Research on Anxiety among Various Age Groups in the Context of High-speed New Media Development

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Abstract: This paper is based on the rapid development of new media in the context of the new era, and the anxiety emotions generated by different age groups are different. This paper speculates that there is a mutual influence between internal anxiety and internet information among different age groups. So this paper conducts a survey and research on the impact of different age groups on the sources and manifestations of inner anxiety, to explore the relationship between inner anxiety and new media among different age groups, and how to face the impact of this new media on mentality. This paper mainly adopts three research methods. They are namely interview method, questionnaire method, literature research method. The research results show that young people are more susceptible to the influence of internet information, while those over the age of thirty are relatively less affected by internet information. The research ultimately found that age has a certain impact on inner anxiety, and this impact gradually decreases with age. The sensitivity of the group aged 30 and above to internet information is not lower than that of the relatively younger group. However, due to their different social and life experiences, they are relatively less influenced by the internet.

Keywords: new media, inner anxiety, information sensitivity, different age groups

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

With the rapid development of digital information, people enjoy the convenience of information while also generating "informational anxiety". Internet information dissemination forms are diverse. In the past few years, short videos, picture copywriting and other emerging forms of information dissemination have become popular among people. There is a strong instantaneous emotional expression. However, the shorter time will bring more scattered content. It is easier for viewers to make one-sided judgments without knowing the full truth.

New media with digital technology as the core are emerging one after another. Mainly including Xiaohongshu, Douyin, Weibo and so on. These three softwares are also the typical representatives of contemporary mainstream media platform communication forms. In recent years, the number of users of major mobile media apps represented by these three softwares is showing a stormy growth trend, while continuing to develop in the direction of younger, more fragmented and more convenient.

With the promotion of the various apps, digital informational fragmentation has become one of the main characteristics of digital communication content, which has different degrees of impact on people's lives. Especially in the psychological state of the people who have strong information capture ability and sensitive empathy ability, which is embodied in the emerging online word " Full Score Anxiety". Because such groups always absorb excellent information, namely the "perfect information" after packaging. While maintaining a strong perception of the surrounding environment, and then resulting in a certain degree of gap in their psychological state. However, at the same time such highly sensitive groups constrained by high-quality education that their inner contradictions continue to deepen, personal thoughts continue to collide. The final main manifestation is inner anxiety.

According to the data of One Psychology's "2021 Mental Health Industry Annual Report", at the beginning of 2020, the younger the age, the lower the mental health index [1]. From middle-aged people who are already facing retirement, to children who are still in school, it is now difficult to ignore the harm brought by mental illness. With the trend that the continuous development of social and economic level, the continuous improvement of material life, and the support of the basic theory that the economic base determines the superstructure, why there is such a serious psychological problem in the new hope of the new era. Whether this is related to the new media digital technology that we pioneered, what impact it has, and how people can find a way to survive in this environment. These are the main content of this research.

1.2. Research Theme

Anxiety research of all ages in the context of high-speed new media development. By investigating the extent to which digital media technology affects the anxiety caused by digital media technology at all ages, this article discusses whether digital media has an impact on people's psychological state.

1.3. Research Methods

In this article there are three main research methods are used, they are namely interviewing method, questionnaire method, literature research method.

1.4. Research Significance

"New media technology is breaking the boundaries between public and private spaces in traditional life, especially in new space scenarios with the participation of the Internet. Public and private spaces have begun to reverse, mix, and even invade each other, while personal spaces also exhibit characteristics such as openness and networking, bringing a series of new problems and difficulties to human society [2]." People cannot deny that anxiety and internal friction are still a major problem that we need to face. The consumption of inner emotions has an increasing impact on the daily lives. With the development of new digital media technology in the new era, whether this new technology helps some people divert their attention and find a way out of anxiety, or does it aggravate our inner internal friction. People of different ages have different life experiences. In the face of the same new media social background development, what are the differences between different age groups. The author hopes to find the answer through this research. Based on the answers, the author explores how people can strike a balance between media and personal mindsets. Under the unstoppable trend of the times such as the development of new media, how to effectively avoid the side effects brought by new technologies and let people live more freely and happily.

2. Method

2.1. Questionnaire

2.1.1. Research Object

The research object that the author choose are people from all different age groups. For fear of Monotonicity of samples and repeatability of data, the author will divide the research objects into four main categories based on their own ages and life experience. There are a group of middle school students aged under 18 who have not yet attended universities but are facing the pressure of college entrance examination, 18-25-year-old college students who have already been admitted to universities but need facing next important life choices, groups aged 25 to 40 who are already working in society, and middle-aged people aged 40 to 60 who have relatively stable lives. Through Content sharing anxiety (SCA) positively affects self-evaluation anxiety, and indirectly affects users' willingness to discontinue use through self-evaluation anxiety [3].

People over the age of 60, due to their backward People over the age of 60, due to their backward thoughts and less understanding of the internet, have little impact on their psychological state through new media. So, there is no representativeness or typicality, and no specific analysis will be conducted.

2.1.2. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is divided into two parts, the personal information of the respondents and the main part of the questionnaire. The main content of the questionnaire will be divided into three small parts in detail. Firstly, the author will set the first question to ask about age and some their own information in order to categorize and organize the questionnaire better. Next, the main part of the questionnaire expands, the author will set 2-3 questions for the main part from three perspectives: the role of new media in mentality, the reasons for anxiety, and the impact of anxiety. The number of questions is better to set less than 20 overall, otherwise, it will make the respondent feel bored.

2.1.3. Questionnaire Distribution

The way to distribute the questionnaire is through the Questionnaire Star platform. The estimated length of questionnaire distribution is 3-4 days. It is expected that 200 copies will be recovered, and the amount of recycling will be as balanced as possible among different age groups.

2.2. Interview

"As members of society, they are inevitably caught up in the trend of social media. In order to establish new interpersonal relationships, social media has become a platform for them to develop and realize themselves [4]." Due to the limitations of time and location, the questionnaire interview adopted a combination of online and real-life methods. The author interviewed a 17-year-old high school girl, a 20-year-old college student, a 30-year-old young employee, and a 50-year-old housewife. Firstly, the author communicates differences based on the life experiences and experiences of the interviewees. In summary, three unified questions were asked to them. Secondly, did the overall emotions of the four interviewees become more positive or negative after using social media. Secondly, have the four interviewees become more sensitive due to social media (i.e. more likely to perceive emotional changes in their surroundings). Thirdly, will the four interviewees repeatedly recall the information they have seen on social media.

3. Result

3.1. Statistics of Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire data used in this article is targeted at different age groups in China through the Questionnaire Star platform. A total of 99 questionnaires were collected, of which 95 were valid information questionnaires. There are a total of fifteen questions in the questionnaire, among which the first two are basic information about the research topic, namely the age of the respondents and the frequency of using social media. With these two questions with basic information, the answers to the questionnaire can be effectively classified for further analysis. As Figure 1 shows, the age data in the valid questionnaire is: 9 people under 18 years old (excluding 18 years old); There are 32 people aged 18-25 (excluding 25 years old), accounting for 32.32% of the total number of respondents; 36 people aged 25 to 40 (excluding 40), accounting for 36.36% of the total number of respondents; There are 18 people aged 40 to 60 (excluding 60), accounting for 18.18% of the total number of respondents; There are four respondents aged 60 and above, but due to the special nature of the sample, the results of these four questionnaires are not considered valid data. Through the second question, it can be seen that social media accounts for a large proportion of people of all ages in their lives.
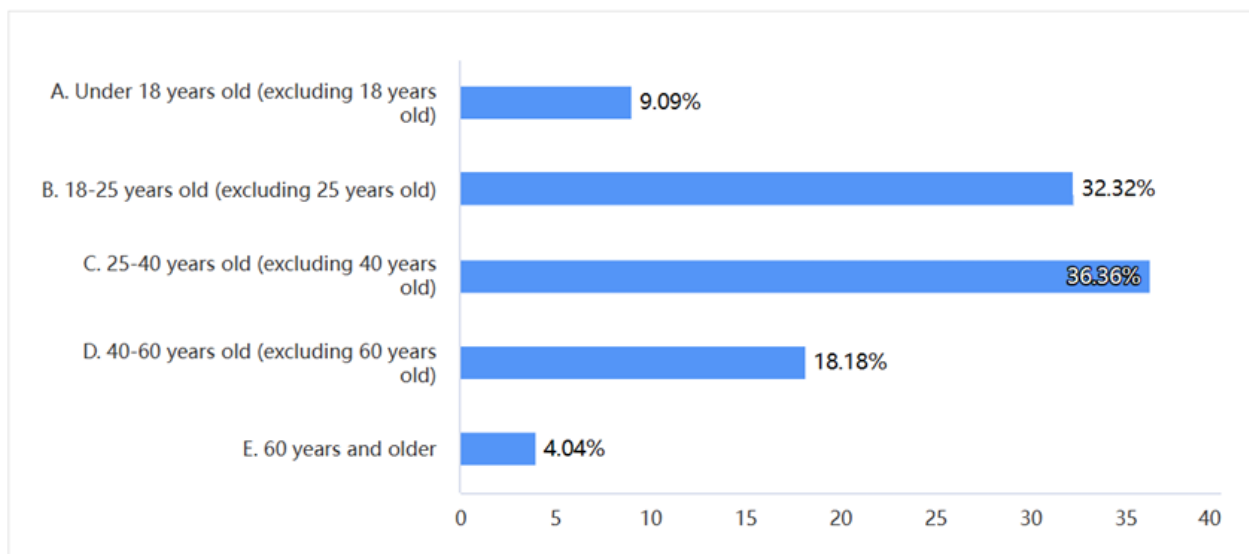

Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents (Picture credit: Original).

The author explores whether social media can increase people's anxiety through questions three and four. As Figure 2 shows, 58.95% of people believe that social media has not increased their sense of anxiety. More than 70% of respondents often see posts on social media about psychological issues such as anxiety and depression.

3. Do you think social media use increases your anxiety?   [Multiple choice question].

Options	subtotal	proportion	
A. Yes	39		41.05%
B. No	56		58.95%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	95		

Form Pie-shaped Ring Columnar Bar Polyline

4. Do you often see posts on social media about psychological issues such as anxiety and depression? [Multiple choice question].

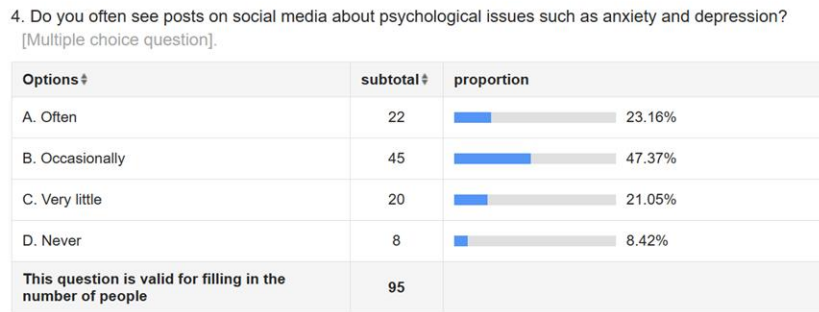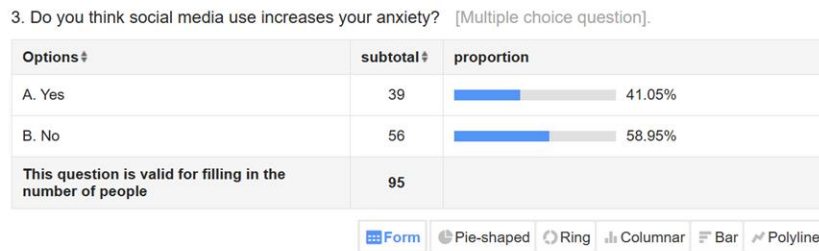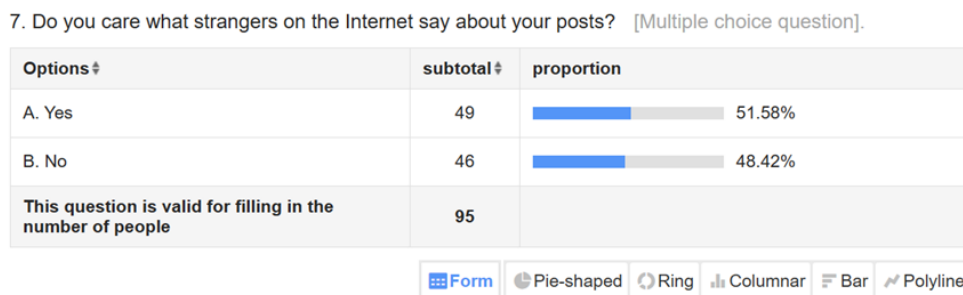| Options	subtotal	proportion	
A. Often	22		23.16%
B. Occasionally	45		47.37%
C. Very little	20		21.05%
D. Never	8		8.42%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	95		

Figure 2: Self analysis of anxiety among respondents (Picture credit: Original).

The remaining topic is the specific impact of social media on people's emotions. 55.79% of people believe that information on social media can have an impact on their emotions. 28.42% of people believe that information on social media affects their sleep quality. 38.95% of people believe that information on social media can have an impact on their interpersonal relationships. 51.58% of people believe that social media will have an impact on their behavior and values. 44.21% of people believe that information on social media affects their self-awareness. 25.26% of people will pass on negative emotions generated by social media to those around them.

For explore the specific sources of anxiety generated by social media through questions 7 and 8. As Figure 3 shows, 51% of people are concerned about the evaluation of strangers on the internet. 47.37% of people feel anxious about certain events or topics that have not yet occurred on social media.

7. Do you care what strangers on the Internet say about your posts?   [Multiple choice question].

Options	subtotal	proportion	
A. Yes	49		51.58%
B. No	46		48.42%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	95		

Form Pie-shaped Ring Columnar Bar Polyline

8. Have you ever felt anxious about some event or topic on social media that hasn't happened to you yet? [Multiple choice question].

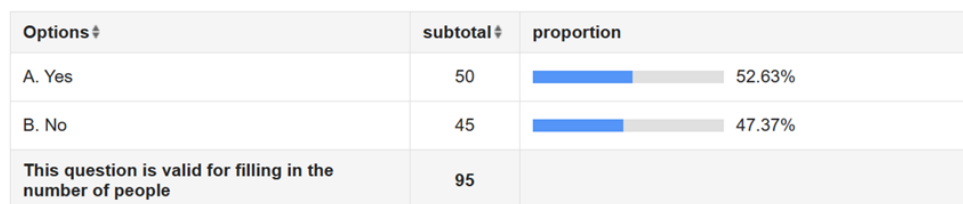| Options	subtotal	proportion	
A. Yes	50		52.63%
B. No	45		47.37%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	95		

Figure 3: Analysis of the Sources of Anxiety among Respondents (Picture credit: Original).

In order to enhance the representativeness and comparability of the questionnaire. The author will classify and statistically analyze the population. Taking the group aged 18 and below as an example. For the convenience of statistics and comparison, the author first discussed the groups aged 18 and below who frequently use social media. As Figure 4 shows, in the topic of whether social media will increase their sense of anxiety, about two-thirds of these groups believe that social media has not increased their sense of anxiety, and digital media has not given them information to verify whether they are anxious through big data.
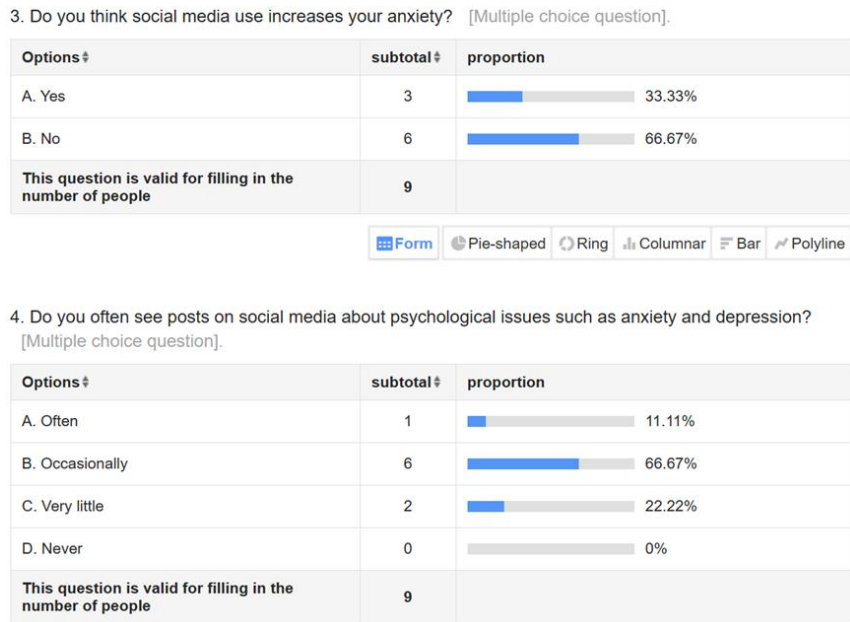

Figure 4: Self analysis of anxiety among respondents under the age of eighteen (Picture credit: Original).

Determine the degree to which this group is influenced by information on social media through questions 5 and 6. As Figure 5 shows, among the 9 valid questionnaires, 7 believed that social media had an impact on emotions; But only three people believe that information on social media affects sleep quality.
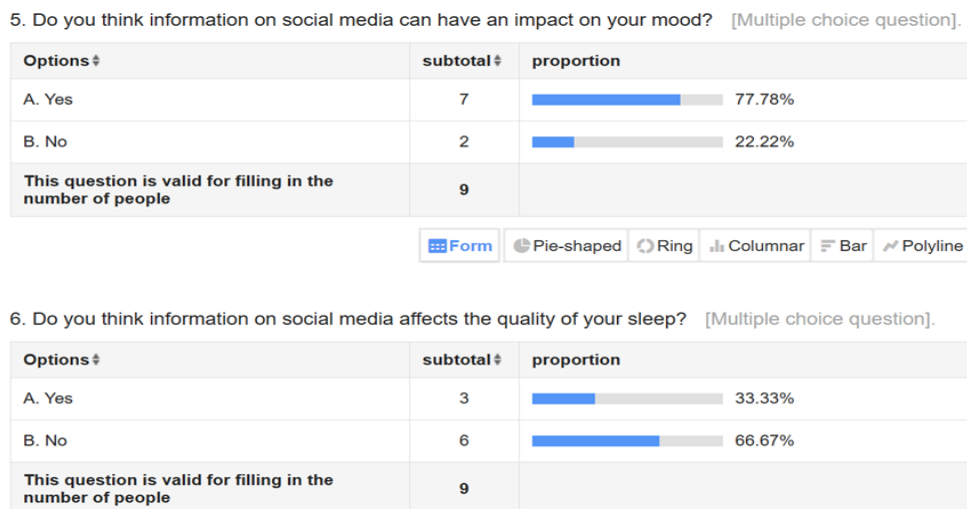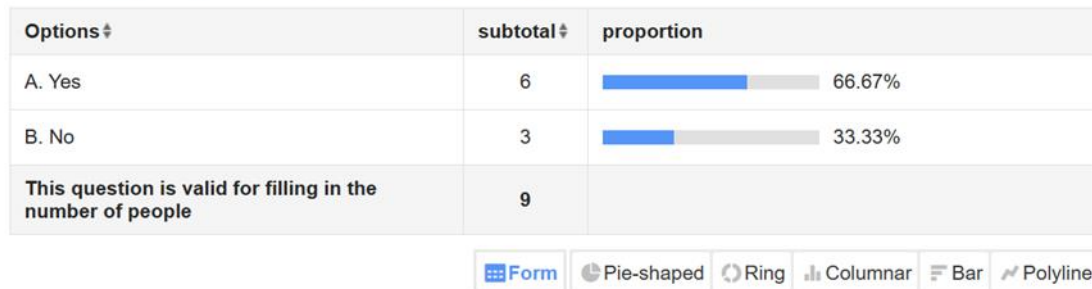

Figure 5: Exploring the impact of anxiety among respondents under the age of eighteen (Picture credit: Original).

The author studied the sources of anxiety through 7-8 questions. As Figure 6 shows, five people feel anxious about events that have not yet occurred on social media. Six people care about comments from internet strangers.

7. Do you care what strangers on the Internet say about your posts? [Multiple choice question].

Options ⇕	subtotal ⇕	proportion	
A. Yes	6		66.67%
B. No	3		33.33%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	9		

⊞ Form ◕ Pie-shaped ◯ Ring ⅈⅈ Columnar ☰ Bar ⤳ Polyline

8. Have you ever felt anxious about some event or topic on social media that hasn't happened to you yet?
[Multiple choice question].

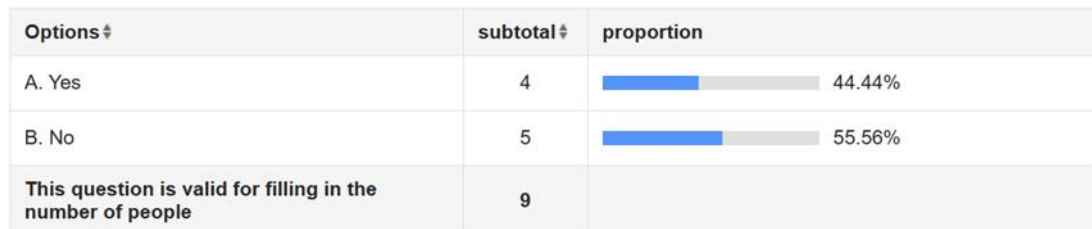| Options ⇕	subtotal ⇕	proportion	
A. Yes	4		44.44%
B. No	5		55.56%
This question is valid for filling in the number of people	9		

Figure 6: Exploring the sources of anxiety among respondents under the age of eighteen (Picture credit: Original).

The last few questions explore the impact of information on social media on people's lives. 77.78% of people believe that information on social media can have an impact on interpersonal relationships and transmit negative emotions generated by social media to those around them. 66.67% of people believe that information on social media will have an impact on their behavior and values. 55.56% of people believe that information on social media has an impact on their self-awareness.

3.2. Statistics of Questionnaire Results

The answer for a 17-year-old high school student is. Due to the enormous pressure of the college entrance examination, she usually has very little time to access her phone and browse social media. Normally, when browsing social media, she only browses some news about the college entrance examination. So after using social media, her emotions showed a relatively negative state. This high school student has found that his perception of the surrounding environment has indeed increased. Becoming more sensitive and suspicious in personality. At the same time, this high school student reported that he often reminisces about the information he saw on social media today late at night.

The answer for a 20-year-old college student is. Social media can make one's emotions more negative because one often compares with others online. Social media can make oneself more sensitive. At the same time, he also admitted that he would uncontrollably recall information on social media, whether useful or useless.

The responses from respondents aged 30 and 50 were surprisingly consistent. They unanimously believe that their emotions are not affected after using social media. The emotions of the interviewees will neither become positive nor negative. Respondents also do not repeatedly recall information on social media. They indicate that information that can be recalled repeatedly is generally of practical

value or unpredictable. It does not deepen the impression just because this information comes from social media. But there are also differences between the two. 30-year-old people say they will not become sensitive due to social media. The interviewee stated that they are busy with their work. Social media is just a medium for conveying information. It will not have a significant impact on one's emotional perception. 50-year-old respondents believe they have become more sensitive. In addition to the personality reasons of the interviewees themselves, the changes in rationality and sensibility as they age are also important reasons that the author needs to consider.

4. Discussion

4.1. Induction of Statistical Results

Through the questionnaire and interview results, the author summarized three useful conclusions. Firstly, the older the person, the lower their sensitivity to information anxiety. If the source of anxiety is indeed social media information on the internet, it indicates that age has a lower level of capture of social media. Secondly, regardless of the age group, social media will have a certain degree of impact on their lives. But the degree of impact is rarely deep enough to affect physiological states (such as sleep quality). Thirdly, the reason for anxiety is more due to the imbalanced psychological gap caused by one's lack of confidence compared to others.

The main motivation for college students to use social media is to achieve social identification and access to information, followed by leisure and entertainment; College students have a certain degree of dependence in the process of using social media, and it should be noted that there is a tendency for the degree of dependence of college students on social media to further increase in the future [5]. This paper from Dalian University of Technology has greatly inspired the author, because he needs to obtain recognition and receive information from social media. So there is a certain degree of dependence on social media. Due to their reliance on social media, they are further eager to gain recognition from social media. The more people care about social media, the easier they are to be influenced by it. Gao Jinguo also believes in "New Media Anxiety Disorder" that anxiety comes from the uncertainty of patterns and paths [6].

There is a view is that social media use is positively correlated with miss out anxiety. According to the Social cognitive theory of mass communication, social media use may reinforce certain cognitive, emotional, attitudinal and behaviors [7].

The essence of anxiety is the negative mentality of self-confusion caused by the mismatch between desire and ability. "In the new era of communication, as a tool, communication media have gained space and possibilities for generalization. They penetrate into various aspects of modern society, but do not hesitate to invade or even suppress the subject through such infiltration [8]."

In the internet world, the full score anxiety cannot be separated from the fundamental practical factors of human nature. As stated in a paper of Nanjing University of Science and Technology entitled "Review and Prospect of Research on User Error Anxiety Disorder (FoMO) in the Mobile Social Media Environment". "The satisfaction of basic human needs is closely related to individual behavioral motivation [9]." The digital dissemination of information technology has nothing but accelerated the emergence of this mentality, exacerbating the impact of this emotion.

4.2. Suggestions for Alleviating Anxiety

People who feel nervous should reduce excessive attention to others. This is a supplementary explanation for focusing on oneself. By reducing excessive attention to others, people can fundamentally reduce the sources of troubles and reduce the number of objects for comparison. However, this method is effective in the early stages of anxiety and in situations where people want to alleviate it in a short period of time, because people always need to open our eyes to the world and

pay attention to others. If people pay long term attention to their own land is easy to stagnate and difficult to progress.

Zhang Zhi and Yan Feng in Let Anxiety Soul regain "Positive Energy" in New Media think that students' psychological big data should be refined [10]. External environments such as society, school, and family can alleviate anxiety groups to a certain extent. The way to alleviate anxiety not only requires personal effort. External assistance is also essential. But the decisive role of internal regulation cannot be ignored. This is also the reason why this article explores the sources of anxiety.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Research Summary

This study mainly used two research methods. They are questionnaire survey method and interview method. The duration of this survey is relatively long, involving a large age range of survey subjects with varying social backgrounds and life experiences. It can be concluded that different age groups have a certain degree of reflection on social media anxiety. Specifically, it can be considered as a mismatch between human vanity and their own abilities. The reason why human beings are constantly developing is because they pursue a harmonious unity in terms of self-dignity and social needs. People's inner needs and the objective drive of society constantly raise the average line, and people are anxious under the pressure of spiritual internal friction and one-sided excellence.

5.2. Research Limitations

The research process was limited by spatial conditions. Although a combination of online and real-life research methods was used, it was only spread to a certain extent in the interpersonal circle around the author, and the dissemination effect was not strong and the scope of dissemination was not wide.

5.3. Future Outlook

The author hopes that through this research, people of different age groups can overcome anxiety. Enable people of different age groups to be aware of anxiety, face it, and ultimately alleviate it. This requires people to maintain calm and rational thinking, and focus more on themselves. Can be the "Egoism" of this era.

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