

# ***The Dilemma and Countermeasures of Contemporary Chinese Youth's Gender Education under the Influence of the Internet***

Shenglai Lu<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Shanghai United International School, Shanghai, China

a. aperez66647@student.napavalley.edu

\*corresponding author

**Abstract:** The development of the Internet has greatly facilitated people's lives and helped students acquire knowledge, but at the same time, it has also placed obstacles in the way of students' gender education. This paper analyzes the dilemma and obstacles of students' gender education in the context of the information age. This paper argues that students' gender education is very important, but due to the age characteristics of students and parents' shy attitude towards gender education, students are easily misled by online information, and have bad consequences. For this reason, schools and parents should pay attention to gender education. Through the joint transformation of society, schools, and parents, gender education should be carried out for students as soon as possible so that students can construct correct gender cognition. At the same time, an open and normal attitude towards sex education should be recommended so that students can receive correct information and relevant education from schools and parents.

**Keywords:** Gender education, Internet, gender cognition

## **1. Introduction**

With the development of society and the progress of mankind, people have more entertainment space while meeting basic food and clothing. Since the introduction of reform and opening up in the 1980s, the material life of the Chinese people has been fully guaranteed. With the development of science and technology, the increasing popularity of the Internet allows all countries and cultures to spread widely. Under this trend, teenagers who are influenced by the rich online world are uncertain about their gender under the influence of various factors. Teenagers are easily attracted and confused by the online world, and this phenomenon is particularly prominent in today's digital age. The paper analyzes in detail why teenagers are susceptible to the Internet and the possible effects.

## **2. Importance and Problems in the Construction of Adolescent Gender Cognition in the Online Environment**

### **2.1. The Importance of Gender Education**

In today's society, the importance of gender education cannot be ignored. For Chinese youth, gender education is not only necessary knowledge to understand their bodies, sexual behavior, and sexual

orientation but also the key to cultivating gender equality and respect for others. Therefore, China's youth gender education curriculum should be set up comprehensively and systematically to ensure that every student can get adequate and scientific sex education. Gender education should be integrated into the school curriculum from an early age. From the primary school level, students should be taught basic physiological knowledge so that they understand the structure and function of their bodies. At the middle and high school levels, sex education should be more in-depth, including sexual health knowledge, contraceptive methods, and gender equality concepts. Such progressive education can help teenagers establish correct sexual concepts and cultivate healthy sexual psychology [1]. Gender education curricula should highlight respect and inclusion. Educators should teach students to respect other people's gender differences and sexual orientations, and encourage students to discuss gender topics based on mutual respect. Through case studies and group discussions, students are guided to realize that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation [2]. Gender education courses should be closely integrated with social reality and guide students to think about the importance of gender equality in real life. For example, some successful women can be cited to let students understand that gender should not limit individual achievement. At the same time, some gender inequalities, such as the challenges faced by women in the workplace, can also be discussed, prompting students to think and discuss gender equality issues. Above all, gender education needs to be supported by both families and society. Schools can carry out parent training, strengthen families' awareness of sex education, and encourage parents to cooperate with schools to jointly promote gender education for adolescents. At the same time, social media and public advertising should also play a role in promoting the concept of gender equality and creating a good social atmosphere for gender education. The establishment of a gender education curriculum for Chinese youth needs comprehensive, systematic, and progressive educational content, emphasizing respect and tolerance, combining social reality, and obtaining support from families and society. Only through such efforts can people cultivate a new generation with a sense of correctness and gender equality and lay the foundation for building a more equal and harmonious society.

## **2.2. Poor Information on the Internet Hinders Gender Education**

It is easy for teenagers to be misled by bad guidance on the Internet. Especially when it comes to gender education. As the Internet world is becoming more and more open, this is undoubtedly likely to have a profound impact on Chinese teenagers. With the spread of the Internet and the free flow of information, teenagers are exposed to an unprecedented diversity of information and opinions daily. This could have multiple implications in terms of gender education and cognitive formation [3]. The Internet provides adolescents with a wide range of gender-related information, but the quality and accuracy of this information varies greatly. They may see information on topics such as gender identity, gender expression, sexual health, and sexuality on social media, sexual health sites, adult sites, etc. This information can sometimes be inaccurate and even contain biases and stereotypes that can lead to confusion or misunderstanding of gender issues. There is some inappropriate content on the Internet, including obscenity, sexism, and the spread of false gender concepts. It is easy for adolescents to be inadvertently exposed to such content, which can negatively affect their gender perception and reinforce gender stereotypes and discrimination. The advent of social media and virtual worlds has made gender expression and identity more diverse. Adolescents may be attracted to gender-diverse communities online, which can promote inclusion and respect but can also lead to confusion about gender identity. The openness of the Internet has a dual nature for gender education and cognitive formation, which not only provides convenience for knowledge acquisition but also brings potential negative effects.

### **3. Cause analysis**

#### **3.1. The Complicated Information on the Internet Arouses the Curiosity of Teenagers**

Teenagers' curiosity and thirst for knowledge about novel things is a major reason why they are easily attracted to the Internet [4]. The Internet provides unlimited information and content, from social media to online games, from educational resources to pop culture, there is almost nothing that cannot be found on the web. This diversity and richness of information appeals to young people, making them eager to learn and experience more. Social media platforms are one of the main factors that teenagers are attracted to online. Social media provides a platform for interacting with friends, sharing lives, and establishing virtual identities. Teens often tend to spend a lot of time on social media because it's a way to interact with their peers and gain acceptance. However, social media can also lead to a disconnect from the real world and an excessive focus on outside approval and acclaim. While the focus is too much on the physical effects of the Internet, such as the games that directly lead to teenagers spending too much time surfing, and social media, a new generation of students is suffering from strong negative Internet influences.

#### **3.2. Impact on the Proliferation of Online Pornography**

In the online world, pornography has as much appeal as any other topic. This phenomenon is due to the freedom and anonymity of the Internet, as well as the natural curiosity and sexual desire of human beings. Pornography has flourished with the growth of the Internet and can be found in almost every corner of the Internet. The freedom of the Internet allows pornography to be distributed without too many restrictions. The Internet offers greater freedom than traditional media, so producers and consumers of pornography can publish and access such content online with relative ease. Commercial opportunities for pornography have expanded rapidly in the Internet age. Whether it's online video sites, paid memberships, or virtual reality technology, the porn industry is actively adopting new technologies to provide more and more exciting content and attract more users. The porn industry has become one of the most profitable industries on the Internet, attracting a lot of investment and innovation [5]. From the beginnings of web forums and email lists to today's virtual and augmented reality technologies, the form of pornography has also evolved. Virtual reality porn is an area full of challenges and opportunities that transport users into a whole new world through simulated sexual experiences. The development of this technology has opened up entirely new commercial prospects for the porn industry, attracting the interest of technology companies and creative talent. While the porn industry has flourished on the Internet, it has also raised a host of ethical, legal, and social issues. This includes issues such as access to minors, addiction issues, privacy issues, and the ethics and legality of content. Therefore, pornography on the Internet has always been a controversial topic that needs comprehensive regulation and discussion. The attraction of pornography in the Internet world cannot be ignored, and minors may be subjected to various adverse effects when they see pornography, which can have long-term effects on their physical and mental health and social development, leading to the distortion of sexual concepts. Distortion of sexual ideas Minors may have incorrect ideas and expectations about sex because of the lack of mature sex education. They may mistakenly believe that the behaviors and episodes shown in pornography are the norm in real life, rather than fiction.

#### **3.3. Lack of Teenagers' Gender Education in China**

In addition to the strong intervention of the mainstream society on the gender cognition of teenagers, the education of parents will also have an undoubted impact. The lack of comprehensive sex education in China has a profound impact on the youth's gender perception. Sex education is often seen as a sensitive topic in China, with sexual health and gender awareness rarely covered in school curricula

[6]. This situation has led to several problems, one of which is the lack of knowledge among adolescents about gender and sexual health. The lack of sex education makes it difficult for adolescents to understand their own bodies and gender characteristics. Lack of correct sex education, teenagers may be confused about their bodies, difficulty accepting their own physical and psychological changes, which may lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, and other psychological problems. Inadequate sex education has led to misconceptions about sexuality and sexual health among adolescents. They may be susceptible to misinformation about the consequences of sexual activity, contraceptive methods, and sexually transmitted diseases. Such misconceptions can lead to early marriage, early childbearing, an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, and possibly even problems with teenage pregnancy [7]. Lack of sex education also contributes to gender inequality. In the absence of sex education, social stereotypes about gender roles and sexual orientation are maintained, and inequalities between men and women at home and in the workplace are not effectively addressed. In the process of growing up, adolescents may be susceptible to gender stereotypes, and it is difficult to form a correct gender concept, which may even lead to the emergence of gender discrimination and violence.

## **4. Suggestion**

### **4.1. Focus on Gender Education for Children**

As Internet information is evolving, children are first exposed to the Internet earlier, so it is necessary to educate children about gender as early as possible. Gender development Theory, also known as gender pattern theory, is a theory to explain gender development [8]. The theory was primarily developed by social psychologists Kay Bussey and Albert Bandura and was further developed in the late 1980s. This theory emphasizes that gender patterns a social stereotypes of men and women, including gender characteristics, roles, and behaviors. These patterns are part of the culture's expectations and norms about gender [9]. Gender pattern theory holds that children begin to accept gender labels at a very young age, and they gradually form a gender identity during the socialization process, which is related to the gender pattern they accept. The theory also includes the concept of gender stability, in which children gradually recognize gender as a stable trait and continue to do so into adulthood. This helps children develop behaviors and values associated with their gender. Finally, gender pattern theory emphasizes gender conformity, the idea that children will strive to align their behavior with the gender pattern they identify with to gain social approval.

### **4.2. Strive for Awareness of Sex Education**

The lack of sex education makes it difficult for teenagers to recognize what is normal sex and learn to say no to bad sex. This makes them more likely to be victims of sexual abuse and may not be able to seek help and protect themselves promptly due to lack of knowledge. The lack of comprehensive sex education in China has seriously affected the youth's gender perception. To build a healthy, equal, and safe social environment, Chinese society needs to strengthen investment in sex education, promote the popularization of comprehensive sex education, so that young people can obtain correct and comprehensive sex knowledge, form a healthy gender awareness concept, and avoid various problems related to sexual health. Although sex education in China is getting more attention and recognition, there are still some drawbacks and challenges, social and cultural factors are the first obstacle affecting children to establish a correct gender cognition [10]. There are some conservative sexual attitudes in traditional Chinese culture, including not discussing sex education topics openly and treating sex as a private matter. This can lead to some parents feeling uncomfortable or out of place, as well as an unwillingness to engage in conversations about sex with their children [11]. Once children are unable to access knowledge and lessons about sex through normal means, they may

obtain information about sex from the Internet, social media, and peers, and the accuracy and quality of this information may be inconsistent. Parents sometimes have difficulty controlling the information their children are exposed to, which can lead to misleading or unhealthy sexual attitudes. Therefore, parents should always maintain an open attitude towards sex education, so that children can access the information they are fighting for and will not be misled by online information.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper analyzes the obstacles and dilemmas of adolescent gender education in the online environment. This paper argues that The information openness of the Internet has a dual nature for gender education and cognitive formation, and the advantage is to facilitate students' access to knowledge, and at the same time enable students to obtain more and more extensive knowledge. However, on the other hand, there are some potential negative effects. Students have poor ability to identify information, so they may be misled by information.

Therefore, parents should attach importance to gender education for children and carry out relevant education as soon as possible. At the same time, society should establish an open attitude towards sex education so that students can receive more correct information.

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