Investigation and Suggestions on the Phenomenon of Youngsters Staying up Late

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Abstract

With the accelerated pace of modern life and the intense competitive pressures in contemporary society, youngsters’ behavior of staying up late has become a common phenomenon which has aroused the concern of people from all walks of life. Consequently, the underlying reasons for this phenomenon are worth analyzing and based on these causes, a new perspective can be put forward which argues that people can regard the behavior of staying up late as a rite of passage for youngsters and show the basic respect for their choice to stay up late rather than the constant criticism. Simultaneously, youngsters also need to be aware of the risks of staying up late consistently and realize that this behavior should be controlled within a moderate scope while they also need to stay healthy during this period by taking certain useful measures to get rid of fatigue and reduce the harm caused by staying up late and gradually form a regular schedule. Therefore, this paper analyzes the reasons for this phenomenon, from which this article also shows a new perspective to youngsters’ behavior of staying up late, and makes the corresponding suggestions to help the young to get through this period more smoothly.

Keywords
Youngsters; Staying up Late; Reasons; Suggestions.

1. Introduction

This paper expresses a standpoint concerning why most youngsters aged 18 to 35 stay up late in current society and certain suggestions for them. My interest in this theme arose from my personal experience that I always stay up late since junior high school. Besides, China Sleep Research Society and other official as well as unofficial institutions illustrated that youngsters’ behavior of staying up late is increasingly prominent, and for a group of young people, staying up late even has become a normal proportion in their life. At the same time, there are over one-third people staying up late and the majority of them is the young people [1]. Therefore, it is worthwhile to analyze the main reasons why this phenomenon exists and appears a development trend. According to the research data demonstrated in the Staying up Late White Paper published in 2019 in China, we classified various reasons into five categories, including young late sleepers’ thinking model, their personal aspirations, tremendous pressure, the enjoyment of the personal moment in night and their habit of staying up too late. By comprehending these main causes, penetrating the essence of it is also significant and valuable. During the exploration, not only can we figure out the attractions of staying up late, but also can realize its authentic meaning in people’s life and based on the analysis, some useful suggestions also can be put forward.

This paper is organized as follows: The first part will outline both author’s personal experience and the phenomenon of staying up late while the second part will introduce the specific definition of staying up late. The five reasons of this phenomenon will be given more exactly in
the third part. In the fourth part, various attractions of staying up late are listed out. And certain suggestions are mentioned in fifth part for the youngsters who keep staying up late.

2. Personal Experience and the Phenomenon of Staying up Late

I have been a night owl since junior high school. Several years ago, I transferred to a top junior high school from my hometown. So, initially, I stayed up late just to make up the class I missed before to keep up with them. But tremendous academic stress and fierce competition there overwhelmed me, which caused me to keep studying and running without any break. And a series of these items resulted in the formation of a habit for me--staying up late. And this habit has accompanied me till now. Due to this experience of staying up late to study, I was gradually used to be a night owl, in other word, it was this experience that knocked my body clocks out of kilter and made me tend to stay up late even when I had nothing to do. Meanwhile, in my years of experience in staying up late, I have found that staying up late is not just for one reason but a wide range of causes, and there are a group of hidden issues behind this phenomenon worthy to be considered. Consequently, figuring out the factors constituting in this phenomenon and giving relative suggestions will be the significant aspects this paper focused on.

Understanding the definition of staying up late is the first step of analyzing this phenomenon and then we can conclude certain reasons based on the collected data and take different methods in allusion to different reasons. Therefore, the essence of this phenomenon will appear on the surface by our analysis. And young people can realize the true meaning of their matters done in night and really know the important implications of their collective behavior. Besides, the attractions of staying up late which will be mentioned later will be useful for them to explore the authentic root of own problems which bring about behavior of staying up late or postpone their time for sleep. Additionally, part of youngsters who tend to be a night owl are looking for the way to revive their energy in day or to minimize and alleviate the harm of staying up late, so, we also offer suggestions to help them.

3. The Definition of Staying up Late

From the secretory system point of view, going to sleep after twenty-three o’clock is defined to “staying up late”. After twenty-three o’clock, human’s liver and kidney need to get rid of toxins, and currently, the function of human’s body is decreasing while all the body organs get into a period of self-repairing and refreshing. Consequently, it is the accurate definition of “staying up late” in this paper, which excludes the sleeplessness.

4. Reasons for Phenomenon

4.1. Thinking Model

Youngsters’ thinking model is one of the most important factors that lead them to stay up late, for it is an internal reason which could not be changed unless the person want to do this. There are almost 10.5% of youngsters staying up late, which results from the thinking model known as “Youth is the greatest capital” [1]. This kind of thinking model existing in youngsters’ minds makes them tend to stay up late whether there is an assignment need to do or not. And it also sets up a precondition for them to stay up late without a great psychological burden, which can assure them that staying up late could not do harm to their body and brain or it is easier for youngsters to revive energy and return to normal life after staying up late. Consequently, the thinking model that we are young is an important reason causing the phenomenon of youngsters staying up late day by day.
4.2. Personal Aspiration

Youngsters’ personal aspiration is the second factor for the phenomenon, which is also called “take the initiative to stay up late”. With the thinking model that youth is the greatest capital, a group of youngsters will make the most of time to study or work all night to pursue their goals and dreams. In addition, the proportion of youngsters who always stay up late and think it can make them become more excellent is 50.3% while nearly 58.7% youngsters who always stay up late believe that it is feasible to reduce their sleep time to improve themselves through studying and working during the night. More specifically, 24.4% of the young night owls would love to stay up late, because they firmly believe that if they make enough effort, they will have return.

However, under this circumstance, the same behavior that taking initiative to stay up late can be divided into two categories by the different attributes. The first one is positive for youngsters to achieve their goals while the other one may result in success anxiety which will bring about some mental problems to them. Initially, from the standpoint of taking initiative to stay up late, the first case can be understood as the individuals want to promote themselves indeed and except the day time, they are also willing to study or work hard at night to acquire more knowledge and skills which can help them to be more well-rounded. In this case, youngsters have a good and healthy mentality, so we classified it into the positive one. On the other hand, staying up late contains the anxiety about success [3], which means that a group of youngsters take initiative to stay up late to make more effort during the night, because they have the anxiety about success. Then, the bad emotion may exert a negative effect on their physical and mental health. In conclusion, whether it is positive or not, personal aspiration is another important reason generating the phenomenon of youngster staying up late.

4.3. Study or Work Pressure

The third aspect refers to a common phenomenon of modern society, study and work pressure. The majority of youngsters who always stay up late are forced by study or work pressure, with exactly 42.5% [1]. Study or work pressure lead to youngsters being forced to stay up late, which means that they do not want to stay up late, but they must do so to finish their tasks. This case should be distinguished from procrastination due to it means that there are too many tasks given to the individual rather than the person are inefficient.

4.4. Personal Moment

Squeezing and enjoying the personal moment in night is the fourth factor. Youngsters are in a critical period for the development of shaping self-awareness [3]. And the youngsters who always stay up late often argue that staying up late can create and prolong the personal time. Indeed, in the day time, people are more likely to be in a large group or community where they are just the work persona and they have to emphasis on a mass of assignments. Relatively, after school or work, they come back to dorm or home, however, generally, there are still some work even many tasks need to be done at home, so maybe after twenty-two o’clock, the time is absolutely belonging to them. As we mentioned above that falling asleep after twenty-three o’clock is defined to staying up late, the span between their relaxing time and the defined time is very limited. So, some of the young people would make the best of their precious alone time in night to release themselves and enjoy their personal moment in which they would not be disturbed by other people or matters. Actually, after a long time studying or working, individuals certainly need to figure out a time to do something they like to relax themselves and relieve the stress coming from all sides, for example, they can release themselves from daily stress with group sports, social events and hobbies. But, when young people are pursuing their spiritual needs in night, they are inclined to get into a situation which can be called "fantasy for more resources". In this circumstance, many people tempt to obtain more “time” through
staying up late, more exactly, according to researchers reported by various media, most of youngsters consider that unless they fall asleep, the day is end, otherwise, the day is still going on for them. It is a sign of fantasy for more resources of time, which gives the illusion to them and sets up a psychological hint that the time belonged to them is prolonged. However, under certain circumstance, people will get out of the illusion by their awareness, but then, some of them may keep staying up late for they getting into another trap called “delay discounting” in psychological. Delay discounting is a psychological phenomenon that in the decision process, the subjective value of one object will decrease with time which can also be called “time discounting” [5]. Similarly, comparing with going to sleep earlier to stay healthy, the enjoyment and freedom of staying up late can give individuals a short-term yield while the body’s health is a long-term gain. Therefore, when people get out of the fantasy for more resources, they may get into the delay discounting subsequently, which may lead them to stay up late again until very late.

4.5. The Habit

The factors mentioned above will lead to a habit of staying up late which is also a reason for this phenomenon. There are 33.6% of youngsters who stay up late being led by this habit [1]. A habit of keeping staying up late will be formed by staying up late continuously for several days. Once the habit formed, individuals are prone to go to bed later than before even though they don’t have anything need to do at that time, for this behavior knocks the body clocks out of kilter, then people’s body will work with the adjusted clock.

5. The Attraction of Staying up Late

5.1. The Illusion of Prolonging the Personal Time

As the personal moment is one of the reasons why youngsters stay up late, the illusion of prolonging their personal time is also one of the main attractions for youngsters’ staying up late. Due to the illusion of prolonging their personal time, the young are more likely to keep aware in the night to prove that the day belonged to them is still not end up, and this illusion also causes them to keep the behavior of staying up late. And in the “prolonged time”, they can do everything they like in their private spaces. They may edit their own videos, post their photos online or write their own stories on twitter or weibo.

5.2. People’s Curiosity of Information Online

The second factor which attracts youngsters to stay up late is people’s curiosity of information online. With the rapid development and wide application of internet, people are exposed to an information age, where individuals have a quick and easy access to everything happened in one day. Cause the information can come from all sides around life, no matter it is the event or other people’s stories, the number of information is infinite and in the meanwhile, human’s curiosity is also unlimited. So, when young people use the smart phones in their personal moment in night, they tend to grasp this chance to get information as much as they could to stuff their curiosity, for they work or study all day with just little entertainment and news of the day. Therefore, the unlimited curiosity for the infinite information impels the youngsters to keep exploring in the information world built by the Internet, which makes them to extend the deadline for the information online to satisfy their curiosity. And it is their curiosity for an increasing number of news that results in staying up late.

5.3. Various Applications

With the proliferation of Internet and the expansion of human's demand, various applications came into existence, which is the other attractions for young people to stay up late. There are a wide range of applications, such as the applications for chatting, the software for watching
videos and so on. Among the applications which night owls prefer to, the application for chat and communication is the most popular one, with 62.7%-night owls using [1]. And the applications for video services and integrated information are not far behind it, with 52.5% and 48.9% respectively. Furthermore, there are more than nine kinds of applications involving in different fields are used by more than thirty percent of sleep-late youngsters. Consequently, because most of the young people only have the free time in night and various applications attracts their attentions, they are more likely to be immersed in the applications which they are interested in. Moreover, nowadays, almost every application pushes the information people like to the top of the page by the background data, so, after individuals watching or looking the videos or information they want, the applications will push new messages to them which may also attract their attention, and then they may keep watching the massages till very late.

Through the above analysis, there are certain factors lead young people to stay up late. Follows are some key points which should be attached importance to while people perceive the phenomenon that youngsters are almost used to staying up late. First, youngsters’ thinking model plays a dominant role in staying up late, for it is the internal factor which cannot be changed easily by external factors. Second, the majority of youngsters who always stay up late take initiative to stay up late to achieve their personal aspiration and the impacts can be divided into the positive one and the negative one. Third, except for their inner motivation of prolonging the study or work time to improve themselves, the entertainment and enjoyment before they going to sleep also contribute to staying up late. Fourth, there is no denying that staying up late is harmful to human's health, but we still need to consider a situation that youngsters are in a period where they not only face tremendous pressure, but also need to figure out their life destination through constantly practicing. Therefore, we can view this phenomenon as a rite of passage for youngsters. The work or study matters stuff their day time and generally, they can only use the time in night to improve themselves, get to know more about the society and the world or explore and have a try to the new things to figure out the lifestyle and the future they truly want. We should show the basic respect to this choice that youngsters staying up late to do their own matters, because they are not mature enough and they still need to keep trying various methods to see the world more wisely and fully, which enables them to get through this period and determine their future more smoothly, with this behavior being controlled within a moderate scope. On the other hand, although youngsters’ behavior of staying up late cannot be regarded as an item which should be absolutely opposed to, we still need to find out certain “magic weapons” for youngsters to help them get through this period more smoothly and stay healthy to walk on their life road in the future.

6. The “Magic Weapon” for Youngsters

6.1. Reduce Entertainment before Sleep

According to the analysis of the preceding context, the main reason and attraction for youngsters to stay up late can be attributed to the entertainment and enjoyment before sleep. Through survey data, we can find that the sleep quality of college students who playing smart phone for a long time before going to sleep is worse than youngsters who playing for a relatively short time, which can draw a conclusion that the time for playing smart phone before going to sleep certainly have an impact on sleep quality[4].And the majority of the entertainment and enjoyment before sleep is playing smart phones, so reducing the time for entertainment before sleep is a significant step for young late-sleepers to improve their sleep quality and sleep earlier gradually.
6.2. **Adjust the Diet Moderately**

As staying up late can account for lack of energy, black eye socket, losing hair and other symptoms, individuals could alleviate these by adjusting their diet moderately. Staying up late will cause reduced immune, skin damage, memory decline and poor sight [6]. If it is necessary for youngsters to staying up late, they can adjust the diet moderately to alleviate the damage to their health, which refers to the diet therapy, using the characteristics of food to adjust the body’s functions under the guidance of the theory of Chinese medicine. And when youngsters must stay up late, they should supply food timely and moderately. And as for the supper, it is better to eat some light foods which are rich in high-quality protein, vitamins, dietary fiber, calcium, iron and other nutrients, such as the whole-wheat bread, noodle soup, milk, eggs, nuts, apples, tomatoes, and so on. Especially vitamin B, it can relieve fatigue, protect liver, stabilize nerves, improve concentration, and alleviate stress. And when individuals stay up late for a long time, they should consume more high-quality protein foods such as fish, lean meat, eggs, milk, and vegetables and fruits to make up the nutritional loss caused by staying up late. Additionally, eat some black beans, black sesame seeds, and mulberries can nourish the liver and kidney, or they also can prepare some black sesame pills around [2].

6.3. **Have a Nap at Noon**

Staying up late last night will cause the fatigue in the next day. And having a good nap at noon is the best method to relieve fatigue for busy youngsters. A recent study by German scientists on sleep found that nap is the most efficient type of sleep. Moreover, "The Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic" says: "When the yang is exhausted, people will lie down, and when the yin is exhausted, people will lie down." Sleeping and waking up are the results of the exchange of yin and yang. At noon (11 o’clock to 13 o’clock), "Heyang" is the master of human’s heart. When it comes to noon, yang gradually eliminates, and having a rest can add yang, so that people’s body and mind can become peaceful. As to the time for rest, it is proper ranging from 30 minutes to an hour. As to some people who cannot sleep, they should also “get into peace” so that their body can balance, transition, refresh the mind and replenish the energy [2]. After having a good nap at noon, people's fatigue will be reduced sharply while their work or study efficiency will be improved greatly. In this case, youngsters can work or study more efficiently and effectively, which may decrease the possibility of staying up late.

6.4. **Get Rid of the Procrastination Gradually**

Youngsters’ behavior of staying up late is not only for a mass of study or work tasks but also for their procrastination. The individuals’ behavior of staying up late correlates with the procrastination, and the essential cause of procrastination is the lack of internal motivation and the fear for the new assignment after they finishing the tasks [3]. Besides, the attractions in the study or work time will decrease people’s efficiency and effect, which may also bring about postponing to tasks later and later till night. Consequently, getting rid of procrastination is of significance to reduce the behavior of staying up late for young people, which requests them to concentrate on their handy work and do not be disturbed by other factors. In order to get rid of procrastination, individuals can follow these points: First, define the most important thing and do it first. Second, set a fixed time and develop a habit. For example, sitting at the desk at 7-9 o’clock every night, not playing mobile phones or games, so at this time you must do something, then you may start to work or do the assignment, several days later, you will find that you can do many things in advance. Third, reduce interference. For instance, when you are working, turn off social media applications and other matters that influence your work efficiency, and you can do things efficiently. Moreover, there are many other ways to help individuals to get rid of procrastination, and we will not list each here.
6.5. Set a Target to Sleep Earlier Every Day

Constant staying up late for a long time will form a habit to stay up late which will knock human’s body clock out of kilter. And then the body will work with the newly adjusted body clock, which may start up a vicious circle in people’s lifestyle. However, the adjusted body clock is not conformed with the human’s endocrine system, which will do harm to their body. Therefore we must turn back the body clock to enable human’s body to keep a common working. Setting a target to sleep earlier every day is a good way to turn back the body clock. If individuals can go to sleep earlier than the day before, their body clock will be turned back as regular gradually. Then, they can also gradually form a regular schedule through this method.

7. Conclusion

The common phenomenon of youngsters’ staying up late mainly results from youngsters’ thinking model, personal aspiration, the study or work pressure, the personal moment and the habit formed later. Among these factors, young people’s thinking model plays the major role, for it is the inner motivation of staying up late. So, whether they stay up late for just entertainment and relax or truly for their self-improvement, it is their own decision and it also led them to explore the world and future through various methods. Therefore, this essay view youngsters’ behavior of staying up late as a rite of passage for young people, where they have energy, time, and opportunity to explore the world and determine their own destinations in the future, whether it is fantastic or not. Additionally, with the illusion of prolonging the personal time, people’s curiosity of information online and various applications attracting, young people are more likely to use their smart phones and other electrical devices in their personal moment in night. One the other hand, although we regard staying up late as one of the steps in life for youngsters, we still need make them to pay attention to their body health, for staying up late certainly do harm to human’s physical and mental health. Consequently, this paper points out certain “magic weapons” for young late-sleepers to get rid of fatigue and reduce the harm caused by staying up late and help them to form a regular schedule gradually.

This essay searches for the factors of the phenomenon that youngsters aged 18 to 35 always stay up late and gives the standpoint that staying up late should be regarded as a rite of passage for young people. Furthermore, this paper also gives certain useful suggestions for the young to help them get through this period more smoothly. And it is also significant for my own life. Since I am accustomed to be a late-sleeper, I will pay more attention on the factors I put forward above, and practice the “magic weapons” to get through this period more smoothly. More effective suggestions may appear during practice. Moreover, this paper just covers some factors in certain areas of youngsters’ staying-up-late phenomenon, and there are many other areas need to be explored.

References