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Adolescent Rebellious Mentality and the Peer Support in Harry Potter

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Abstract. Adolescent mental health issues are widely recognized in today's society, making research on the formation of adolescent personality particularly important. In the field of children's literature and popular culture studies, the Harry Potter series holds landmark significance. In terms of literary value, it reconstructs the theme of growth through fantasy narratives, integrating universal values such as courage, friendship and justice into the magical world. It breaks the thematic boundaries of traditional children's literature and achieves aesthetic resonance between child and adult readers. From the perspective of cultural communication, it has built a cross-media narrative system, promoting the extension of the novels to films, games and other fields, and forming a global "Harry Potter cultural IP". It provides a classic model for IP development in the popular culture industry, and meanwhile facilitates cultural exchange and value identification among different regions in cross-cultural communication. This study employs the case analysis method to explore the formative causes of adolescent rebellious psychology and examine the impact of peer support on adolescents' mental health. Using the "Harry Potter" film series as an example, it specifically analyzes scenes that illustrate these phenomena and concludes that adolescents' rebellious mentality is a form of self-protection, and peer support to some extent promotes the formation of resilient character traits.

Keywords: Adolescent , Rebellious Mentality, Peer Support, Harry Potter

1. Introduction

Harry Potter is a classic fantasy film series that tells the story of a young boy, Harry Potter, who attends the magical school Hogwarts. Along with his friends Hermione and Ron, Harry embarks on a thrilling adventure to combat a powerful dark force, Voldemort. The series explores themes of friendship, courage, and justice, with each film distinguished by its gripping plot, rich characters, and unique magical elements.

Harry Potter is categorized as a children's TV program primarily because its content and themes are suitable for young audiences. The main character setting of the book is a reason. Harry Potter is an 11-year-old boy, and the story revolves around his growth and development, making it appropriate for young viewers. Also, the series emphasizes themes of friendship, courage, and justice, which resonate with the experiences and values of teenagers. And Harry Potter's dialogue

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and descriptions are straightforward and easy to understand, making them appealing to younger audiences.

With the rapid development of society and the increasingly fierce competition, teenagers face multiple pressures from family, school and society in the process of growing up. The formation of rebellious psychology is not only an important aspect of adolescent personality development, but also a manifestation of their exposure to external pressures. As an integral part of adolescent development, peer support has a profound impact on their character development and behavior patterns.

This paper explores the causes of adolescent rebellious psychology and the impact of peer support on adolescent mental health, and uses case analysis research methods. By studying the formation mechanism of rebellious psychology and the role of peer support in it, it can help better understand the psychological changes of adolescents, so as to provide more support and guidance for society and promote the healthy growth of adolescents.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Theories of rebellious psychology

Rebellious psychology refers to the psychological state in which individuals adopt opposite attitudes and words and deeds to external requirements in order to maintain their self-esteem, which is common in adolescence and is a manifestation of their enhanced self-awareness in the psychological "transition period." It refers to the psychological reaction generated by students in the process of receiving education that deviates from the expectations of educators, often manifested as the behavioral tendency of "you let me go east, I want to go west [1]."

Specifically, the rebellious behaviors of junior high school students include resistance, going against parents, teachers and having conflicts with peers. Adolescence is an important stage in the formation of individual personality. During this period, junior high school students develop faster physically but lack social experience, their physical development exceeds their psychological maturity, they pursue a sense of adulthood, they are self-centred in their thinking, and they often make impulsive decisions, which are the manifestations of their self-expression. Junior high school students show different kinds of rebellious behaviors in different spaces, and the external environment has different degrees of influence on junior high school students' behaviors, so it takes the concerted efforts of multiple educators to channel junior high school students' rebellious behaviors [2].

2.2. Peer support and adolescent development

Peer support is one of the important social support resources in the process of adolescent growth, and peer support is an important part of social support. And peer support does help teenagers form resilient characters.

As an important interpersonal mutual aid model, peer support groups have shown significant advantages in supporting vulnerable groups, but they also have problems, such as limited research objects and single methods [3]. Human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, largely as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function [4].

The theory of group dynamics focuses on the role and impact of group member interaction on the behavior and psychology of group members, and creates a peer support atmosphere in peer

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assistance, forming a virtuous circle [5].

3. Case studies from harry potter series

3.1. Rebellious mentality

In the fifth book, the Ministry of Magic tries to cover up Voldemort's resurrection and sends Dolores Umbridge to intervene at Hogwarts. Harry was isolated for insisting on telling the truth and was even labeled a liar. Harry refused to accept Umbridge's incompetent teaching and secretly organized students to practice Black Magic defense.

Another typical case of adolescent rebellious mentality in the Harry Potter series appears in the sixth film, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince. After learning about Voldemort's Horcruxes from Dumbledore, Harry becomes determined to track down and destroy them—a mission that requires him to deviate from the normal school life expected by Hogwarts faculty, such as focusing solely on coursework and even hiding key information from his closest friends, Ron and Hermione. When Professor Snape, who is tasked with teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts, questions Harry's inattention in class and accuses him of neglecting his studies, Harry openly defies Snape's authority, arguing that his 'real work' destroying Horcruxes is far more important than completing assigned homework. This rebellion is not mere defiance for the sake of it but stems from Harry's clear self-identity as a 'defender against Voldemort'—a role he has gradually constructed through previous experiences.

From the perspective of adolescent psychology, this behavior reflects the core driving force behind rebellious mentality: the pursuit of self-identity confirmation. During adolescence, as self-awareness significantly enhances, adolescents begin to break away from the identity labels imposed by adults, for example, a student who should prioritize grades and actively construct their own sense of self. Harry's rebellion against Snape's teaching requirements and the school's conventional expectations is essentially a way to protect his self-identity as a warrior against evil. He refuses to be confined by adult-defined "rules" because these rules conflict with his self-perception of his mission and value.

Adolescence is a critical period for the formation of self-identity; therefore, it is reasonable to believe that what they are protecting is the freedom to explore their self-identity. Self-identity is an individual's perception, understanding, and engagement with themselves, which gradually forms through interactions between self-awareness and both internal and external environments, facing numerous choices and engaging in self-exploration and commitment [6].

3.2. Peer support

A compelling case of peer support promoting adolescent resilience occurs in the third film, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. When Harry is tormented by recurring nightmares about his parents' death and fears that Sirius Black—whom he initially believes is a murderer and his parents' betrayer—is coming to kill him, he falls into extreme anxiety and even struggles to concentrate in classes like Divination.

At this critical moment, Hermione and Ron provide comprehensive peer support: Hermione, noticing Harry's mental distress, uses her logical thinking to help him analyze the truth about Sirius Black, preventing Harry from being trapped in blind fear; Ron, despite his own fear of Sirius Black, stays by Harry's side at all times—accompanying him to the Shrieking Shack to confront Sirius and even standing in front of Harry when they initially encounter Sirius, showing a willingness to

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protect his friend. Most notably, when Harry learns the truth that Sirius is his godfather and that Peter Pettigrew is the real betrayer of his parents, he is overwhelmed with emotion and nearly makes an impulsive decision to take revenge on Pettigrew. It is Ron and Hermione's timely persuasion—reminding him that "revenge is not what your parents would want" and urging him to abide by justice—that helps Harry calm down and make a rational choice, handing Pettigrew over to the authorities.

Risk-taking increases between childhood and adolescence as a result of changes around the time of puberty in the brain's socio-emotional system, leading to increased reward-seeking, especially in the presence of peers, fueled mainly by a dramatic remodeling of the brain's dopaminergic system. Risk-taking declines between adolescence and adulthood because of changes in the brain's cognitive control system—changes which improve individuals' capacity for self-regulation. These changes occur across adolescence and young adulthood and are seen in structural and functional changes within the prefrontal cortex and its connections to other brain regions. The differing timetables of these changes make mid-adolescence a time of heightened vulnerability to risky and reckless behavior [7].

This case perfectly illustrates the positive impact of peer support on adolescents' mental health: the emotional companionship from Ron and Hermione alleviates Harry's loneliness and anxiety; their rational guidance helps Harry avoid impulsive behaviors caused by negative emotions. The trust and sacrifice of his peers made Harry realize that he was not alone, which strengthened his determination to fight Voldemort. High-quality peer autonomous support can promote positive learning experiences, improve self-efficacy and competence, and show stronger resilience and perseverance in difficult situations [8].

Peer autonomy support is a basic psychological need for individual growth and an opportunity for peers to decide and choose each other. The satisfaction of this need can promote the best function of peers and strengthen the independent action ability and independent consciousness of individuals.

4. Discussion

4.1. Practical measures for guiding adolescent rebellious mentality

Based on the analysis of rebellious mentality in the Harry Potter series and relevant theoretical research, guiding adolescent rebellious mentality requires abandoning the traditional "suppression-oriented" approach and adopting a "guidance-oriented" strategy centered on respecting adolescents' self-identity exploration. For schools, educators should establish an educational model instead of relying on one-way preaching. For example, when students exhibit rebellious behaviors, such as refusing to follow classroom rules, teachers can initiate one-on-one conversations to understand the students' underlying motivations and jointly discuss revised solutions. This not only respects adolescents' need for autonomy but also helps them recognize the rationality of rules from a proactive perspective, reducing resistance. For families, parents should shift from authoritative control to supportive companionship. As reflected in the conclusion, simple preaching often denies adolescents' freedom of self-exploration and intensifies rebellion. Instead, parents can create an open family communication environment: for instance, when disagreements arise, such as on extracurricular activities, parents can share their concerns while listening to their children's reasons, and make choices through mutual negotiation. This approach protects adolescents' self-esteem and guides them to learn to balance personal needs with external expectations.

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4.2. Optimization strategies for peer support systems

To give full play to the positive role of peer support in adolescents' mental health, it is necessary to construct a systematic peer support mechanism combining school guidance and student autonomy. Schools can take the lead in establishing formal peer support programs, such as training student volunteers in psychological knowledge and communication skills to form peer support teams. These teams can conduct regular activities, such as stress-sharing workshops or study mutual assistance groups to provide targeted support for peers facing academic pressure or emotional troubles. For example, referring to the peer support model in the Harry Potter series, where Ron and Hermione help Harry solve problems through collaboration, schools can guide support teams to focus on autonomy support—avoiding imposing solutions on peers and instead helping them analyze problems and make independent choices, which aligns with the theoretical requirement of peer autonomy support for satisfying adolescents' basic psychological needs.

In addition, communities can also participate in peer support system construction by organizing inter-school peer exchange activities, such as summer camps for adolescents from different schools. This expands adolescents' peer interaction scope, enables them to receive diverse support resources, and further enhances their social adaptation and resilience.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the formation mechanism of adolescent rebellious mentality and the impact of peer support on adolescents' mental health by using the Harry Potter film series as a case study and adopting the case analysis method. The research finds that adolescent rebellious mentality is essentially a form of self-protection for self-identity exploration—adolescents resist external expectations to safeguard the freedom of constructing their own identity; high-quality peer support, especially peer autonomy support, can effectively alleviate adolescents' psychological stress, enhance their self-efficacy, and promote the formation of resilient character traits, as demonstrated by the support Ron and Hermione provided to Harry in multiple critical situations.

However, this study has limitations: the case analysis is based on fictional film plots, and the conclusions lack verification from real-world empirical data; the research scope is also relatively narrow, failing to cover adolescents from different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds. In future research, a mixed-methods approach combining questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews will be adopted to collect data from a broader sample of adolescents, further verifying the relationship between peer support and adolescent resilience and exploring the influence of cultural and environmental factors on this relationship.

For parents, schools, and other stakeholders concerned with adolescent development, this study emphasizes that guiding adolescents requires respecting their self-identity exploration and giving full play to the positive role of peer support—only by constructing a supportive rather than repressive growth environment can we effectively promote adolescents' psychological health and all-around development.

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