

Discussion on Psychological Problems and Countermeasures to Solve The Problems of Migrant Children of Migrant Workers under the Background of New Media

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Abstract: This paper compiles related research literature and focuses on the psychological health problems of migrant children in the context of new media. It explores the current situation of mental health of this group in urban adaptation, including the lack of group belonging, lack of self-acceptance, social anxiety, etc., and its association with the use of new media. It analyzes the influencing factors, such as family, school, society, and the new media environment. We analyze the influencing factors of family, school, society, and new media environment, and analyze the influence factors of family, school, and new media environment. Combined with the characteristics of new media platforms such as “Shake” and “WeChat”, we explore the strategies of utilizing new media to carry out mental health education, promote the synergy between family, school, and society, and implement targeted interventions. It also proposes specific ideas in the case of Chengdu City, providing theoretical references and practical guidance for solving the mental health problems of this group.

Keywords: Migrant workers; migrant children; psychological problems; new media

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1. Introduction

Urbanization is an inevitable trend of China’s social development and an important driving force for economic transformation. In 2024, the urbanization rate of China’s resident population will reach 67.00%, and the number of migrant workers in cities will exceed 290 million. As the center city of western China, the number of migrant workers in Chengdu continues to rise, and their accompanying children have gradually become a part of the city’s education and social development that cannot be ignored, and their mental health problems are becoming more and more prominent. New media technology has profoundly changed their lives and studies, and short video platforms and social software have become the main channels of information and socialization. However, their information screening ability, media literacy, and psychological tolerance have not yet matured, which has led to the emergence of new features of traditional psychological problems. Research shows that there are differences in the mental health level between migrant children and local children in urban areas, which are further amplified in the new media environment due to changes in information exposure and socialization patterns. Therefore, it is of great significance to systematically analyze the related problems and countermeasures in light of the practice in Chengdu.

2. Main psychological problems of migrant children in the context of new media

2.1. Weak sense of belonging to the group and identity dilemma

Due to the differences in household registration and living environment, migrant children are often “marginalized” in the city, and their sense of group belonging is significantly lower than that of local children in the city, and the gap widens with the rise of grades^[1]. The symbols of urban life in the social platforms of new media construct a “mainstream” frame of reference and reinforce their perception of being “outsiders”. Some migrant children reduce online interaction due to “different topics from their urban classmates”, forming “self-isolation”. The low level of school connection of migrant children is manifested in their low participation in class activities and low interaction with teachers^[2]. New media virtual socialization replaces part of the offline communication, weakening the sense of integration into the real collective, which may trigger a sense of loneliness and depression in the long term.

2.2. Insufficient self-acceptance and aggressive tendencies

Self-acceptance is a core element of mental health, and the self-acceptance level of migrant children is significantly affected by family structure and campus roles, with lower self-acceptance scores for children whose parents are divorced or who have not served as class members. Inadequate self-acceptance is easily transformed into aggression, and the anonymity of new media provides a “safe outlet” for aggressive behavior, with some children releasing negative emotions through online comments and game interactions. Aggression scores were higher in the group with low levels of self-acceptance among migrant children^[3]. The dissemination and imitation of violent content in new media further strengthen the association, forming a vicious cycle of “reality frustration - online catharsis - behavioral solidification”.

2.3. Social Anxiety and Interpersonal Relationship Disorders

In real-life social situations, migrant children often display sensitive and withdrawn behaviors, and more than 70% of them suffer from social disturbances such as “feeling nervous when communicating with strangers” and “worrying about being laughed at by others”^[4]. This situation is further exacerbated by over-indulgence in new media: the instantaneous and fragmented nature of online interactions gradually replaces in-depth face-to-face exchanges, causing their ability to interact in reality to weaken, with problems such as poor expression and lack of empathy. Peer relationships in school play a key role in reducing social anxiety, but migrant children find it difficult to integrate into the social circles of their urban classmates due to “cultural divides” and “differences in interests”^[5]. Although the “circling” social model of new media can bring a brief sense of belonging, it invariably reduces their willingness to engage in cross-group interactions, and ultimately creates the schizophrenic state of “active and positive online, silent and reticent offline”.

3. Analysis of the Causes of Psychological Problems

3.1. Constraints of family environment

3.1.1 Parenting style and lack of companionship

Migrant parents are mostly negligent of their children’s education due to their busy work. More than 60% of parents “communicate with their children for less than one hour a day”, and their cultural level is mainly junior high school and below, making it difficult to provide effective psychological support^[6]. Some parents leave the responsibility of education entirely to the school and lack supervision over their children’s new media use, leading to excessive indulgence.

3.1.2. Insufficient cooperation between home and school

Migrant parents have low school participation, less initiative to communicate with teachers about their children’s psychological conditions, and are not skilled in the use of school online communication platforms, leading to a break in the home-school synergy mechanism and the formation of “educational islands” in the new media era^[7].

3.2. Shortcomings in school education

3.2.1. Absence of mental health education

Most of the schools receiving migrant children lack mental health education resources, there are not enough full-time psychological teachers, the curriculum is in form^[8], and there is a lack of targeted intervention programs for psychological problems caused by new media.

3.2.2. Insufficient media literacy education

Schools do not pay enough attention to the media literacy training of migrant children, and offer fewer courses on information screening and network safety^[9]. Teachers' limited ability to apply new media makes it difficult to guide students to use the Internet reasonably, resulting in some children getting lost in the information wave.

3.2.3. Insufficient inclusiveness of campus culture

The campus culture of some schools is not sufficiently inclusive of migrant children, and there is hidden discrimination, and the social circles of urban students and migrant children are relatively isolated. This environment has weakened the sense of belonging of migrant children, forcing them to turn to the Internet to seek recognition.

3.3. Influence of social environment

3.3.1. Implicit discrimination and stigmatization

Although the policy guarantees equal rights for migrant children, implicit discrimination still exists in society. The stereotype of "migrant children = problem students" in new media spreads through short videos and comments, reinforcing public prejudice and affecting the self-perception of migrant children.

3.3.2. Insufficient regulation and support of new media

New media platforms have imperfect filtering mechanisms for undesirable information, and discriminatory content and violent information targeting migrant children are easy to spread. Meanwhile, there is a lack of mental health support platforms specifically designed for migrant children, which makes it difficult to intervene in their psychological problems in time^[10].

4. Countermeasures and Suggestions

4.1. Family level: using new media as a link to strengthen parent-child interaction and media supervision.

4.1.1. Enhance parents' parenting and communication skills

Carry out online training with the help of community parent schools and WeChat public numbers (e.g., "Chengdu Parent Classroom"), which contain the laws of children's psychological development, effective communication methods, etc., and push out 2-3 short video courses per month. Implementing the "Parent-Child New Media Interaction Program", advocating that parents and their children participate in activities such as Jieyin "Family Stories" short video creation and WeChat reading punch cards, like the "Parent-Child Reading Live" in some communities in Chengdu city "in some communities in Chengdu, as a way to reduce the amount of time children spend online alone and enhance emotional connections.

4.1.2. Fine-tuning media regulation and guidance

Compile a "Family Internet Guide" and guide parents to set up cell phone "screen time management" functions (e.g., no more than 1.5 hours of Internet access per day) and install content filtering software. Establishing an "Internet contract" mechanism, whereby parents and their children jointly negotiate the range of time and content to be used online, and record them through a WeChat app, thus cultivating self-management skills.

4.2. School level: building a new media-enabled mental health and support system

4.2.1. Create a new media-enabled mental health education scene

Psychology teachers and publicity teachers form a special team to produce 5-8 minute/period videos on psychological themes (e.g., “We are all small class masters” micro-lesson to cultivate a sense of belonging to the group), which are pushed out weekly through the campus public number. Synchronize the development of the “Hole in the Wall” anonymous message system and set up an offline consultation appointment portal. Organize a collection of campus psychological works (short videos/cartoons), and select outstanding works to be displayed on platforms such as electronic class boards.

4.2.2. Systematic promotion of media literacy education

Make “new media literacy” a required course with one class period per week: lower grades focus on the “three-step method for identifying online rumors,” while upper grades delve into issues such as cyberbullying and privacy protection, using real-life cases to practice responses. At the same time, collaborate with local media outlets to take students to newspapers and television stations to complete “fact-checking challenges” and “short video production training,” enhancing their ability to judge information through practical experience.

4.3. Social level: optimizing the environment and collaborative support by using new media as a tool

4.3.1. Strengthen new media content supervision and positive guidance

Promote platforms to establish “migrant children-friendly content” review mechanisms, requiring short-video platforms to increase manual review of content involving “migrant children” and filter discriminatory remarks; algorithmic recommendation systems to prioritize and push “urban-rural integration. The algorithm recommendation system prioritized the push of “urban-rural integration” themed content.

4.3.2. Constructing a “home-school-society” digital collaborative network

Construct a “Cloud Platform for Services for Migrant Children”, integrating educational, psychological, and community service resources, realizing real-time sharing of information such as parents’ inquiries about hosting centers and appointments for psychological counseling, schools’ notices, and communities’ undertaking of practical activities. Promote the “Mental Toughness Training Camp” online and offline combination model, social organizations to develop a WeChat small program “toughness refueling station”, to provide psychological mini-tests, emotional regulation audio; offline monthly “City Challenge “ activities, online synchronization to share feelings and enhance stress resistance.

4.3.3. Upgrade digital mental health services

Optimize the functions of the Chengdu “Spiritual Partners” platform, add AI voice interaction modules, and automatically push targeted suggestions; access professional psychological counselors to sit in online clinics, and provide low-priced video consulting services.. Develop “Peer Support” community applets, establish online mutual support groups by age groups, encourage senior grades to share adaptation experiences, and equip volunteers to guide discussions.

5. Conclusion

In the new media environment, the mental health problems of migrant workers’ children present complex causes in the family, school, society, and individuals. To solve this problem, it is necessary to build a multi-party collaborative mechanism: families should strengthen parent-child communication and guidance on Internet use, schools should improve psychological counseling services and media literacy education, and society should purify the Internet environment and establish a support network while helping students to improve their psychological adjustment ability. This systematic intervention has proven to be effective in improving their psychological state. In the future, it is necessary to improve the relevant policies, increase the investment of resources, and make good use of the advantages of new media technology to

create better conditions for the psychological health and urban integration of migrant children.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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