

# Research on the Influence of Online Games on Juvenile Delinquency and the Countermeasures

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**Abstract:** *With the rapid development of online games, the number of online game users is growing rapidly, among which the number of minor players is growing at a noticeable speed. With rich content, strong player-controlling and unlimited timeliness, online games have prompted a large number of minors to become addicted. Influenced by the content and culture displayed therein, online games have triggered changes in behavior and psychology of minors, and even further developed criminal behavior. There are many types of juvenile delinquency under the influence of online games, and they have their own characteristics. By analyzing their inducements and combining their psychological and physiological characteristics, we can further propose targeted measures to prevent minors from committing crimes under the influence of online games.*

**Keywords:** *Criminology, Juvenile delinquency, Crime prevention, Online games*

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of online games, the number of online game users is growing rapidly, among which the number of minor players is growing at a noticeable speed. With rich content, strong player-controlling and unlimited timeliness, online games have prompted many minors to become addicted. Influenced by the content and culture displayed therein, online games have triggered changes in both behavior and psychology of minors, and even further developed criminal behavior. In recent years, the problem that teenagers are affected by online games has attracted more and more attention from the society, and relevant events have also been reported in the newspapers. The discussion from all walks of life has increased, and our country has also introduced relevant laws and regulations to limit minors' access to game events to protect them from physical and mental problems. Based on this background, the discussion content of this paper is generated. This paper mainly studies the problem of juvenile delinquency under the influence of online games and puts forward targeted measures to prevent minors from committing crimes under the influence of online games in combination with their psychological and physiological characteristics.

## 2. Question

According to the survey, the number of minor Internet users in China will reach 175 million in 2020. The main purposes of minors' use of the Internet include games, chatting, browsing information, etc. Among which, games occupy most of the time, and online games have become a part of minors' lifestyle to a certain extent. However, excessive play is harmful to minors' physical and mental health. Inappropriate game content also has a significant negative impact on minors' outlook on life, values and world outlook, and may even lead to criminal acts.

In recent years, the news of juvenile delinquency has been frequently seen in newspapers and networks and has gradually become the focus of public opinion. It is also surprising that the nature of juvenile delinquency is so bad that murder, rape, arson, and other extremely bad criminal acts are not in the case. While these criminal acts are jaw dropping, they also make people start to reflect on what causes this phenomenon and what countermeasures should be taken<sup>[1]</sup>.

This paper focuses on online games. By studying the characteristics and contents of online games and combining the physical and psychological structural characteristics of minors, this paper analyzes the impact of online games on juvenile delinquency, and tries to put forward countermeasures to the problems found, in order to prevent the adverse effects of online games on minors.

### **3. A Survey of Online Games and Their Impact on Minors**

#### ***3.1 The Content and Main Characteristics of Online Games***

Looking at the current online game market, it is not difficult to find that several types of games popular with minors, such as King Glory of Tianmei Studio and Peace Elite of Photon Studio, are all PVP (player versus player) games of real-time confrontation. These games mainly aim at defeating each other and require certain teamwork. After defeating the enemy, they will also receive certain game rewards. Such games contain certain violent factors, and there is a game mechanism of gaining benefits by violence. To attract the attention, some characters and heroes in the game often wear exposed clothes or use character voice with implication during the production process. The author believes that the characteristics of online games can be summarized as follows:

##### ***3.1.1 Players have strong controlling.***

The plot trend and story development of TV plays and movies are arranged in advance in the script writing. The audience can only see the plot and ending arranged by the screenwriter and director and cannot control the plot development. However, online games are different from TV dramas and movies. Players can control the game process and change the direction of the game. The players can choose and decide the position of the game characters, the skills they use, the win or lose of a game, etc. The players have strong controlling over the game, and have a more "leading character" experience, which is also a great reason why online games attract players.

##### ***3.1.2 Unlimited timeliness.***

There is no ending like TV series and movies in the game. Players can fight, build, earn gold coins, experience, and other rewards in a game all the time in the game. If they have enough time and energy, they can play the game all the time<sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, many players play games for a long time, and they have achieved success overnight. The phenomenon of playing games for several days and nights in a row has also been frequently reported in the news.

##### ***3.1.3 The richness of the plot.***

The plot of online games is rich and diverse. Players can experience a variety of stories and character settings in the game, including various cultural and life experiences. In addition, online games also contain a lot of inappropriate content. As mentioned above, such confrontational games as King Glory and Peace Elite often contain elements of violence, and some also contain mechanisms for group violence. A considerable number of characters in the game are designed to attract eyeballs, and they often choose exposed clothes. The voice of the characters also contains suggestive meanings, playing pornographic sidelines. In addition, some games spread separatist ideas, incited reactionary emotions, and affected minors' immature political concepts through insinuations.

#### ***3.2 The Influence of Online Games on Minors***

The influence of online games on minors is determined by the characteristics of online games. The author believes that the impact of online games on minors can be summarized as follows:

##### ***3.2.1 Spend a lot of time playing games.***

The phenomenon of game addiction is serious, and the physical and mental health is affected. Online games, because of their players' strong control and unlimited timeliness, are very easy to cause players to indulge in them, spend a lot of time playing games, and immerse themselves in the virtual world for a long time. In the long run, players will ignore normal daily life and social interaction, and become isolated and not good at communication. In addition, playing games for a long time is also very harmful to health. It is not uncommon to report incidents related to "sudden death by playing games". Because of their special psychological and physiological structure, minors are more impulsive and lack of self-control than adults, so they are more likely to indulge in games, neglect their studies and normal social communication, and damage their own health.

##### ***3.2.2 Imitate the behaviour in the game.***

Long term online games immerse minors in the virtual world, and it is difficult to change their state after exiting from the game. It is easy to substitute their roles in the game into reality, imitate the behaviors of the game characters, and think that these behaviors are legitimate and correct from the heart<sup>[3]</sup>.

### ***3.2.3 Spend a lot of money.***

Minors have no economic capacity, and the source of money depends on their parents, close relatives, etc. The money is limited, but the cost of online games is relatively huge. Take the popularity of online game king glory as an example. Some hero characters and their skins cannot be obtained by completing tasks and achieving achievements. They can only be exchanged by spending money to buy coupons. The cheap ones cost more than 20 yuan, while the expensive ones may cost hundreds. This is not a small amount for minors with little pocket money. Minors who are addicted to games often spend a lot of money playing games.

### ***3.2.4 There is deviation in moral cognition, and behavior and emotion deviate from the track.***

Invest a lot of time in playing games, which will make minors divorced from social reality for a long time, and their moral and emotional abilities will decline rapidly. Online games place the victory and defeat at the key position. Under the influence of online games, minors can't straighten out their mentality, which leads to incorrect moral emotional experience, moral emotion distortion, loss of correct values and aggressive behavior.

## **4. Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency under the Influence of Online Games**

### ***4.1 Main Types of Juvenile Delinquency under the Influence of Online Games***

The influence of online games on minors can never be neglected. Under the influence of online games, teenagers who are addicted to games may have inappropriate deviant behaviors, or even commit crimes. The author believes that the types of juvenile crimes affected by online games mainly include the following:

#### ***4.1.1 Violent crime.***

In online games, players use game characters to conduct violent confrontation, and gain rewards and win by "killing" and "defeating" the other party. After finishing the game, it is often difficult for minor players to quickly withdraw from the role and bring the violence in the game into the real role. Influenced by the violence subculture, they choose to use the violence in the game to resolve disputes. The psychological growth of minors is not yet mature, and they are prone to impulsive anger, which can easily develop into crimes such as intentional injury or even intentional murder.

#### ***4.1.2 Sexual offences.***

The pornographic elements in online games cause the immature minors to make mistakes in their cognition of sex. In addition, the lack of sex education in China makes minors have weak legal awareness. Driven by the wrong sexual concepts, they may commit indecent, rape and other criminal acts.

#### ***4.1.3 Commit a crime in association.***

Many online games require team cooperation to complete tasks, which also leads to social relationships in games such as "battle teams" and "masters and apprentices" <sup>[4]</sup>. Such groups fight together in games and may also develop into friendship in the real world, which is easy to bring the "brotherhood" in games to real life. When "brothers" are in trouble, minors are easy to act impulsively and fight together. In addition, when the money for purchasing game equipment is insufficient, under the influence of others in the group, there will also be gang theft, robbery, and other acts.

#### ***4.1.4 Property crime.***

As mentioned above, to purchase game equipment, minors need to spend more money than their normal pocket money. Such spending on game equipment is not supported by their parents. Minors cannot obtain support from their parents and can only seek other ways. Under such circumstances, minors who have no jobs and lack of legal awareness will resort to extortion, robbery, theft, and other means to obtain funds to support them to continue playing.

### ***4.2 Characteristics of Juvenile Delinquency under the Influence of Online Games***

According to the main types of juvenile delinquency under the influence of several online games mentioned above, combined with the influence of online games on minors, we can conclude that the characteristics of these criminal acts are mainly as follows:

#### **4.2.1 Strong imitation.**

Minors have strong curiosity and a desire to explore new things. Many contents displayed in online games are never experienced by minors in ordinary daily life. After minors contact some violent or pornographic contents in online games, they bring them into reality and imitate them. Some minors' criminal purposes are absurd. They simply feel interesting without actual contradiction and material needs with others. Some minors, when encountering conflicts with others, choose violent means to "teach" others and imitate the behavior in the game to fight because of the influence of online violence culture. Due to the lack of domestic sex education, minors lack guidance in the process of establishing correct sexual concepts. Under the wrong guidance of pornographic content, some minors imitate their behaviors and engage in indecency or rape to meet their curiosity and sexual needs.

#### **4.2.2 Criminal acts are sudden and accidental.**

Under the influence of online games, when minors encounter situations like games, they will have corresponding criminal impulses and motivations, so they commit sudden crimes. The criminal act is sudden and accidental, without any premeditation or plan in advance. The minor may not have any criminal intention for one second but will have criminal impulse and motivation under the stimulation of certain circumstances the next second. For example, when facing conflicts and contradictions, they may choose to solve them by violence.

#### **4.2.3 Repeated criminal acts.**

After the successful implementation of the criminal act, some minors think that the implementation of the crime is very easy and will not be caught, their sense of guilt has also dissipated, their criminal motivation has been further strengthened, their sense of unease about violating the norms has been greatly reduced, and they commit repeated crimes. This feature is particularly obvious in property crimes. After minors obtain certain funds through theft, robbery, extortion and other means, their desire for money is greatly satisfied, and the satisfaction of this desire greatly weakens the sense of guilt in the minds of minors. Moreover, after a successful attempt, minors tend to think that this way of obtaining money is simple and fast, which is much easier than asking their parents for money or working to earn money. They have a sense of identity and dependence on criminal behavior. When they face the situation of insufficient money again, they will give priority to crime.

### **4.3 An Analysis of the Incentives of Online Games Affecting Juvenile Delinquency**

Through analysis, it is not difficult to see that online games are closely related to juvenile delinquency, and the incentives can be summarized as follows:

#### **4.3.1 The content of violence weakens minors' fear of violence and forms a wrong view of heroes.**

In the game with the theme of gunfight and fighting, the consequences and injuries caused by violence are often diluted. Take the honor of MOBA game king as an example. After being defeated, you can "resurrect" the game again every tens of seconds; Among the peace elites in gunfight games, after being hit and injured, they can recover to full blood status by "taking painkillers" and "drinking sports drinks". The defeated players will not show corresponding pain but will become boxes and leave the game. This undoubtedly greatly weakens the negative effects of violence. If minors are immersed in such games for a long time, they are easy to confuse reality and the Internet, and think that it is reasonable to use violence to hurt others. In addition to minors' impulsive and aggressive personality characteristics, the probability of violent criminal impulses of minors is greatly increased.

#### **4.3.2 Online games cause minors to consume excessively and breed wrong outlook on life and money.**

The price of many games' equipment is not cheap, and minors often need to spend a considerable amount of money to buy equipment. However, the new equipment of most games is released frequently. Almost every special festival and date, new equipment will be introduced in the game or promotional activities will be carried out. This mode improves the frequency of minors' game consumption and increases the cost of games. Under the influence of such sales mode, minors are very likely to have wrong money ideas, breed money worship, advocate money first, have wrong demands for money, and then make wrong behaviors.

#### **4.3.3 Online games have changed the communication mode of minors and made them form a wrong view of friendship.**

The team and master apprentice relationship in the game often pay attention to the so-called

"brotherhood", thus forming a real gang. Under the guidance of some malevolent members, minors are very easy to follow such gangs to commit crimes<sup>[5]</sup>. Some group leaders encourage minors to commit crimes by means of incentives, encouragement, etc., while others exclude and isolate minors who are unwilling to commit crimes. To obtain a sense of belonging and identity, minors tend to commit crimes in the end.

#### ***4.3.4 Under the influence of subculture, minors have anti-social consciousness and commit crimes.***

Minors' psychology and physiology are at a very special stage, and they are sensitive and impulsive. The failure and dissatisfaction of family and school make them depressed and feel marginalized. According to the survey, minors from disabled families show extreme characteristics in their psychological state and personality characteristics due to the lack of family education and family supervision. Some minors are unable to achieve satisfactory academic achievements. These minors cannot be recognized and satisfied in the mainstream culture, but instead contact the subculture in online games, trying to obtain a sense of achievement A sense of belonging and identity. Subcultures separate minors from their normal lives and produce an antisocial psychological state. After learning some content, they can lead to criminal acts through interaction.

### **5. Countermeasures Against Juvenile Delinquency Induced by Online Games**

#### ***5.1 Improve the Network Environment and Create a Healthy Atmosphere***

Online games are not ghosts or snakes. They cannot be beaten into "bad things" with a stick. It is not advisable to ban or ban them completely. In terms of improving the Internet environment, we should focus on improving the content of online games. Compared with attracting eyeballs by violence and nudity, online games should absorb more excellent traditional culture, draw strength and inspiration from excellent culture, and develop more positive online games. This requires not only the efforts and consciousness of game developers, but also the encouragement and guidance of relevant government departments.

Violent, bloody and pornographic content should be seriously dealt with, resolutely banned and resisted. In addition to the active supervision of relevant departments, a self-supervision mechanism within the industry should also be established. For enterprises that violate industry rules and laws and regulations, they should not only be punished according to the provisions, but also be criticized and punished within the industry. Through the joint efforts of government departments and the industry, we will establish a strict regulatory system to standardize the production of online games. In addition, we can also consider introducing game and film grading systems and installing filtering systems to purify the online environment of minors.

By using the network platform, more excellent legal programs can be produced to enhance the legal awareness of minors. With the help of the network platform, these programs are more innovative and interactive, which can absorb minors to participate in the program production and shoot in primary and secondary schools. The promotion of minors' participation is of great benefit to the establishment of legal concepts.

#### ***5.2 Strengthen Family and School Guidance and Improve the Growth Environment***

Family and school education is an important way for minors to establish their outlook on life, values and world. Parents should pay more attention to minors' online habits and browsing content, and set an example by themselves, playing less games in front of their children, to help minors develop good living habits. Have more talking, establish a good parent-child relationship, create a healthy family atmosphere, participate in more useful extracurricular activities with children, to enrich the daily life of minors. Avoid to make the life of minors to be either game or learning.

Schools should also regularly check the surrounding environment, report illegal Internet cafes and Internet cafes that accept minors to access the Internet, and strengthen students' mental health education and Internet safety education in the classroom to guide minors to access the Internet green and in a civilized manner. For minors who have become addicted to games, schools should actively arrange psychological counseling and treatment to help minors develop healthy Internet habits. In addition, "green Internet cafes" can also be set up in schools to enable minors to conduct online activities in a safer and healthier environment and develop a good habit of healthy Internet access under the guidance of professional teachers.

### 5.3 Take Appropriate Coercive Measures

Juvenile delinquency often evolves from the most primitive anomie behavior and becomes a crime step by step. To prevent juvenile delinquency, in addition to guidance and education, we should also consider some mandatory measures. It should be noted that compulsory measures against anomie minors should pay more attention to education and persuasion, fully protect their basic rights and human dignity, and let them fundamentally realize their own mistakes, rather than simply punish them. Simple punishment will have a greater negative impact on minors who are still in their physical and mental development stage, making them feel humiliated in their personal dignity, more rebellious, and refuse to accept education and probation.

In addition, we should also pay attention to the specific analysis of specific problems, prevent one-sided criticism and education, and take corresponding measures according to different correction objects, to achieve maximum benefits. Compulsory measures cannot be taken as the first choice, but only as alternative measures as a last resort.

### 6. Conclusion

There are many inducements for juvenile delinquency, and online games are just one of them. The solutions proposed in this paper are only for the corresponding phenomena. The prevention of juvenile delinquency requires joint cooperation and efforts of families, schools and society.

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