

Social Media Empowerment: Constructing Maternal Autonomy for New Generation Urban Mothers

Wei Shi

School of Humanities, Zhejiang Business Technology Institute, Hangzhou 310053, China

Abstract: *With changes in social structures and cultural perceptions, urban new-generation mothers of children with autism face multiple challenges in their maternal practices, including traditional gender norms, economic burdens, and constraints of the healthcare system. From both structural and post-structural perspectives, this study employs netnography to analyze the interactions of mothers on Xiaohongshu and WeChat communities. The findings reveal that under the dual pressures of traditional gender roles and various social structures, these mothers gain significant informational and emotional support through social media. This empowerment enhances their informed decision-making and choices, alleviates feelings of isolation and anxiety in the parenting process, and promotes personalized and diverse expressions of motherhood. Social media functions not only as a support tool but also as an empowerment platform, helping mothers find autonomy and self-expression within societal structures.*

Keywords: Mothers of Children with Autism, New-Generation Mothers, Social Media, Maternal Autonomy, Empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advancements in medical science and increasing social awareness have led to a rise in global autism diagnosis rates, creating a demand for related research and support strategies[1]. In China, the prevalence of autism among children aged 6-12 is 0.7%, with an estimated 2 million children aged 0-14 nationwide and approximately 160,000 new cases each year[2]. Studies indicate that mothers are often the primary caregivers in families with autistic children, experiencing greater stress compared to mothers of neurotypical children[3-5].

Urbanization and technological progress present new-generation mothers, born in the 1980s and 1990s, with a parenting environment significantly different from that of previous generations. Influenced by higher education levels, these mothers rely more on social media for support and information, showcasing independence and innovation in their parenting practices. They face not only the traditional pressures of motherhood but also multiple role conflicts imposed by modern society. These new challenges and dilemmas make understanding and supporting urban new-generation mothers of children with autism increasingly urgent and important.

Despite widespread attention to the challenges faced by mothers of children with autism, existing research has yet to fully explore how urban new-generation mothers adapt to their maternal roles within rapidly changing social structures. According to Giddens' structuration theory, there is a "dual" relationship between social structure and agency, where individuals, while constrained by structure, also exhibit a certain degree of agency[6]. Urban new-generation mothers of children with autism possess a certain degree of agency in their interactions with social structures. The development of new media technologies has empowered more women through new media, expanding their social resources and discursive space, and enhancing their individual agency[7].

Therefore, this study employs netnography to explore the following questions: What structural factors constrain the maternal practices of urban mothers of children with autism? How do they, as agents, cope with the tension between social structure and personal expectations? What role does social media play in this process?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 Parenting Challenges of Children with Autism

Raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) presents significant challenges for families, particularly for mothers. Key factors include mental health issues, socioeconomic burdens, and lack of social support. The unique needs of children with autism, such as communication difficulties, social interaction challenges, and

repetitive behaviors, not only place stress on mothers' daily lives but also impact their psychological well-being, increasing the risk of anxiety and depression[8-9]. Economically, families with autistic children face high costs for special education and therapy, often far exceeding family incomes, with government subsidies typically insufficient to cover these expenses[10]. Additionally, parents' experiences in dealing with these challenges vary across different regions, reflecting the influence of factors such as family size, social support, and economic conditions[11]. An effective social support system, including support from family, community, friends, and professional organizations, is crucial in alleviating the stress faced by these mothers[12-13]. Among these, peer support, which involves mutual assistance and encouragement from parents with similar experiences, is considered a vital and effective form of support[14]. These support systems can provide emotional support, practical information, and resources, helping mothers better cope with the challenges of parenting.

2.2 Sociocultural Characteristics of Urban New-Generation Mothers

Urban new-generation mothers in China grew up during the post-reform era, experiencing rapid economic growth, the one-child policy, educational expansion, internet proliferation, and deep developments in marketization, industrialization, and urbanization[15]. These factors have shaped their values and generational identity distinctly from previous generations. Generally, these mothers have higher education levels, which enhances their market competitiveness and gives them greater bargaining power within their families, allowing more autonomy in parenting and household decisions[16]. With the advent of new media technologies, they use online spaces to learn and share parenting topics, gaining maternal identity, emotional comfort, and a sense of belonging. However, in their pursuit of self-development, they face conflicts in parent-child relationships, spousal relationships, and traditional motherhood expectations, seeking a balance between family and work. Their lives are influenced by both social structures and personal agency[17]. Overall, urban new-generation mothers show significant innovation and autonomy in their parenting practices. By utilizing modern technology and educational resources, they create more possibilities for themselves and their families while seeking new identities amid sociocultural changes. However, inadequate, unequal, and unregulated childcare resources put significant pressure on working mothers in urban areas, undermining their status in both public and private spheres[18]. For mothers of children with autism, these challenges are more complex, requiring targeted and comprehensive support from social, educational, and medical systems.

2.3 The Impact of Social Media on Maternal Practices

In modern society, social media has become a crucial platform for information and communication, significantly influencing the parenting practices of urban new-generation mothers. These platforms have changed how information is accessed and reshaped mothers' social networks, providing essential support for families with children who have special needs[19].

Empowerment theory, which originated in the 1970s, initially described how oppressed groups resist unjust social relations[20]. Over time, it has expanded to broader fields, particularly in analyzing how providing information and resources can enhance individual and community autonomy. In the context of widespread social media use, empowerment theory focuses on how these platforms improve individuals' information access and social interactions, increasing their autonomy and control in life and decision-making. For example, influential WeChat public accounts in the field of autism education, such as "Enlighten Special Education Platform" and "Dami and Xiaomi," provide mothers of children with autism with the latest research and educational methods, and establish a community for support and experience sharing. This significantly enhances mothers' self-efficacy and sense of social empowerment. The establishment of such communities and the sharing of information provide mothers with a platform for learning, mutual assistance, and collective growth, demonstrating the empowerment potential of social media in modern parenting practices[21].

However, social media use also brings new challenges. Studies show that social comparison on social media can increase psychological stress for mothers, especially when they compare their parenting practices with idealized images of motherhood[22]. Additionally, while social media offers a platform for sharing and support, information overload can increase anxiety and stress for mothers[23].

2.4 Application of Structural and Post-Structural Theory in Maternal Practices

Based on the above literature review, we observe that mothers of children with autism not only assume the role of caregivers, but their maternal practices are also profoundly influenced by multiple sociocultural factors. Existing

research highlights challenges in mental health, economic burdens, and social support systems, yet lacks detail on how these mothers actively adapt and influence their conditions. Despite significant social and economic challenges, these mothers use digital tools like social media to transform how they access information and support, enhancing their agency and creativity in parenting. This paper introduces structural and post-structural theories to explore these sociocultural influences, revealing structural factors in maternal practices and proactive coping strategies.

Structuralist theory views social structures as decisive in shaping individual behavior and roles. For urban new-generation mothers of children with autism, factors such as the education system, access to medical resources, and societal expectations shape their maternal practices. These structures limit actions and form the foundation of maternal identities. Post-structuralism examines how individuals find space for action within these constraints, with agency formed through interactions with power[24]. This study uses a post-structuralist perspective to understand how these mothers reshape their practices through social media. They use these platforms to obtain information, share stories, and participate in broader motherhood discourse, challenging and expanding traditional definitions of motherhood.

By integrating structural and post-structural perspectives, this paper explores the position of urban new-generation mothers of children with autism within social structures and how they redefine their practices amid constraints and opportunities. This theoretical integration offers a comprehensive framework to understand and support the unique challenges and opportunities faced by this group.

3. DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a netnographic approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the daily experiences of urban mothers born in the 1980s and 1990s who have children with autism. This method allows researchers to directly observe and engage with the target group's online communities, capturing real-time interactions and life situations. Data collection was conducted through two primary methods:

Firstly, the study involved screening and analyzing content posted by new-generation mothers of children with autism on the Xiaohongshu app. Particular attention was paid to posts, comments, and videos tagged with terms like "autism parenting" and "special needs education." Content analysis was used to extract information about daily challenges, parenting techniques, and resource acquisition, organizing these findings into qualitative research material for subsequent analysis.

Secondly, the research team participated in a WeChat group for parents of children with autism based in Hangzhou. This group is one of several established by an autism rehabilitation education brand across different cities in China. The group members are primarily mothers from Hangzhou, Shanghai, and nearby cities with children aged 6 to 12 years with autism, constituting 90% of the group's total membership. These mothers have diverse professional and educational backgrounds, with 70% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Over a one-year field study (April 2023 to April 2024), combining participatory discussions and non-participatory observations, the research team explored the behavioral patterns and psychological experiences of these mothers within their community interactions.

Through these extensive data collection activities, the study initially observed that despite differences in personal backgrounds and living environments, mothers of children with autism share many similar challenges and strategies in their parenting practices and social interactions. This not only reflects their common experiences in facing social structures and cultural expectations but also highlights the complex role social media plays in their maternal practices. These shared experiences and challenges will be further explored in the subsequent analysis to reveal the structural factors that constrain and shape these mothers' parenting practices.

To protect participants' privacy and ensure data confidentiality, the study adhered strictly to ethical guidelines throughout the data collection process. All participants provided informed consent, and personal identity information was anonymized during data analysis.

4. MULTIPLE CONSTRAINTS: REGULATION OF MOTHERHOOD BY SOCIAL STRUCTURES

4.1 Conflict Between Parenting Ideologies and Social Expectations

In contemporary Chinese society, urban new-generation mothers have markedly different parenting ideologies compared to traditional views. Generally well-educated, they tend to learn scientific parenting knowledge through online resources and books, emphasizing the quality of upbringing. However, traditional gender roles and family division of labor, such as the expectation that "men work outside, women work inside," still exert a profound influence on them. In this cultural context, mothers are expected to be the primary caregivers, requiring substantial sacrifices in time and energy and taking on more parenting responsibilities. When problems arise in a child's development, mothers are often seen as primarily responsible, adding significant mental stress.

For urban new-generation mothers of children with autism, these challenges are even more unique and complex. Social expectations of motherhood are generally based on the upbringing of typical children, but the special needs of children with autism require mothers to invest more energy and time to meet their developmental needs. Lacking adequate social resources and clear parenting frameworks, these mothers must independently seek suitable support and strategies. They not only have to meet their child's special needs but also strive for social recognition and a sense of achievement in motherhood, resulting in dual pressures. This constant pressure permeates their daily lives, leading to experiences significantly different from those of typical mothers and causing feelings of immense frustration and psychological burden[25].

For example, on the Xiaohongshu platform, "Star Mom" CC expressed her frustration in a video:

"No matter what, I have a master's degree in psychology and have observed for a long time. I found that the institution my child currently attends always uses food or fixed instructions to induce him to complete tasks, like training an animal, which might worsen his repetitive behaviors over time. So, I suggested we consider switching to another intervention institution, but his father and grandparents disagreed, thinking I was delaying his treatment and being irresponsible by stopping classes. I'm really speechless..."

CC's experience highlights the complexities involved in raising and educating a child with autism, revealing the tension between professional educational applications and traditional family expectations, and how this tension practically impacts their maternal practices and mental health.

4.2 The Dilemma of Economic Pressure and Career Sacrifice

New-generation mothers typically have high expectations for their education and career development, actively participating in the labor market and pursuing personal career achievements. However, after childbirth, they often face discrimination and challenges in the workplace, frequently being forced to choose between career development and family responsibilities. The so-called "middle-aged mothers" in the workforce experience dual pressures from family and career, which often lead to career development bottlenecks, affecting both their economic status and mental health[26].

Raising a child with autism further exacerbates these challenges. According to the "2021 Blue Book of the Rehabilitation Industry for Children with Developmental Disorders," over half of the families have one parent, usually the mother, stay home full-time to care for the child, significantly affecting the household income. When mothers are the primary caregivers, 60.3% of them quit their jobs to care for their children full-time. The high cost of caregiving forces many mothers to reduce their working hours or leave the workforce entirely, increasing the economic pressure on the family and limiting their career development and self-fulfillment. Although there are economic support measures such as rehabilitation training subsidies, these are often insufficient to cover all expenses, and many families have to bear the high costs of private institutions. Additionally, the current social support for raising children with autism is inadequate and varies in quality, highlighting the need to strengthen and optimize the social support network. However, current policies and their implementation still need improvement[27].

For example, a netizen named Ali said:

"Our child's current institution costs more than ten thousand yuan a month, and it's more than twenty kilometers away from home. I have to commute back and forth every day to drop off and pick up my child. Most of my time is spent on this, and I can't balance work, so I had to quit my job. There's a special education center recommended by the municipal civil affairs bureau that's closer, but the spots are limited, and we can't afford to wait!"

Ali's case highlights the economic pressure and career sacrifices faced by families with autistic children in obtaining professional educational services. It also reveals the scarcity and unequal distribution of high-quality special education resources. This situation not only increases the economic burden on families, forcing mothers like Ali to make difficult choices between career development and family responsibilities, but it also potentially negatively impacts their mental health and social participation in the long term. Therefore, policy and social service improvements are needed to enhance the accessibility and quality of special education resources, better support these families, and alleviate their economic and psychological pressures.

4.3 Restrictions on Maternal Autonomy by Medical Norms

Early screening and intervention for children with autism are not just private family matters but also public actions that affect national public health and social well-being, forming a crucial part of national health policies. In 2022, the National Health Commission released the "0-6 Years Old Children Autism Screening and Intervention Service Specifications (Trial)," outlining requirements for autism screening, diagnosis, and intervention. While these standardized procedures enhance the efficiency of early diagnosis and treatment, they limit mothers' ability to make personalized decisions based on their child's specific needs.

The experience of Little Z's mother illustrates the feelings of many mothers adhering to highly standardized medical procedures:

"When Little Z was diagnosed as highly suspected of autism at over three years old, with no language, poor eye contact, and poor social skills, the doctor recommended immediate intensive intervention and introduced some methods and rehabilitation institutions. Our life was completely turned upside down, running between the hospital in the morning and the institution in the afternoon. I felt like I was being pushed along with no time or ability to think about whether this was the best arrangement. To accompany my child, I had to quit my job and eventually move close to the institution. I was on the brink of mental and physical collapse; life was a mess. When I consulted experts for alternative plans, they all said this was the best choice for my child. What could I do? I just had to take it one day at a time."

Her experience reveals the tension between the standardized medical system and maternal autonomy. This standardization often overlooks the specific circumstances of the child's family and the mother's personal wishes, leading mothers to feel marginalized in the decision-making process, creating a strong sense of helplessness.

Mothers often lack a voice in medical decisions. New-generation urban mothers, who value science and rationality, tend to rely on expert authority in their parenting. However, the current medical system's resource constraints mean that experts cannot provide enough attention to meet each mother's individual needs. Mother H expressed her distress:

"The experts suggested we take our child to an institution for ABA training. Initially, it was effective, but later, the child resisted going to the institution and would cry and scream. I felt this couldn't continue, so I decisively switched to a play therapist. After two months of training, the child adapted well and made significant progress. So, I think the key to what method to adopt is whether it suits your child, and as a mother, I actually have the most intuitive sense of this."

Mother H's case reflects a broader phenomenon where parents' choice of treatment methods is driven by personal beliefs and their understanding of their child's unique needs. Studies have shown that parents' personal beliefs and deep understanding of autism lead them to choose specific treatment methods, which may not align with the medical system's standard recommendations[28]. Future research and policy development should address this power imbalance and seek ways to enhance mothers' voices in the early intervention process, ensuring that treatment plans better adapt to the specific circumstances and needs of the child's family.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA EMPOWERMENT: EXPANDING MATERNAL AUTONOMY

5.1 Informational Support

With the advancement of internet technology, social media has become an essential tool for new-generation mothers of children with autism to access information and resources. It transcends time and space, gathering mothers in a virtual public space where they can exchange information and interact with knowledge, thereby

challenging knowledge hierarchies and enhancing their decision-making abilities and autonomy. Under the framework of national health policies, the screening and intervention of children with autism have become standardized medical practices. However, in this process, mothers of children with autism often find themselves in a disadvantaged position in conversations with the medical system. They lack a voice when facing the professional advice of medical experts and rehabilitation institutions and can only passively follow instructions and arrangements.

The community of mothers on social media platforms promotes a shift towards a more equitable medical relationship through information acquisition and knowledge sharing. This information-sharing mechanism significantly enriches mothers' parenting resource pools, enabling them to make more informed and personalized decisions when facing complex parenting issues[29]. Mothers of children with autism face greater caregiving pressures than typical mothers. Lacking professional knowledge and practical experience, they often feel at a loss when dealing with their child's special behaviors and needs. Through interactions in WeChat groups, novice mothers can consult with other mothers on topics such as recommendations for medical institutions and specialists, access to special education resources, learning intervention methods, daily caregiving techniques, and handling sudden incidents with their children.

One online user, Xiaomei, shared:

"When my child was diagnosed with autism, it felt like the sky was falling. I was like a headless chicken, running around looking for institutions. Luckily, a mother in the group introduced an intervention institution in our district and recommended a therapist who had previously taught her child and was highly regarded. I am truly grateful to her."

Through these channels, mothers gain more knowledge about intervention and treatment and learn from the practices of other mothers, thus gaining more autonomy and voice in interactions with the medical system[30].

Moreover, social media not only provides opportunities for instant communication but also, through its diverse platform characteristics, meets the specific needs of mothers in different contexts. Platforms like Xiaohongshu allow mothers to post detailed long-form parenting experiences and tips, using images and text to make the information more intuitive and understandable. Some mothers share their strategies and experiences for successfully handling emotional outbursts of autistic children, detailing each step and its effects. These methods of information sharing and resource acquisition not only effectively help mothers cope with the challenges of parenting but also, in a broader socio-cultural context, promote a shift in the knowledge-power relationship[31]. Supported by social media, mothers are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but active producers and disseminators of information. This role transformation further strengthens their subjectivity, giving them more voice and autonomy in parenting and medical interactions.

5.2 Emotional Support

In the current medical system and social support framework, mothers of children with autism face significant challenges, yet their emotional needs and psychological states often receive insufficient attention. These mothers must address their children's special education and rehabilitation needs while enduring social misunderstanding and prejudice, leading to notable mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness[32]. Additionally, the cumulative burden of long-term caregiving and financial strain further exacerbates their psychological stress. Under such multiple pressures, mothers of children with autism urgently need emotional support. The virtual communities on social media allow mothers with similar experiences to gather and find empathy and support from each other, alleviating the loneliness and anxiety of the parenting process[33].

Mothers of children with autism often encounter situations where their children suddenly cry and throw tantrums in public, roll on the ground, or even attack others. Handling these autism-specific behaviors can be exhausting for mothers lacking relevant experience. One user, K, shared:

"Last evening, while walking with my child in the neighborhood park, a few kids were playing soccer nearby. Suddenly, he lay down on the ground, crying and screaming, even banging his head on the ground. Many people gathered around, some pointing and whispering. No matter how I tried to comfort him, he wouldn't get up. At that moment, I felt so frustrated and helpless, like I had failed. Sigh! I felt like crying but had no tears!"

Other mothers shared similar experiences, offering solace and encouragement:

"It's the same for all of us. After a while, you get used to it and start to notice that sometimes there's a reason behind the sudden emotional outbursts. Don't worry; it will get better."

This provided much-needed comfort to the distressed mother. Moreover, social media platforms offer diverse forms of emotional support through video chats and online activities. For instance, some mothers share their daily lives and parenting experiences through video calls, fostering emotional connections and alleviating loneliness. Certain platforms regularly organize online support groups and counseling sessions, providing mothers with avenues to express their feelings and seek support during stressful times. In summary, social media is not only a channel for information sharing for urban new-generation mothers of children with autism but also a refuge for emotional communication. Through mutual expression, encouragement, and guidance, mothers can relieve psychological stress and gain a sense of belonging within the community.

5.3 Diverse Expressions of Motherhood Identity

From the perspectives of structural and post-structural theories, individuals exhibit a degree of agency and autonomy within the constraints of social structures. For urban, new-generation mothers of children with autism, despite facing the dual challenges of traditional gender role expectations and modern socioeconomic pressures, they showcase unique motherhood practices through platforms like social media. Social media provides these mothers with information and emotional support and promotes personalized and diverse expressions of their parenting practices. By sharing individualized parenting strategies and experiences, these mothers construct unique motherhood paths and find a sense of belonging and strength in online communities, enhancing their self-identity and ability to cope with stress[34]. This interaction-based support helps mothers balance personal development with family needs, driving a reevaluation of motherhood roles at the sociocultural level.

Qiqi's mother's story exemplifies the impact of social media on modern motherhood practices. After her son Qiqi was diagnosed with autism at the age of two, she faced the decision of whether to quit her job to fully commit to his intervention and treatment. Unlike some mothers who completely abandon their careers, Qiqi's mother chose to leave her management position at a multinational company and join a small private firm. Although her income decreased, this change provided her with more personal time and greater job flexibility, allowing her to effectively participate in her son's intervention and daily care while maintaining her career development. She shared her experiences on the Xiaohongshu platform, stating:

"There is no standard answer to the challenge of raising an autistic child. What's important is that every mother finds a way and rhythm that suits her, integrating available resources. Going it alone is not an option."

Her story resonated with many mothers of children with autism, garnering comments like:

"When I was wavering about quitting my job, your story gave me strength. There's no best choice, only the most suitable one. Thank you!"

"Thank you, Qiqi's mom. Your shared interactive methods have taught me a lot. I am not alone on this journey. Let's keep pushing forward together!"

Meanwhile, some urban new-generation mothers of children with autism leverage their higher education and cultural capital to secure better conditions and a fairer social environment for their children. DouDou's mother, who holds a Ph.D. in management, understands from years of caregiving that autism care is a massive undertaking that cannot rely solely on the family. Organizational, governmental, and societal support are essential. She initiated a mutual support WeChat group for parents of children with autism in her city, where parents share intervention methods, experiences, and resources related to education, healthcare, and social welfare.

Utilizing her academic background and social resources, she regularly organizes online and offline seminars and lectures, inviting professionals to discuss the education and care of children with autism. These activities not only enhance parents' understanding but also attract public attention, promoting awareness of the needs of children with autism. Additionally, DouDou's mother actively communicates with local government departments to advocate for necessary support for children with autism and their families.

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by urban new-generation mothers of children with autism and their coping strategies supported by social media. It reveals how these mothers, under the pressure of traditional gender roles and sociocultural norms, benefit significantly from social media platforms in terms of information acquisition, emotional support, and the construction of motherhood pathways. The findings indicate that social media, as a platform for information sharing and resource acquisition, enhances mothers' informed decision-making and choice capabilities in parenting. It also builds online communities that offer crucial emotional support, alleviating feelings of loneliness and anxiety, and bolstering psychological resilience and self-efficacy. Furthermore, social media facilitates personalized and diverse expressions of motherhood practices, helping mothers find a sense of belonging and strength in online communities, leading to a reevaluation and redefinition of motherhood roles in the sociocultural context.

The findings validate the applicability of structural and post-structural theories in the context of modern motherhood practices. They illustrate the challenges mothers face within existing social structures and their proactive responses and reconstitution of motherhood roles through individual actions and the use of social media. This suggests that social media is not just a tool for information and emotional support but also a platform enabling mothers to find autonomy and self-expression within social structures. However, the study has limitations, such as potential information omission and misinterpretation from social media-based observations, and the sample predominantly comprising urban new-generation mothers, which may not fully represent the experiences of all mothers of children with autism.

Future research should expand the sample scope to include mothers of children with autism from various socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds for a more comprehensive discussion and comparison. Additionally, it is worth exploring the role of social media in families with children with other special needs to uncover its broader impact on modern parenting practices. This study not only enriches our understanding of modern motherhood roles but also offers new perspectives and recommendations for policymakers and social support systems, aiding in better understanding and supporting the multifaceted needs and challenges faced by mothers of children with autism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was supported by the Hangzhou Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project "Maternal Practices and Coping Strategies of Urban New-generation Mothers of Children with Autism: An Investigation Based on Xiaohongshu and WeChat Groups" (Project No. M23JC094), and by the 2022 Domestic Visiting Scholar Program for Teacher Professional Development of the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education (Project No. FX2022102).

REFERENCES

- [1] Chiarotti, F., & Venerosi, A. (2020). Epidemiology of autism spectrum disorders: A review of worldwide prevalence estimates since 2014. *Brain Sciences*, 10(4), 274.
- [2] Wucai Lu Autism Research Institute. (2024). Report on the development status of autism education and rehabilitation industry in China (V). Beijing: Guangming Daily Press.
- [3] DePape, A.M., & Lindsay, S. (2015). Parents' experiences of caring for a child with autism spectrum disorder. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(5), 569–583.
- [4] Papadopoulos, D. (2021). Mothers' experiences and challenges raising a child with autism spectrum disorder: A qualitative study. *Brain Sciences*, 11(3), 309.
- [5] Jiang, L., & Ye, C. (2020). Research progress on anxiety of mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder in China: A visual analysis based on CNKI literature. *Psychological Monthly*, 15(19), 235-238.
- [6] Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (K. Li & M. Li, Trans.). Beijing: China Renmin University Press. (2016). (p. 23).
- [7] Li, M. (2022). Empowerment through social media: Women's agency in the new media environment. *Sociological Research*, 4(2), 45-60.
- [8] Koegel, R. L., Koegel, L. K., Hurley, C., & Frea, W. D. (1992). Improving social skills and disruptive behavior in children with autism through self-management. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 25(2), 341-353.

- [9] Bromley, J., Hare, D. J., Davison, K., & Emerson, E. (2004). Mothers supporting children with autistic spectrum disorders: Social support, mental health status and satisfaction with services. *Autism*, 8(4), 409-423.
- [10] Li, H., Shen, Y., & Yang, C. (2020). The dilemma of families with autism and the construction of a social support system: Based on a survey in Shanghai. *Social Security Research*, (5), 37-47.
- [11] Papadopoulos, R. K. (2021). The place of the refugee experience in developmental and trauma psychology. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(3), 1875-1892.
- [12] Boyd, B. (2002). Examining the relationship between stress and lack of social support in mothers of children with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 17(4), 208-215.
- [13] Pozo, P., & Sarriá, E. (2014). Prediction of stress in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 17.
- [14] Dykens, E., Fisher, M., Taylor, J., Lambert, W., & Miodrag, N. (2014). Reducing distress in mothers of children with autism and other disabilities: A randomized trial. *Pediatrics*, 134(3), e454-e463.
- [15] Li, C. (2019). The children of reform and opening up: China's new generation and the new era of China's development. *Sociological Research*, (3), 25.
- [16] Xu, Y. (2020). "Widowed parenting": The maternal dilemma and formation mechanism of urban new-generation mothers. *Ningxia Social Sciences*, (6), 136-143.
- [17] Wei, J., & Sang, Z. (2020). The identity dilemma and multiple negotiations of new-generation mothers: "Middle-aged mothers" from the perspective of life course and lifelong development. *China Youth Studies*, (08), 57-64..
- [18] Wallace, C. (2019). Between state, market and family: Changing childcare policies in urban China and the implications for working mothers. *Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 6(1), 1-23.
- [19] Ammari, T., & Schoenebeck, S. (2015). Networked empowerment on Facebook groups for parents of children with special needs. *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 2805-2814.
- [20] Soloman, B. (1976). *Black empowerment: Social work in oppressed communities*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 21-22.
- [21] Roffeei, S. H. M., Abdullah, N., & Basar, S. K. R. (2015). Seeking social support on Facebook for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 84(5), 375-385.
- [22] Tate, M. K. (2023). The impact of social comparison via social media on maternal mental health, within the context of the intensive mothering ideology: A scoping review of the literature. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 44(9), 854-870.
- [23] Henton, S., & Swanson, V. (2023). A mixed-methods analysis of the role of online social support to promote psychological wellbeing in new mothers. *Digital Health*, 9.
- [24] Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford University Press.
- [25] Li, J. (2017). The current situation, characteristics, and influencing factors of parental stress in parents of preschool children with disabilities. *Journal of Beijing Institute of Education*, (1), 34-38.
- [26] Zhang, P., & Lin, X. (2020). The curse of companionship: Family life, work pressure, and parenting anxiety among urban young parents. *China Youth Study*, 290(4), 69-77.
- [27] Ban, Y., & Sun, J. (2017). Social support and parenting stress of parents of children with autism: Analysis of the effects of identity and income. *Chinese Journal of Special Education*, (1), 58-64.
- [28] Mire, S. S., Gealy, W., Kubiszyn, T., Burrige, A., & Goin-Kochel, R. (2017). Parent perceptions about autism spectrum disorder influence treatment choices. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 32(4), 305-318.
- [29] Reinke, J. S., & Solheim, C. A. (2015). Online social support for mothers parenting children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 18(5), 349-362.
- [30] Qiu, J. (2017). Mobility experience and rational medical choices: A case study of elderly pregnant women. *Collection of Women's Studies*, (1), 21-29.
- [31] Wang, B. (2021). The reproduction of relationships: The daily structure and mechanism of media rituals. *Academic Research*, (12), 76-83.
- [32] Zablotzky, B., Bradshaw, C., & Stuart, E. (2012). The Association Between Mental Health, Stress, and Coping Supports in Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 43, 1380 - 1393.
- [33] Bira, B., Buzoianu, C., & Tudorie, A. (2020). Social support and empathy in online communities: The role of social media in connecting mothers of children with autism. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 18(5), 349-362.
- [34] Zhao, R., & Liu, L. (2022). Trusted transmission: Information acquisition of urban new generation mothers in the new media environment. *Contemporary Communication*, (5), 102-104.