

## Research Review on the Risk of Youth Responsibility Anomie in Network Moral Construction and Educational Risk Control Measures

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### Abstract

Given the complexity of network moral construction, this research first sorted out and reviewed the risk factors of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction, and then pointed out that future research on youth responsibility anomie should be conducted with a curiosity with its representation, and by focusing on educational strategies to address it and re-examining related problems using the network governance theory. After a comprehensive analysis of the in-depth connection between network moral construction and youth responsibility anomie as two mutually restricting and promoting factors, and revealing the practical problems with respect to the latter, this research proposed educational control measures to address youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction.

**Key words:** Network moral construction; Youth responsibility; Risk of anomie; Educational control measures

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It is pointed out in the fourth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee that: China faces “surging risks and challenges at home and abroad” and it needs “to build a community of social governance in which everyone is responsible, everyone undertakes their due obligations, and everyone enjoys the benefits”. (The literature research office of the CPC Central Committee, 2014 & 2016) The Outline of the Implementation of the Construction of the Moral Citizen in the New Era expressly pointed out that China needs to “pay adequate attention to the moral construction in cyberspace” and that “A nation will prosper only when its young people thrive.”; although youth responsibility anomie risk seems to have started in the risky field of the network society, its roots can be traced directly back to the realistic society. And network moral construction also faces risk factors of youth responsibility anomie including responsibility substitution, responsibility conflict, responsibility drift and diffusion, etc. As such, this research aims to explore issues about the risk of youth social responsibility anomie at a new era, including problem representation, influencing factors and educational control measures.

### 1. FOREIGN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

**1.1** The connotation and essence of youth responsibility. Youth responsibility refers to the moral quality and personality characteristics a decent youth should have, which are deemed as a constructive force that promotes youth development. In Western history, the Greek philosopher Zenon of Eleates first used the term *kathekon* and defined it as “befitting actions that correspond to nature” or “proper actions guided by the sense of reason”. In his work “Basic Principles of Moral Metaphysics”, Kant claims that “responsibility is the behavior necessity derived from respect for the law of nature.” And it is stated in Marxist theory that: “human nature is not a single person abstraction, in its reality, it is the sum

of all social relations.” For a person, the subject of responsibility, his/her responsibility arises from dealing with various social relations in the process of engaging in productive labor. And the concept of responsibility has a relationship attribute, which reflects certain connections among people and between people and society in social activities.

**1.2** The characteristics of youth responsibility in network moral construction. First of all, in network moral construction, the responsibility relationship among young people becomes more complicated and youth responsibility itself reflects more varied connections. Under such circumstances, as stated by Zygmunt Bauman, members of an organization tend to shuffle responsibility off onto other people, and the organization as a whole becomes a tool to obliterate responsibility. Secondly, in network moral construction the subjects of youth responsibility become more diversified, making it easier to conceal the moral liabilities of young people. Thus, there is a risk of substituting young people’s moral responsibility with technical responsibility. Thirdly, the self-organization characteristic of the new era could easily lead to self-organization features in network moral construction, and in turn, to the dilemma of collective action among young people. In his theory of collective action dilemma, Mancur Olson, a famous American economist, states that individuals believe that they only have minimal influence on the organization, which can also be used to explain the problem of responsibility diffusion among young people. Fourthly, the false/true duality nature of specific responsibilities in network moral construction could easily lead to responsibility conflicts among young people.

**1.3** Studies on educational Control of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction. 1) Educational approaches to address youth responsibility anomie. In this field, the United States attaches great importance to promoting youth’s sense of responsibility by cultivating their moral awareness while the UK advocates that responsibility education should be integrated throughout the daily lives of young people. Ramon (Rom) Lewis (2012) believes that, in order to cultivate youth responsibility, teachers must make good use of educational methods such as explaining the effects of bad behaviors, giving early warnings and making conversation after the event. 2) Research on the environmental mechanism to address youth responsibility anomie. In terms of the construction of the institutional environment, Tineke Broer (2015) advocates improving youth responsibility in network moral construction by means of developing social political expressions and improving the institutional environment. On the other hand, in terms of building an ethical environment, Olga A. Karabanova (2014) explores the cultivation of youth responsibility by schools from the perspective of teenager’s PMA of their schools.

## 2. DOMESTIC RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

**2.1** The connotation and characteristics of youth responsibility. The first point of view, taken from the perspective of ethics and morality, is that youth responsibility is a moral quality. Cui Xinwei (2012) believes that as the internal basis for social connections between individuals, responsibility has rich moral connotations and is a core basic moral quality of an individual (Cui, 2012). Another view point, which is more focused on the recognition and maintenance of social norms, is that youth responsibility should be regarded as a mission and “task” that young people must complete by themselves in accordance with social norms. In summary, youth responsibility has an essential social characteristic, subjective personality characteristic, and the moral characteristic of altruism, the practical characteristic of participation, and the generation characteristic of lifelong presence.

**2.2** Research on the relationship between network moral construction and youth responsibility. Song Xiaohong (2019) points out that the anonymity and interactivity of a network environment would further expand the dispersion and imbalance of power and responsibility among young netizens. Tu Guihua (2018) believes that, due to the lack of fully developed morality, world view, self-discipline ability as well as the value of right and wrong, teenagers are extremely vulnerable to the effects of unhealthy online behaviors, which may lead to all kinds of moral anomies in their online activities. Li Yamei (2011) states that online ethics is a reflection of the social relations between and common interests of individuals and organizations participating in online activities, and that it is the sum of all behavioral moral codes and norms that people should observe when in cyberspace. All in all, network development has brought a series of impacts on people’s social life, which in turn have given rise to a lot of ethical issues.

**2.3** Major trends and risks with respect to youth responsibility in network moral construction. Based on rich, detailed and accurate survey data, “China Youth Development Report” points out that in today’s China, many young people believe that their fate is closely linked to their responsibilities to their families and the country. However, there are still many risks regarding youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction. As stated by Deng Yan (2011), in the field of network moral construction, it is not uncommon to see in young netizens moral awareness issues such as the prevalence of relativism and the spread of anarchism, moral emotion issues such as indifference and alienation towards others and other phenomena including lack of clear values on rights and wrongs and self-indulgent online behavior, etc. Miao Yong (2014) believes that the emergence of highly

advanced modern media technology, especially that of self-media, has allowed irresponsible “cyber celebrities” to maliciously explore the directness and anonymity of the “micro-platforms”, which has led to many undesirable consequences for young netizens.

**2.4 Path selection with respect to educational control of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction.** Qiu Weiguang (2013) believes that youth responsibility should be cultivated by simultaneously taking multiple approaches including cognitive education, moral emotion training and behavior development education. Wei Jinping (2013) points out that, in accordance with the law of responsibility formation, we should improve the social responsibility of college students by means of classroom education, practice-based intensification and example guidance. Hu Ting (2005) claims that, in the era of globalization, the responsibility of college students should have four core elements: National rejuvenation, socialist beliefs, global ethics and heroic personality. Zhang Li (2015) explained the role of network culture in cultivating youth responsibility from the perspective of strengthening network culture construction. Chinese scholar Guo Qing (2013), from the perspective of promotion of social responsibility under the socialist core value system, proposes that we can achieve an educational environment suitable for cultivating youth responsibility through the dissemination of the socialist core values. Xiong Shengyu (2014) believes that media literacy education for college students should be strengthened in order to create a good network ethical environment. And it is specially pointed out in the Outline of the Implementation of the Construction of the Moral Citizen in the New Era that China should do a good job in ethical construction of cyberspace by strengthening the construction of online content, cultivating civilized self-discipline network behavior, enriching online ethics practices and creating a good network ethical environment.

Despite a series of valuable results obtained basing on the research of predecessor scholars, existing research on youth responsibility still leaves much room for deepening and expansion in terms of: 1) Research angle. Existing research does not answer the question of what kind of youth responsibility is needed in network moral construction, what are the challenges in this regard and how to prevent and control relevant risk factors. 2) Research content. As existing research efforts are mostly focused on the meaning, status quo and cultivation of youth responsibility, there lacks sufficient study on the logical routes of the possible further dissimilation and dynamic evolution of youth responsibility in network moral construction, and on the educational control measures of youth responsibility anomie risk. 3) Research perspective. More often than not, the results of existing research on youth responsibility were obtained

by studying situations in the home country rather than comparing those between different countries. In particular, there lacks sufficient research on youth responsibility education in network moral construction. 4) Research method. Existing research tends to use static thinking instead of dynamic analysis. But conducting research in the context of network moral construction requires the use of a more systematic and dynamic approach. Although research on educational control of youth responsibility anomie risk is needed due to new developments in the new era, to ensure effective risk prevention and control requires re-examining the risk basing on the complexity nature of the new era and using related theories.

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### 3. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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The “risk” of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction is not only a theoretical and practical issue but also a proposition with distinctive characteristics of the current era. Future research in this area should cover topics such as “the inner connection between network moral construction and youth responsibility”, “risk factors of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction”, “educational control measures of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction”.

**3.1** Expound and verify basic theories related to the risk of youth responsibility anomie. a) Explore the theory basis of educational strategies to address youth responsibility anomie risk. Educational strategy research in this field should be conducted on the basis of taking “network governance theory” as the theoretical basis for exploring ways to address the risk of youth responsibility anomie in a new era. b) Define basic concepts scientifically. Other than scientifically defining core concepts such as “youth responsibility”, “responsibility anomie” and “network moral construction”, further research should also include in-depth analysis of their connotation and extension, and discrimination of related concepts.

**3.2** Analyze the inner connection between network moral construction and youth responsibility anomie. Due to the complexity of network moral construction, youth responsibility now has some new characteristics including: The complexity in responsibility relationships, the diversity of responsibility subjects, the networking nature of involved organizations, and the false/true duality nature of specific responsibilities. These characteristics all have a huge impact on the dynamics of youth responsibility anomie. Specifically, the risk of youth responsibility anomie is represented in four areas: The responsibility substitution phenomenon of technical responsibility replacing moral responsibility, responsibility conflicts caused by the differences and contradictions between the old and the new responsibility ethics, responsibility drift

in modernity reflection of complex network behavior, and the diffusion of responsibility caused by moral indifference and blindness in a dilemma of collective action (Zhou, 2016).

**3.3** Reveal the actual risks of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction. Based on the “ought to be” nature, inevitability and contingency of youth responsibility in network moral construction, we need to construct a structural model of youth responsibility and prepare the “Questionnaire of Youth Responsibility in Network Moral Construction”, so as to reveal the risk dynamics of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction, and to explain from the vertical perspective the dialectical relationship between the complexity and risks of network moral construction and the youth responsibility anomie risk; and the positive interaction between the power reconstruction of network moral construction and the promotion of youth responsibility from a horizontal perspective.

**3.4** Analyze the influencing factors of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction. Undesirable factors in network moral construction, such as information distortion, behavioral oversight, moral aphasia, media disqualification, etc., can lead to the risk of youth responsibility anomie. As this risk is represented by responsibility anomie behaviors caused by a mixture of individual factors (the subject’s motivation, cognition, emotion, behavior, etc.) and external factors (politics,

economy, society, culture, etc.), future research should be conducted to extract the compound influencing variables of youth responsibility anomie from the two dimensions of endogenous factors and exogenous factors.

**3.5** Develop educational control measures to address the risk of youth responsibility anomie in network moral construction. Starting from risk aversion theories and models, we should explore the educational control measures of youth responsibility anomie risk in network moral construction, including the identification, prediction, early warning, pre-control, avoidance and mitigation of related risks. And by comprehensively enhancing youngsters’ rational awareness of responsibility anomie risk, we can more effectively enhance educational prevention and control of youth responsibility anomie risk in network moral construction.

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