

# School Policy Imposition to Solve the Problems of Early Love Among Chinese High School Students

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## Abstract

This article's objectives encompassed investigating the factors influencing early romantic relationships among high school students, analyzing the repercussions of such relationships on these students, and proposing policy interventions to address the issue. The research involved a sample of 26 participants, including students with romantic experiences, teachers familiar with student romantic issues, parents, and school leaders. Data collection employed interviews, with subsequent analysis using descriptive and content analysis techniques. The study identified psychological, physiological, and social factors as the primary influencers of early love among high school students. It also highlighted the impact of early romantic involvement on students, encompassing psychological, physiological, academic, and interpersonal dimensions. To mitigate this issue, the study recommends a multifaceted approach, including the establishment of a comprehensive student support system, enhanced legal education, standardized uniforms for all high schools, media coverage regulations, strengthened social monitoring, rigorous internet content management, and the creation of a dedicated research institution. These measures collectively aim to create a healthier environment for high school students grappling with early romantic relationships.

**Keywords:** high school; early love; Chinese student; policy

## Introduction

As high school students mature and their secondary sexual characteristics develop, they transition from their carefree and joyful childhood into the vibrant, tumultuous, and enigmatic phase of adolescence. Furthermore, in our rapidly advancing society, the portrayal of love in various forms of media such as books, movies, and television exerts a powerful allure on high school students, potentially leading to early romantic relationships. What was once a rarity in the 1980s, high school students' involvement in romantic affairs has now become a common occurrence, seemingly unstoppable. What adds to the concerns of both schools and parents is the rising incidence of sexual activity among high school students within these romantic relationships, along with issues like teenage pregnancy and abortion, which have garnered considerable attention from society.

Presently, high school students are exhibiting a widespread, increasingly younger, and more open approach to romantic relationships. Their attitudes toward matters related to sexuality have become more permissive, with a rising incidence of sexual activity, a diminishing awareness of sexual ethics, and a lack of responsibility. In a 2007 survey in Shanghai, 38.37% of high school students expressed a positive attitude toward sexual behavior. A similar survey in Shenzhen revealed that 50.2% of high school students had dating experiences, with 10.3% of males and 4.4% of females engaging in sexual activity during these relationships. Moreover, a substantial proportion of high school students, with 42% of boys and 33.6% of girls, expressed acceptance of having multiple partners, while 28.7% of boys and 28.9% of girls were open to considering abortion. Teachers and parents are well aware of the potential harm early romantic involvement can have on students' personal growth and academic performance, and they often attempt to discourage it. There have been reports in China of high school students running away from home due to early love, experiencing depression, manic episodes, and even suicide, which might be linked to overly restrictive approaches to early love education among students (Chen, 2023, as cited in the National Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

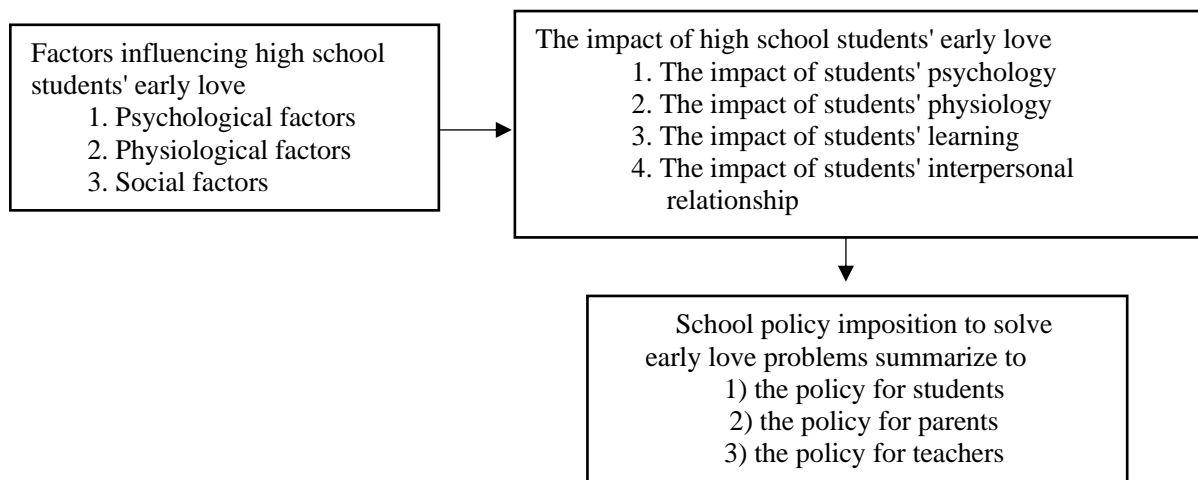
This study delves into the factors behind early romantic relationships among high school students, examines the effects of early romance on these students, draws from personal and professional experiences, suggests policy measures to prevent early romantic involvement, and advocates for the use of effective approaches in addressing incidents related to early romantic relationships.

## Research Objectives

1. To study about factors affecting early love among high school students
2. To investigate the impact of early love among high school students
3. To impose a policy to solve the problems of early love among high school students.

## Conceptual Framework

The researcher defines the research conceptual framework based on the concept of the factors, impacts together with solutions. The details are as follows.



**Fig.1 Conceptual Framework**

## Research Methodology

This study relies predominantly on qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews. To initiate the interview process, an essential step involves the creation of a comprehensive interview outline to explicitly communicate the research objectives and purpose to participants. Subsequently, an interview questionnaire aligned with these objectives is meticulously crafted and rigorously reviewed by three subject matter experts. Following this preparation, interviews are conducted using the approved questionnaire, aiming to elicit the perspectives and insights of respondents regarding various aspects of early romantic relationships among high school students. In addition to the interview methodology, an integral part of the research process involves the identification and selection of key informants. These informants are individuals with specialized knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic, and their access is typically facilitated through professional networks, academic institutions, or relevant organizations.

### Sampling Group

The study focused on two higher education institutions in Sichuan Province, specifically in Cuiping District and Xuzhou District within Yibin City. These institutions consisted of Yibin No.1 High School, a standard high school, and Yibin Business Vocational School, a vocational high school. Data collection involved interviews with a total of 26 participants, including 10 students who had experienced romantic relationships, 10 teachers with expertise in addressing student romantic issues, 4 parents of students, and 2 school administrators responsible for student affairs.

### Research Tools

In this study, an interview questionnaire is employed, and it is structured into three sections according to the research objectives.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using both inductive and content analysis techniques. Following the interviews, the audio recordings and textual notes underwent multiple reviews. These data were then organized into categories based on the research framework and subsequently summarized in alignment with the research objectives.

## Research Results

### Objective 1

The findings indicated that the factors impacting early romantic relationships among high school students were:

#### 1. Psychological Factors

##### 1.1 Curiosity

Certain high school students exhibit heightened curiosity about the opposite gender, driven by their exposure to physiological and health education classes or by witnessing romantic scenes in movies and literature. They are also enthusiastic about experiencing the emotions associated with love.

*"I fell in love because, after studying physiological hygiene, I became curious about women."*

*(Student A, July 4, 2023)*

*"After watching love scenes in movies and reading books, I yearn for love and hope to experience its emotions."*

*(Student B, July 3, 2023; Student C, Student D, July 4, 2023)*

### 1.2 Inner Loneliness

Certain high school students experience a sense of loneliness deep within them. They perceive an ongoing growth in themselves, accompanied by developing abilities and needs. However, they frequently sense a lack of understanding from others and feel unfulfilled in their emotional needs. Consequently, these feelings of loneliness, distress, and anguish may intensify. When these psychological emotions become particularly pronounced, there arises a need to find the "right person" with whom to share their thoughts and feelings. Inevitably, when they envision individuals of the opposite sex, the likelihood of engaging in 'early love' becomes considerably high.

*"I fell in love because I feel like I can't find a friend who understands me. I hope to find a girlfriend who understands me and shares common interests, to talk and play together".*  
(Student E, July 3, 2023)

*"My parents are busy with work and rarely communicate with me. I often go home alone, and no one speaks to me. No one shares my happiness and sadness with me".*

(Student F, July 3, 2023; Student A, Student G, July 4, 2023)

### 1.3 Reverse Action

When parents take a straightforward and authoritarian approach by outright forbidding high school students from dating, it often triggers a rebellious and confrontational response in some students. Paradoxically, this prohibition tends to fuel their sense of intrigue and unhealthy curiosity surrounding matters of sex and marriage. This phenomenon, known as the "forbidden fruit effect," artificially leads some students in China to delve into early romantic relationships.

*"My parents often tell me not to fall in love, not to overly socialize with female classmates and prioritize learning. I feel very annoyed. I have grown up and can think for myself now. I don't want them to interfere with me.*

(Student H, July 4, 2023)

*"My parents are too strict and simple in their discipline towards me, which I dislike very much. What I think is that they don't want me to do, but I have to do it.*

(Student F, July 3, 2023)

## 2. Physiological Factors

### 2.1 Sexuality Need

Students in high school are experiencing progressive physical development and maturation, along with the reawakening of their inner sexual urges. At this point, a lot of people start to progressively explore their bodies and start masturbating to experience sexual pleasure. It seems sense at this point that the body's natural process of releasing sexual energy is healthy and appropriate. However, it will progress into sexual contact until actual sexual action happens if it is accompanied by early love.

*"Sometimes when I sleep and dream, I dream of having sex with a girl, and even when I wake up, my body will react. I also want to try it in reality."*  
(Student E, Student F, July 3, 2023; Student I, July 4, 2023)

*"When I see a boy I like, I blush and hope to socialize with him."*  
(Student J, July 3, 2023)

### 2.2 Attractive Appearance

Teenage high school students are drawn to people of the other sex without even realizing it because they observe how they act, speak, and dress and find them attractive. Early love is the result of wanting to socialize and get close to them.

*"I think she's very beautiful.  
(Student E, Student F, July 3, 2023)*  
*"I think he/she has a very outgoing and humorous personality."  
(Student E, Student J, Student B, July 3, 2023; Student I,  
Student C, Student G, July 4, 2023)*  
*"He is very handsome while playing basketball.  
(Student D, July 4, 2023)*

### 3. Social Factors

#### 3.1 Peer Influence

During adolescence, young individuals are particularly susceptible to external influences and the desire to imitate their peers. This inclination to mimic the behaviors and actions of friends is a prevalent phenomenon during this stage of development. Consequently, some students may engage in romantic relationships solely due to the influence of their peers, without genuine emotional involvement.

*"My friends around me are all in love, and I don't have a girlfriend,  
and they often mock me."  
(Student E, Student F, July 3, 2023)*  
*"My good friend often tells me in front of me how good her boyfriend is to  
her and advises me to find a boyfriend to take care of myself.  
(Student J, July 3, 2023; Student C, Student D, July 4, 2023)*  
*"His friend told him that dating is a compulsory course for  
high school students now, and if he doesn't find a girlfriend quickly,  
his high school career is incomplete.  
(Student F, July 3, 2023)*

#### 3.2 Lack of Perfect Family

During adolescence, high school students often experience a phase of rebellion, which, combined with inadequate communication with their parents and a sense of being misunderstood or neglected, can make them particularly receptive to the warmth and attention of peers of the opposite sex. Consequently, they may actively enter into early romantic relationships.

*"My parents have been arguing for a long time,  
and I didn't want to stay at home or talk to them, so I fell in love.  
(Student A, July 4, 2023)*  
*"My parents divorced, and they don't care about me.  
I feel like a burden to them and want to find a boyfriend  
to care about me.  
(Student J, July 3, 2023)*

#### 3.3 The Influence of Media

Contemporary early romantic relationships among high school students often emulate the romantic narratives found in literature, movies, and television. However, these portrayals of love in Chinese literary works tend to idealize the protagonists, presenting them as exceptionally handsome men and stunningly beautiful women. This idealized notion of romance caters to traditional societal values that emphasize physical attractiveness and talent. High school students who have an affinity for literature and the arts are inevitably influenced to some extent by this prevailing concept.

*"I was taken by my friends to watch some pornographic movies  
before and felt very excited.  
(Student F, July 3, 2023)*  
*"The song sings about not caring about eternity,  
only having what I once had. I hope to have a memorable  
love story during my high school years.  
(Student H, July 4, 2023)*

### 3.4 Inappropriate School and Family Education

Due to the influence of China's exam-oriented education system and the immense pressure it places on students, many schools and parents tend to prioritize high school students' academic performance above all else. Some schools even significantly limit students' free time in an effort to boost enrollment rates, resulting in students feeling that their lives revolve solely around studying. This monotonous routine can leave students feeling empty and disengaged. High school students are typically full of energy and require outlets to express their emotions and expend their vitality through various activities. However, their primary responsibility is to excel in their studies, and the repetitive daily cycle of "dormitory, cafeteria, classroom" can become quite tedious for students with diverse interests. If they are unable to find effective ways to channel their energy during their leisure time, they may inevitably experience a sense of monotony, emptiness, and inexplicable boredom, leading some to turn to romantic relationships as a means of coping.

*"My parents only care about my academic performance.  
Every time they talk to me about socializing with the  
opposite sex, they strictly interfere and give me  
uncertainty and no permission. I think it's too authoritarian.  
(Student F, Student B, July 3, 2023; Student G, July 4, 2023)*

*"The school only values the enrollment rate and arbitrarily  
reduces our activity courses. I feel that campus culture is very  
monotonous and campus life is very boring.  
(Student E, Student G, July 3, 2023; Student c, Student D,  
Student G, July 4, 2023)*

**Objective 2.** The results showed that the impact of high school students' early love were;

### 1. The Psychological Impact of Early Love to Students

#### 1.1 Emotional instability

High school students typically experience heightened emotional fluctuations, and early romantic relationships can exacerbate emotional instability. Instances such as breakups, arguments, or uncertainties within a relationship can contribute to emotional ups and downs.

*"After falling in love, my boyfriend (girlfriend)  
and I often argue about small things, even arguing  
about where to eat.  
(Student J, July 3, 2023; Student I, Student D, July 4, 2023)*

*"Both male and female classmates in love  
have unstable emotions, especially when experiencing  
setbacks in love, which can easily lead to psychological illness,  
unhealthy psychology, and even serious crimes.  
(Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D, July 6, 2023;  
Teacher E, Teacher F, Teacher G, Teacher H, July 8, 2023)*

*"Since I opposed my child's romantic relationship,  
she stopped talking to me and locked herself in the room  
every day when she came home, sometimes even throwing dishes  
while eating.  
(Teacher I, Teacher J, July 10, 2023)*

*"After students fall in love, their personalities  
and emotions will undergo some changes.  
Many boys may become impulsive, while some girls  
may become more suspicious.  
(School Administrator A, July 15, 2023)*

#### 1.2 Sensitivity

Adolescent high school students who enter into romantic relationships often develop heightened sensitivity and a tendency to become easily suspicious of their partners. They may find themselves prone to jealousy and unfounded suspicions arising from their partner's normal behavior, often speculating that their partner's actions stem from a lack of affection. Without timely counseling and support, this emotional state can potentially lead to students developing feelings of inferiority, depression, and even create lasting psychological challenges that affect their future marriages.

*"I told my boyfriend that I'm a bit thirsty and he didn't buy me water to drink. I don't think he likes me anymore.*

*(Student D, July 4, 2023)*

*"I want to chat with my boyfriend, but he is playing games. I feel that he doesn't care about me and feels very uncomfortable."*

*(Student J, July 3, 2023; Student A, July 4, 2023)*

*"When I see my girlfriend (or boyfriend) chatting and playing with other male (or female) students, I get very angry and worried about a bit of competition and jealousy.*

*(Student E, Student F, Student B, July 3, 2023; Student I, Student D, Student G, July 4, 2023)*

### 1.3 Develop a Competitive Mentality

Adolescent high school students, who are still in the process of developing their values, tend to engage in frequent comparisons with their peers. These comparisons extend beyond academic performance or the popularity of branded clothing; they also encompass romantic relationships. Students involved in romantic relationships are more inclined to engage in comparisons to gain acknowledgment and attention from the opposite sex. This involves showcasing their abilities and achievements in front of classmates and friends.

*Teachers said, "High school students who fall in love generally have a competitive mentality. Girls tend to prefer dressing up and makeup after falling in love.*

*Boys, in order to show that they are better for their girlfriends and that their girlfriends also have something, or even better.*

*This undoubtedly increases the financial burden on their families.*

*(Teacher A-J, July 6, 2023)*

### 1.4 Self-Harm and Suicide

High school students, given their susceptibility to emotional ups and downs, often struggle to navigate emotional challenges due to their limited life experience. Following a breakup, they might act impulsively and make poor decisions.

*"After my senior sister fell in love, she burned her arm with a cigarette butt, and now there are still many signs of burns.*

*(Student F, July 3, 2023)*

*"My senior brother couldn't bear the blow of heartbreak and jumped off a bridge after the college entrance examination, committing suicide.*

*(Student D, July 4, 2023)*

*"Nowadays, high school students are not yet fully developed physically and mentally. Some students, after falling in love, are unable to face and handle it correctly, leading to self-harm, hunger strikes, and even suicide.*

*(Student E, July 15, 2023)*

## 2. The Impact of Early Love on Students' Physiology

### 2.1 Impact on physical health and development

High school students are in the midst of their peak physiological development and haven't reached full maturity. Their inability to handle the emotional burdens associated with early love can negatively impact their physical development. Emotional states can influence the endocrine system, and students in early love often struggle to manage their emotions, leading to significant fluctuations. This can result in unexplained problems, affecting their mental well-being and, subsequently, their physical growth. Premature sexual activity can also pose risks to their physical health.

*"Early love and sexual activity may lead to gynecological diseases such as vaginitis and pelvic inflammatory disease in girls.*

*(Parent A, July 8, 2023)*

*"High school students falling in love too early can exacerbate their desire for sex, and students often cannot control themselves, which is likely to lead to reproductive diseases.*

*(School Administrator B, July 6, 2023)*

### 2.2 Pregnant

The absence of self-protection awareness and sexual knowledge among high school students during adolescence can result in sexual intercourse leading to unwanted pregnancies. Early pregnancy can have physical and academic consequences for students, potentially delaying their education and even resulting in-school suspensions.

*"High school students are not yet able to live independently, giving birth to a child is a burden to themselves. If they find a suitable path in the future and want to venture, they will find that the child you gave birth to in the early years has become a stumbling block for you.*

*For the sake of the child, they can only take on your responsibility, spend their whole life guarding him/her, and live as an ordinary and tired person."*

*(Parent A, July 8, 2023)*

### 2.3 Abortion

Following pregnancy, high school students often find it challenging to raise children due to social pressures. As a result, they may opt for abortion, which carries the risk of reproductive system infections and disrupts the body's endocrine balance. These hormonal imbalances can lead to issues such as irregular menstruation, prolonged bleeding, habitual miscarriages, or premature births, potentially impacting women's fertility and increasing the risk of infertility.

*"Abortion not only causes thinning of the endometrium, but also damages the cervix, resulting in symptoms such as irregular menstruation, amenorrhea, and low menstrual volume."*

*(Parent C, July 8, 2023)*

*"High school students are prone to premature sexual activity after falling in love, but due to inadequate safety precautions, it may lead to pregnancy and abortion.*

*(Parent B, July 16, 2023)*



### 3. The Impact of Early Love on Students' Learning

#### 3.1 Learning Inability to Concentrate

High school students face substantial academic demands, necessitating a significant investment of time and energy. However, when they engage in romantic relationships, their attention and energy may become divided, leading them to focus on their love lives rather than their studies. This shift can result in a decline in their academic performance, as they often struggle to strike a balance between their academics and romantic pursuits.

*"I can't listen to the teacher's knowledge at all.  
I just want to finish school quickly and take  
my girlfriend to play in class."*

*(Student C, July 4, 2023)*

*"My daughter often looks at photos on her phone  
while studying."*

*(Parent B, July 10, 2023)*

#### 3.2 Decline in Academic Performance

Once they enter into romantic relationships, high school students invest a substantial amount of time and energy in their love lives. However, this increased focus on romantic endeavors can detract from their academic responsibilities, ultimately leading to a gradual deterioration in their grades and a tendency to neglect their studies.

*"The child's grades have been severely declining for  
a period of time, dropping from the top 10 in the class to over 30.  
It was only after chatting with him that we found out  
that he was dating a female classmate in the class."*

*(Teacher I, July 10, 2023)*

### 4. The Impact of Early Love on Students' Interpersonal Relationships

#### 4.1 Narrowing of Social Circle

Students who are in romantic relationships often have limited interactions with the majority of their classmates within the class, which gradually results in them erecting barriers between themselves and the collective class environment, pushing them into more isolated positions.

*"After falling in love, I don't want to play with other friends,  
I just want to play with my boyfriend (or girlfriend)."*

*(Student J, Student F, Student B, July 3, 2023;  
Student D, Student I, Student G, July 4, 2023)*

*"When falling in love, students are clearly unwilling  
to participate in other activities in the class."*

*(Teacher A, School Administrator B, Teacher B, Teacher C,  
July 6, 2023; Teacher D, Teacher G, Teacher I,  
July 8, 2023)*

#### 4.2 Reduced Communication with Parents

High school students involved in early romantic relationships tend to avoid communicating with their parents out of fear that their parents may disapprove or even criticize them once they learn about their relationships. As a result, their communication with their parents significantly diminishes. In some cases, high school students may choose to forgo spending time with their parents in favor of having more private time with their romantic partners.

*"During the period when their children were in love,  
the time spent with their parents and chatting with them  
significantly decreased."*

*(Teacher I, School Administrator B, July 10, 2023)*

**Objective 3.** The results showed that the school policy impositions of early love problems were.

### **1. The Policy for Students**

High school students should develop a balanced perspective on life and love, define achievable short-term objectives, and work towards enhancing self-discipline in their daily routines and studies. They should also be mindful of their behavior and communication and engage actively in both classroom and group activities.

1.1 Set practical and attainable short-term objectives. High school students can define small, achievable goals that can be reached in a short span, redirecting their focus away from romantic interests.

1.2 Increase participation in group activities.

1.3 Enhance self-control skills.

1.4 Exercise caution in words and actions. High school students should ensure that their behavior and language align with their identity, engage in more constructive activities, refrain from excessive joking with the opposite sex, and limit overly intimate interactions.

1.5 Foster a proper perspective on love and life. Teachers can guide students in forming a healthy view of love and addressing love-related issues by sharing stories of heroic role models, exemplary individuals with progressive ideas and noble values, or stories that embody positive qualities in their surroundings.

### **2. The Policy for Parents**

Preventing early romantic involvement among high school students is a significant concern for parents. As a result, parents should implement measures to assist their children in cultivating a healthy emotional mindset and fostering their overall growth. In the endeavor to deter early romantic relationships in their offspring, parents play a pivotal role. They can offer suitable education and direction, establish a positive family atmosphere, and serve as positive role models to steer their children away from the adverse consequences of early love.

2.1 Offer support and companionship: Family support and companionship play a pivotal role in deterring early romantic involvement in children. Parents should maintain open lines of communication, attentively listen to their children's thoughts and feelings, and provide understanding and support when their children encounter emotional challenges or confusion, fostering a sense of care and backing. Establishing a stable parent-child relationship encourages children to seek guidance and advice from their parents.

2.2 Provide comprehensive sex education: Offering accurate sex education is a crucial step in preventing early romantic relationships. Parents should initiate discussions on topics such as sexual knowledge, gender roles, and human development with their children at an appropriate age. Using suitable language and materials tailored to their children's age and comprehension levels, parents should help their children understand the responsibilities associated with sexual behavior, the significance of self-protection, and the importance of sexual health.

2.3 Cultivate a nurturing family environment: Parents' behavior and attitudes have a significant impact on their children. Parents should foster a warm family atmosphere, serving as role models for their children by showcasing healthy love and interpersonal relationships. Establishing relationships within the family that are based on respect, equality, and mutual support, and demonstrating positive communication styles, helps children develop a healthy perception of love.

2.4 Encourage extracurricular activities and academic progress: Parents should motivate their children to explore diverse interests and excel in their studies. They

should assist their children in identifying their passions and interests and provide the necessary support and resources for full immersion. By nurturing interests and striving for academic achievement, children allocate more time and energy to personal growth and development, reducing the likelihood of early romantic involvement.

2.5 Implement appropriate supervision: Instituting reasonable supervision for children can deter them from unhealthy romantic relationships. Parents can manage their children's usage of mobile phones and social media to ensure they have adequate rest and study time. Establishing family rules and guidelines and engaging in discussions with children ensure a clear understanding of acceptable and prohibited behaviors.

### **3. The Solution for Teachers**

Teachers should consistently offer emotional education to students and engage in constructive discussions to assist them in developing a proper perspective on love. Teachers must also be mindful of their words and expressions, excel in psychological communication, and provide effective guidance. Teachers' composed approach can transform the experience of first love into a narrative of returning to a supportive family environment. Diverse cultural activities can be organized to enhance students' extracurricular experiences, redirecting their attention away from yearning for love and the desire for romantic involvement. These activities can help students channel their excess energy into areas of personal interest, naturally reducing the incidence of early romantic relationships among students.

3.1 Replace criticism with persuasion: Teachers should approach early love issues with understanding, acknowledging that while early romantic relationships among high school students may have negative aspects, the emotions involved are pure and beautiful. When providing guidance to students involved in early love, teachers should communicate as friends, highlighting the risks associated with early love and guiding them toward setting noble goals and redirecting their focus towards academics and beneficial extracurricular activities. This approach, rooted in empathy, is more likely to be embraced by students.

3.2 Enhance class culture development: Teachers should foster a positive class culture and utilize various methods to help students form healthy perspectives on friendship and love. Classroom discussions, thematic education, and other approaches can educate students on the potential risks of early love. Students should be educated on understanding their emotions and needs correctly, promoting a healthy view of love, emphasizing self-protection, and facilitating emotional management.

3.3 Promote healthy interaction between genders: Teachers should adopt an open-minded attitude toward students' interactions with the opposite sex, recognizing the inevitability and importance of such interactions during adolescence. Opportunities for students to engage openly with the opposite sex should be created through organized collective activities like outings, sports events, dances, and evening gatherings. These activities enable students to better understand the opposite gender and acquire valuable communication skills. Private interactions between male and female classmates, such as discussing problems, working on assignments, chatting, watching movies, or participating in sports, should be viewed as normal and not cause for concern.

3.4 Implement thoughtful seating arrangements: A scientifically planned seating arrangement benefits both student learning and classroom management while fostering a harmonious and healthy interpersonal atmosphere. Such arrangements can also contribute to the prevention of early romantic relationships among students.

3.5 Strengthen adolescent education: Schools should systematically introduce sexual knowledge to students, including information on sexual physiology, sexual health, and

sexual hygiene, along with general knowledge related to sexuality. This education aims to enhance adolescents' self-awareness and sense of responsibility, increase their understanding of sexual morality and legal principles.

3.6 Offer psychological counseling: Schools should establish psychological counseling services and provide targeted counseling to students facing psychological challenges. Before counseling sessions, confidentiality should be guaranteed to make students feel at ease and open up. Timely guidance from teachers is essential.

3.7 Implement uniform dress code: Uniform dress codes in vocational high schools can help reduce disparities in appearance caused by family backgrounds and diminish competitive attitudes. It also minimizes gender-related distinctions, reducing unnecessary attractions and discussions related to clothing and gender characteristics, ultimately lowering the likelihood of intimate contact and early romantic involvement between students.

3.8 Enhance break time management: Break times provide students with opportunities to interact with classmates, including those from different classes and grades. Effective management during these periods is crucial to prevent issues such as student conflicts, smoking, and inappropriate interactions between genders, which can disrupt the school atmosphere.

3.9 Strengthen the management of resident students: Students residing on campus without immediate parental supervision may be at higher risk for early romantic involvement if proper school management is lacking. Strengthening management during the evening study period and bedtime is essential.

3.10 Foster a positive campus culture: A positive and healthy campus culture, along with enriching collective activities, plays a vital role in shaping students' healthy interests and cultivating appropriate values.

3.11 Enhance parental awareness: Parents have a significant impact on their children's growth and character development. Strengthening parental awareness through regular parent-teacher meetings and educational sessions can provide parents with effective methods and practices for family education and parent-child interaction. This guidance can help parents offer gender education to their children, contributing to the prevention of early romantic issues.

3.12 Organize productive parent meetings: Parent meetings involving class teachers, parents, and students are important collective activities that promote unity and shared understanding within the school community. A successful parent association aids in bringing people together and aligning their perspectives.

## Discussion

The findings of Objective 1 indicate that the factors influencing early romantic relationships among high school students are multifaceted. These factors encompass not only psychological and physiological aspects but also social influences. This aligns with a study conducted by Zhao Rui, Wu Junqing, Li Yuyan, Zhang Junguo, Jin Menghua, and Li Yiran in 2020, which explored the connection between adolescent reproductive health education and early romantic involvement. Their analysis of potential categories of reproductive health knowledge revealed that various factors impact early romantic relationships among adolescents. These factors encompass family environment, family upbringing, school education, media exposure, peer interactions, as well as personal behavior, academic performance, and sexual knowledge.

During their developmental stage in high school, students undergo significant physiological changes, characterized by the maturation of their sexual and reproductive organs,

heightened endocrine activity, and increased sexual desire. These physiological developments lead to shifts in thinking and cognition, such as boys experiencing voice changes and the development of Adam's apples, and girls encountering menstrual cycles. As these physical changes manifest in appearance and bodily features, curiosity and reliance on the opposite sex tend to expand rapidly. Precocious puberty serves as a prerequisite for the emergence of early romantic relationships. This aligns with the psychological analysis and proposed solutions by Wu Ting (2020) regarding adolescent early romantic involvement. Wu Ting's work highlights that girls tend to be more emotionally proactive and have higher emotional expectations, such as desiring boys' consideration and care. In contrast, boys often experience stronger sexual impulses and curiosity. Adolescence, characterized by intense hormonal secretion and emotional volatility, marks the period when sexual awareness begins to emerge. During this phase, there is a heightened curiosity and attraction toward the opposite sex, but due to the impulsiveness and semi-maturity of adolescence, distinguishing between liking and love can be challenging. Insufficient self-control may lead to crossing the boundaries of heterosexual communication, resulting in adverse consequences, consistent with these observations.

High school students today primarily mimic the romantic lives of characters in books, movies, and television shows when they fall in love. However, a typical issue in the secular world is depicted in Chinese literary works when it comes to love: women are always the world's most beautiful women, while males, the protagonists of love, are always dignified and have exceptional demeanors. Middle school students are inevitably influenced by these romantic ideals portrayed in literature and art, a notion that aligns with Li Yuan's (2020) perspective on the growing prominence of early romantic relationships among students. Additionally, some individuals openly flaunt their romantic relationships in daily life, while television dramas, films, and self-media platforms frequently emphasize themes of romance, and extramarital childbirth, and even exploit explicit content to gain attention. The 16-year-old single mother's live-streamed video of her adopted son, which went viral online and attracted a large following of brainwashed fans, is one example of how this plot has, nevertheless, attracted a lot of attention and approval on multiple occasions. Celebrities frequently dismiss their sense of existence with sadistic love and unmarried children. Adolescent boys and girls have experienced unparalleled effects from these visual and acoustic experiences, frequently igniting their limitless imaginations and, in turn, paving the way for early romantic relationships. It's always the same.

The findings from Objective 2 of the research reveal that early romantic relationships among high school students can have significant detrimental effects on them. Primarily, these effects manifest as psychological instability, heightened sensitivity, suspicion, and constant comparison. Physiologically, early romantic involvement can adversely impact students' physical development. Following a breakup, they often struggle to cope and react appropriately, which can lead to self-harm and even suicide. Their diminished focus on academics results in lower academic performance and delayed future prospects. Furthermore, early romantic relationships are not conducive to the comprehensive development of interpersonal relationships and can easily escalate into family conflicts. These findings align with Liu Yuxin's (2003) analysis and recommendations concerning the phenomenon of "early love" among high school students, as outlined in the context of modern educational science. Liu emphasizes that early romantic relationships are typically short-lived and often lack meaningful outcomes. Moreover, they tend to be impulsive and irrational choices for students, fueling unrealistic fantasies and emotional impulsivity that negatively affect their learning. Additionally, early romantic relationships tend to incite extreme behaviors when faced with challenges, such as martyrdom, malicious revenge, running away from home, depression, and even self-harm or suicide. Lastly, due to their limited sexual knowledge and self-discipline,

high school students engaging in early romantic relationships may engage in sexual activity during impulsive moments, which increases the risk of unintended pregnancy and miscarriage. This pattern remains consistent.

Early romantic relationships often result in conflicts within families, as parents frequently adopt a contrasting stance towards their children's involvement in such relationships. This parental disapproval can easily trigger disputes within the family. When children defy their parents in pursuit of romantic involvement, it can have adverse effects on both the child's personal development and family harmony. This observation aligns with the findings of Wei Yemei and Fan Guorui (2019), who, from the perspective of family dynamics, noted that factors such as divorce, being an only child, parental disagreements, and a lack of effective parent-child communication and warmth within the family environment, along with the inability to confide in peers during adolescence, can all contribute to an increased likelihood of early romantic involvement. This pattern of family conflict is consistent with their research.

The research findings from Objective 3 indicate that the prevention of early romantic relationships should not be the sole responsibility of schools or parents; rather, it should involve collaborative efforts from students, parents, teachers, and educational institutions. By implementing appropriate strategies, effective prevention can be achieved, allowing high school students to confront and manage early romantic relationships in a mature manner without jeopardizing their physical and mental well-being. This perspective aligns with Zhang Chaoqiong's (2005) analysis of the psychological characteristics and guidance strategies related to early romantic relationships, which emphasized that addressing early romantic relationships is a comprehensive endeavor requiring the collective engagement of society, schools, families, teachers, and students to promote the healthy and stable development of adolescents. However, He Guoxian (2020) cautioned against excessive intervention when students display a preference for someone of the opposite sex. Instead, he advised against approaches like questioning, surveillance, tracking, investigation, scolding, or involving the other party's parents, as these actions are generally counterproductive.

To support students with psychological difficulties related to early romantic relationships, schools should establish dedicated psychological counseling rooms. These counseling sessions should be tailored to address the specific needs of students, and strict confidentiality should be assured to create a safe space for students to express themselves without fear. Teachers should play an essential role in providing timely guidance during this process. This approach, while challenging, aligns with Zhang Chaoqiong's (2005) analysis of early romantic relationships, which highlights the importance of addressing early romantic relationships comprehensively. Early romantic relationship counseling should not be limited to identifying issues for reporting to parents but should involve sustained and diligent efforts. Addressing the complexities of early romantic relationships and their psychological impact is a systematic endeavor that necessitates the collaboration of society, schools, families, teachers, and students to foster the healthy and stable development of adolescents.

Parents and schools should initiate age-appropriate discussions about sexual knowledge, gender roles, and human development with children. It's essential to use language and materials suitable for their age and comprehension level. These discussions should help children grasp the responsibilities associated with sexual behavior, the significance of self-protection, and the importance of sexual health. This approach aligns with the current state and improvement strategies for sex education in China, as proposed by Che Sai Xia (2020). While China's adolescent sex education has made progress, it remains insufficient and lacks systematic structure. Sex-related content in schools often focuses on biological aspects in biology courses and mental health courses, addressing the psychological changes during adolescence. However, there is a need for more comprehensive sexual knowledge, especially regarding the

prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Traditional moral values have limited open discussions about sex among teachers and parents, leading to secrecy and avoidance of these topics when interacting with teenagers.

## Conclusion

Through interviews, this study unveiled that in our modern society, where adolescence begins at an increasingly early age, high school students are progressively exposed to and engage in discussions regarding romantic relationships. These interviews identified the primary factors contributing to early romantic involvement among high school students, which encompass psychological, physiological, and social elements. Furthermore, the impact of early romantic engagement on students, as gleaned from the interviews, spans four main domains: psychological effects, physiological influences, academic consequences, and interpersonal dynamics. To address the challenge of early romantic relationships among high school students, the study recommends implementing school policies organized into three distinct categories: policies aimed at students, policies directed towards parents, and policies specifically designed for teachers.

## Suggestions

1. It is advisable to investigate the prevalence of early romantic relationships among high school students in different high schools across Yibin city.
2. Research evaluating the effectiveness of policies should be undertaken.

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