "interests" and make immoral and even illegal actions in order to obtain some benefits. Third, the game advocates the extreme "individualism" concept, which also has a serious adverse effect on teenagers. Teenagers addicted to online games often pay more attention to personal interests and feelings, with a strong awareness of being self-centered.

5. Online games misinterpret history and culture

China has a long and profound traditional historical culture, rich in content and distinctive, with great value for development and utilization. To cater to domestic and foreign game enthusiasts, especially Chinese online game fans, some domestic and foreign online game developers have developed online games based on Chinese history and culture. However, some online games have seriously distorted or altered the historical and cultural connotations during the development process, due to the developers' lack of historical knowledge, the stance of foreign developers, or the developers' focus on profit-oriented business models.

Firstly, there is a contradiction between historical facts and interpretation, mainly in the character settings. For example, in the online version of "Romance of the Three Kingdoms," while the game tries to present the true face of history on one hand, it deliberately exaggerates and beautifies character images to make them more distinctive and charming on the other. For instance, Zhao Yun is depicted as an almost perfect warrior and strategist in the game, while characters of the same level in real history are portrayed as insignificant and minor, which deviates from historical accuracy.

Secondly, there is a temporal and spatial confusion in the language used. The game "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" contains a large number of Japanese terms, such as "Seihatsu," which does not exist in traditional Chinese culture. There is also a lot of linguistic confusion in "Kill!" For example, Deng Ai's quote "Hoeing the fields at noon, sweat drips down to the soil," Lu Xun's "Cards are not omnipotent, but without cards, it's absolutely impossible," Sima Yi's "Out in the world is to take people's money and help people with their troubles," and Liu Chan's "My dad is Liu Bei," and so on.

Thirdly, there is a distortion of real history. Some attentive players have found that Taiwan is not included in the vast map of the 9th, 10th, and 11th versions of "Romance of the Three Kingdoms." Whether this is intentional or accidental, it has to some extent misled players. In addition, in the game "Koihime Musou," Guan Yu is altered to be a jealous beautiful girl. In the game "Big Talk about the Warring States," Jing Ke is depicted as trying to assassinate not Emperor Qin Shi Huang, but L v Bu Wei. This kind of distortion is quite ridiculous and not serious, not only disrespecting Chinese history and culture but also seriously misleading teenagers.

For teenagers, online games are more attractive than history textbooks, so they are easily influenced by the initial impression they get from the historical content in games. This is very detrimental to the establishment of a correct view of history for young people. It is undeniable that historical-themed online games have stimulated teenagers' interest in history, and the large number of historical elements in historical online games have aroused teenagers' players' extensive attention to historical figures and events. Many players have a deeper understanding of the "historical" context, event content, and character traits in online games. However, if there are a large number of historical errors in online games, they will seriously mislead teenagers. Some extreme, incorrect, or even distorted interpretations of history will also mislead teenagers' views of history.

6. Conclusion

Online games are an interactive form of entertainment, a fusion of the internet and culture. While offering leisure and entertainment, they also disseminate a vast amount of information to players. Consequently, in the process of advancing the online gaming industry, enhancing the cultural consciousness of game developers is crucial. Additionally, it is important to regulate the content of online games in a targeted and effective manner and to lead through systems to actively encourage online gaming companies to develop green games. The development of high-quality national games that promote national spirit, reflect the characteristics of the era, and carry forward the rich connotations of Chinese history and culture, as well as positively healthy online games, is essential. Reducing the negative impact of online games on adolescents is undoubtedly key to fostering the healthy development of the online gaming industry.

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