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# A study on the psychological mechanisms and intervention strategies of teenagers' network misconduct from the perspective of psychology

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## Abstract

With the rapid development of digital technology, the Internet is constantly changing people's cognition and lifestyle, bringing unprecedented convenience and efficiency. Meanwhile, as a virtual space parallel to the real world, the potential risks and challenges of the internet are becoming increasingly prominent, especially for the large and vulnerable group of teenagers. Teenagers, when their psychology and personality are not yet mature, are easily influenced by negative factors in the online environment, which can lead to online deviant behavior. It is not only the right of teenagers to grow up healthily in the Internet era and avoid the erosion of negative information, but also the sacred duty entrusted to the whole society by law. Therefore, using a psychological perspective to analyze the formation mechanism of adolescent online deviant behavior, exploring effective solutions to prevent and correct adolescent deviant behavior, and ensuring that adolescents can grow up healthy and safe in the era of the internet.

## Keywords

psychology, teenagers, online, deviant behavior, preventive strategies

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# Исследование психологических механизмов и стратегий вмешательства в сетевое правонарушение подростков

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## Аннотация

Стремительное развитие цифровых технологий меняет сознание и образ жизни людей, предоставляя им большие возможности. В то же время, являясь виртуальным пространством, параллельным реальному миру, потенциальные риски интернета становятся все более заметными, особенно для такой уязвимой аудитории, как подростки. Подростки, чья психология

и личность еще не созрели, легко поддаются влиянию негативных факторов в интернет-среде, что может привести к девиантному поведению в сети «Интернет». Благополучно развиваться в эпоху современных технологий и не поддаваться воздействию негативной информации – не просто право подрастающего поколения, но и обязанность, возложенная законом на общество. Анализируя механизм формирования девиантного поведения подростков в сети «Интернет» с психологической точки зрения, следует определить эффективные решения для профилактики и коррекции их неправомерного поведения, а также обеспечить им здоровое и безопасное развитие в век цифровых технологий.

### Ключевые слова

психология, подростки, онлайн, девиантное поведение, превентивные стратегии

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#### 1. The concept and main types of adolescent online deviant behavior

Irregular behavior is a social phenomenon that occurs at a certain historical stage in the development of human society and is widely present in human society. From a sociological perspective, deviant behavior refers to the behavior of social members under specific social conditions that deviates or violates social norms, also known as deviant behavior or deviant behavior. Based on the spatial differences generated by deviant behavior, we divide deviant behavior into two types: real-life deviant behavior and online deviant behavior (Zuo & Li). From a psychological perspective, the adolescent population, due to being in a critical period of personality formation, has not yet fully formed its values and worldview, and lacks accurate value judgments for information on the internet. Therefore, it is more susceptible to false information, violent content, and even the negative values presented in short video images will be imitated. Therefore, adolescent online deviant behavior usually refers to deviant behavior that violates social norms or values in the virtual world of the internet. These behaviors often stem from insufficient awareness of the complexity and risks of cyberspace among adolescents, as well as insufficient ability to consciously resist negative cultures.

The main types of adolescent online misconduct include internet addiction, internet pornography, cyberbullying, and cybercrime, all of which have a negative impact on the psychological and social functions of adolescents. Specifically:

##### (1) Adolescent internet addiction

Adolescent Internet addiction, also known as Internet use disorder or excessive Internet use. With the popularization of the network, especially with the popularization of smart phones, tablets and other devices and the rapid development of Internet technology. The phenomenon of teenagers becoming addicted to online games, short videos, social media, etc. is becoming increasingly prominent, which has affected their daily life, learning, social interaction, and physical and mental health. Internet addiction can be seen as a psychological disorder characterized by prolonged addiction to the internet, leading to significant damage to social and psychological functioning in adolescents.

##### (2) Teenage internet pornography

Teenage online pornography typically refers to information primarily focused on sexual or physical nudity, transmitted through channels such as the dissemination of pornographic images and text. Its purpose is to tease and seduce the user's sexual excitement. Teenagers are in a critical period of life development and moral character formation, and are easily influenced by online pornography. Long term exposure to these vulgar and unhealthy information can have a profound negative impact on their physical and mental health.

### (3) Teenage cyberbullying

Teenage cyberbullying, also known as online bullying, is one of the urgent online risks and forms of harm that needs to be addressed, and it is also a new type of campus violence. Mainly through various online media such as QQ, WeChat, email, chat rooms, etc., spread harmful comments, pictures, or videos that harm the victims, causing them to be repeatedly observed on a larger scale and causing greater and deeper mental pain. At the same time, online bullying is also prone to generalization into real-life campus bullying incidents. There is evidence to suggest that there is a close connection and "continuity" between offline bullying and online bullying. Most victims of online bullying are first bullied on campus, with a large proportion of victims being bullied both online and offline (Prevention and treatment of bullying and violence in primary and middle school students, 2018). These have a profound negative impact on the mental health and social adaptability of adolescents.

### (4) Juvenile cybercrime

Teenagers have been living in the rapidly changing digital age since childhood, learning to understand the world through numbers and the internet, and growing up under the joint influence of the real world and the online world, known as "digital natives". Teenagers, due to their developing mental state and relatively weak willpower, coupled with the infiltration and negative impact of unhealthy habits in real life, are prone to develop rebellious psychology and excessive dependence on the internet after being frustrated in real life, leading to the risk of cognitive bias and personality distortion in the process of socialization, and thus falling into the wrong path, even leading to illegal and criminal activities (Feng, 2023).

## **2. The psychological mechanism of adolescent internet deviant behavior**

Psychological mechanisms are the deep-seated driving forces of behavior, and behavior is the external manifestation of these psychological activities. The emergence of online deviant behavior among teenagers is often closely related to their internal psychological mechanisms. We need to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind adolescent online deviant behavior in order to more effectively prevent and intervene in such behavior.

### (1) Immature mind is a key factor leading to adolescent online deviant behavior

Teenagers are in a special period of physical and psychological development, with weak awareness of laws and regulations, making it difficult to have a correct understanding and judgment of the legitimacy and legality of their own behavior. With the advent of the internet age, various feudal superstitions, decadent ideas, Western ideologies, pornography, violence, and other negative information have also emerged. This can easily cause teenagers to gradually become blurred in their views on right and wrong, their moral consciousness to decline, and their physical and mental health to be vulnerable to harm. Immature mental state is a key inducement for adolescent online deviant behavior, including cognitive narrowness, weak self-control, insufficient prediction of consequences, strong rebelliousness, and excessive curiosity. The internet is filled with stimulating information such as violence, pornography, and extreme speech, posing a great challenge to immature teenagers. At the same time, the internet has created a convenient communication platform for teenagers, increasing the risk of deviant behavior, and some negative forums have become a breeding ground for negative psychological ideologies. In the information age, teenagers lack the ability to distinguish between true and false information, and are easily misled by extreme remarks, confusing reality and virtuality.

### (2) Imitating violence is an explicit factor leading to teenagers' deviant behavior on the Internet

Imitation, as an important way of human learning, has accompanied us since childhood and shaped individual behavioral styles. Bandura's social learning theory emphasizes that in a social environment, individuals learn and adapt by observing and imitating the behavior of others. In the era of network information, the Internet has become an important "tool" for young people to learn. Some negative information has been rendered into stimulating and attractive forms, which makes young people

have an intuitive impact and mislead them into it, so that they can easily observe and imitate in images. Foreign studies have also found that violent information on the internet has a significant impact on adolescent online deviant behavior. Long term exposure to negative information on the internet can cause significant psychological and behavioral changes in adolescents, with irritability and impulsiveness becoming characteristics of such adolescents (Yang, 2014). Teenagers may try to copy the violence they see on the Internet as a way to solve problems or express emotions, and this imitation may evolve into network deviant behavior, or even criminal behavior.

(3) The basic attributes of the Internet are the risk factors that induce teenagers' Internet deviant behavior

As an important platform for information dissemination, the Internet has the basic attributes of openness, sociability, virtuality and concealment. These basic attributes have largely become risk factors for inducing adolescent online deviant behavior. Firstly, openness makes it easy for teenagers to access inappropriate online content, such as information that excessively promotes violence or bad behavior. Due to the immaturity of their minds, teenagers find it difficult to accurately assess the value and impact of this information, making it easy to be misled. Second, the social nature of the Internet has also exacerbated this problem. On social media, teenagers may be influenced by peers imitating and promoting negative behaviors, forming a false social culture. Third, the virtuality and concealment of the Internet have weakened teenagers' moral and legal concepts. Teenagers may lose proper behavioral guidance in the virtual world, leading them to ignore legal constraints and engage in online misconduct. At the same time, the Internet may also lead to cognitive biases of adolescents, which may lead to incorrect and objective understanding of social phenomena and induce network deviant behaviors.

### 3. Countermeasures for Teenagers' Internet Misconduct

The rapid development of Internet technology has changed the world, but also profoundly affected the psychology of young people. Teenager online misconduct has brought many negative impacts to the development and stability of society. The formation of this deviant behavior is due to the psychological characteristics of teenagers themselves. It is not only the right of teenagers, but also the sacred duty of the whole society entrusted by law to let teenagers absorb positive nutrients and grow up healthily in the Internet era. Therefore, all sectors of society should take joint action, build a collaborative mechanism, actively create a clear online environment, and continue to strengthen relevant security measures to resolutely prevent and reduce the occurrence of online misconduct among young people, and fully protect their healthy growth.

(1) Purify the online environment and promote a healthy, positive, and upward online culture

In the era of the rapid development of the Internet, the network environment and network ethics are facing enormous challenges. The online environment is impacted by harmful information, which affects the physical and mental health development of adolescents; The ethical standards on the internet are not yet sound, and teenagers lack the ability to regulate their own behavior, which can easily have an impact on the reality of morality; The openness and virtuality of the internet put teenagers in a dangerous situation at any time. Therefore, we urgently need to create a green and healthy online environment full of humanistic care and atmosphere.

Firstly, strengthen education and guidance for all netizens, especially young netizens. As indigenous people in the digital age, teenagers are spending more and more time in the online world. Therefore, it is crucial to improve their internet literacy and cultural literacy. Through various channels such as school education, family education, and social education, we guide young people to develop good internet habits, clarify ethical norms on the internet, enhance their ability to distinguish online information, and thus avoid being harmed by harmful information.

Second, we should strengthen the supervision and management of Internet content. By implementing special actions such as the "Clean Net Action", we will strengthen the supervision of

various types of online information such as online news, social media, and online videos. Vigorously crack down on illegal and harmful information online, clean up online junk, and purify the online space. At the same time, we should actively encourage netizens to report online illegal activities, form a network governance pattern with the participation of the whole society, and provide netizens with a clear online space.

Third, strengthen the enforcement of Internet regulation. In order to pursue commercial interests, some Internet enterprises often ignore the review and management of network information content, which leads to the spread of illegal and harmful information on the network. In this regard, the relevant functional departments of the government and the Internet industry regulators should strengthen the regular inspection of the network platform, expose and punish those who find violations in a timely manner, order the severely illegal network platform to shut down for rectification, and severely punish the enterprises involved. Effectively curb the occurrence of online illegal and criminal activities from the source, and jointly maintain the healthy and stable development of the network.

(2) Focusing on strengthening school education and cultivating positive and upward values among young people

Schools play a crucial role in preventing online deviant behavior among adolescents based on their physical and mental development characteristics. In order to better guide teenagers to treat the internet correctly and improve their self-protection abilities, schools should take a series of targeted measures.

Firstly, schools should offer network security education courses and incorporate them into the curriculum system. The course content should target the characteristics of young people and promote online knowledge to them in an easy to understand way, such as how to distinguish the authenticity of online information and how to avoid online fraud. Through systematic learning, teenagers can enhance their awareness of network security and improve their self-protection abilities. In addition to classroom teaching, schools can also carry out a series of activities related to network security. For example, organizing cybersecurity knowledge competitions, holding themed class meetings on network ethics and the rule of law, etc. These activities can stimulate the interest of teenagers, guide them to treat the internet correctly, and cultivate good internet habits. At the same time, schools should pay attention to the problem of teenagers becoming addicted to the virtual world, guide them to balance the relationship between real life and the virtual world through activities, and avoid excessive addiction.

Secondly, schools should actively guide young people to consciously abide by online ethics. The Internet is a huge resource pool. Teenagers can access the wider world and acquire rich knowledge through the Internet by using the Internet to obtain information, learn knowledge, exchange and interact. Schools can encourage teenagers to participate in online learning, online discussions, and other activities to cultivate their positive and healthy lifestyle. In order to strengthen the legal awareness and awareness of young people, schools can invite legal experts or legal promoters to give special lectures at the school. Through real cases and in-depth analysis, make teenagers aware that the internet is filled with various harmful information and content that is detrimental to their physical and mental health. These lectures can enhance the legal awareness of young people and make them consciously resist the influence of harmful information and content.

Thirdly, pay attention to the mental health of adolescents and promote positive interpersonal communication. Schools should actively pay attention to the mental health of young people, and make every effort to ensure their physical and mental health by enriching mental health courses, organizing mental health themed activities, and establishing quick response psychological counseling mechanisms. Especially, they should strengthen psychological counseling for students with poor psychological qualities such as introverted, solitary, impulsive, and unstable emotions, and provide necessary psychological counseling and support. At the same time, when teenagers face difficulties in

their studies, interpersonal relationships, and other aspects, they should provide professional advice and help in a timely manner, providing a safe space for them to speak freely, confide in their inner troubles, and receive professional psychological support to alleviate potential psychological pressure.

(3) Using a diversified social service system as a guarantee to promote the healthy growth of young people

To promote the construction of a diversified social service system, it is necessary for the whole society to collaborate and participate together, and establish a close linkage mechanism. The core of this mechanism is to achieve seamless sharing of information, ensuring that all departments can obtain relevant information at the first time and take coordinated and consistent actions when necessary. Through this approach, we can form a strong collaborative force to jointly address various challenges in social services.

Firstly, society should attach importance to the promotion and expansion of cultural, sports, entertainment, and social activities. In order to better promote the healthy growth of young people, the government should actively formulate a series of beneficial policies and provide necessary resource support for them. These resources include youth activity centers, sports facilities, and various cultural and artistic projects, aiming to provide a rich and colorful growth environment for young people. At the same time, the government should encourage parents to actively participate in cultural and sports activities for teenagers, and participate in family sports events or family art projects together with their children. This not only enhances the connection between family members, but also allows children to feel the charm of sports and art in the warm environment of the family, thereby cultivating their interests and hobbies.

Secondly, society should encourage and support young people to participate in various social practice activities. By participating in social activities such as volunteer service, teenagers can cultivate their sense of social responsibility and teamwork skills in practice. These activities not only help teenagers better understand society, but also help them establish good interpersonal relationships and lay a solid foundation for their future growth.

Thirdly, society should actively organize specialized training and educational activities to help teenagers improve their self-protection abilities. These activities can include knowledge and skills on how to identify and respond to potential dangers, how to handle interpersonal relationships correctly, and how to seek help. Through these training and education, teenagers can better protect themselves and avoid becoming victims of illegal activities.

In short, in the era of rapid development of the Internet, we should make full use of the convenience and resources brought by informatization to our life, work and study; At the same time, it is also necessary to fully evaluate the risks and hidden dangers hidden behind informatization, especially the uncertain impact it brings to young people. Currently, China is fully accelerating the promotion of the strategy of building a strong education country and resolutely implementing digital strategic actions, with the primary task of building a comprehensive, systematic, and high-quality education system. In this process, ensuring that young people can thrive and engage in effective learning in a safe and healthy online environment should be regarded as an indispensable key element in achieving high-quality education development. It needs to receive widespread attention and high attention from all sectors of society, and work together to safeguard the physical and mental health of young people.

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