

Current Situation and Countermeasures of Adolescent Mental Health in the Context of Social Media

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Abstract: In contemporary society, social media serves as both a means for students to connect and a source of entertainment and relaxation. Nevertheless, despite its many advantages, it can also lead to adverse psychological effects. The digital environment and the vast array of information available online significantly influence students' mental well-being. This article seeks to raise awareness about the negative consequences that social media has on students, the potential psychological issues they may encounter, and various recommendations from multiple perspectives. This includes strategies for students facing mental health challenges to find healing and resolution, as well as how educational institutions can support student mental wellness in relation to social media usage. In conclusion, the psychological ramifications of social media on students are significant; it is not only addictive but can also trigger various mental health concerns. Schools should organize more activities aimed at reducing addiction to virtual platforms. Additionally, teachers and parents need to be vigilant regarding students' mental health and offer timely advice and appropriate interventions when issues arise.

Keywords: Media, therapy, psychology, adolescents.

1. Introduction

This paper primarily examines the indispensable role of social media in students' lives in contemporary society, highlighting its significant impact on their emotional and psychological adjustment. Among junior high school and college students, some excessively rely on social media platforms and immerse themselves in the virtual world for prolonged periods, resulting in mental health issues. Additionally, inexperienced students are more susceptible to external influences and self-denial due to the intricate nature of online content [1]. However, the influence of cyber violence in the media cannot be ignored. Students are more likely to be affected by cyber violence because of their weak ability to withstand it, which eventually leads to psychological problems and depression. According to the survey, 73.2% of college students have different degrees of psychological stress, 21.48% of college students may have depression risk, and the depression risk of adolescents is higher than that of adults [2]. It can be concluded that students' mental health status is not ideal in the context of social media.

This paper mainly studies the current situation of students' mental health in the social media environment and the coping measures after the occurrence of psychological problems. Students can be treated through painting therapy, music therapy, group psychotherapy and other therapies, and

serious cases require prompt medical treatment for drug intervention. It also calls on schools and families to pay timely attention to students' psychological conditions, strengthen psychological education, provide professional psychological counselors, and hold more offline activities to reduce students' time on social media. Parents should also communicate with their children in a timely manner, reasonably control the use of electronic devices, help students establish good use habits, and reduce the harm of social media to students.

2. The Impact of Social Media on Teenagers

2.1. Current Situation of Teenagers Influenced by Media

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published a report entitled "Concerns about Social Media Use and Gaming Among Adolescents in Europe, Central Asia and Canada." In this study, researchers conducted surveys with nearly 280,000 adolescents aged 11, 13, and 15 across 44 countries in Europe, Central Asia, and Canada. Findings indicate that the percentage of young people facing issues related to social media usage increased from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022. Additionally, it was found that around 12% of teenagers are at risk of developing gaming addiction. The research revealed that over 10% of adolescents exhibited signs of problematic social media use in 2022—struggling to manage their online behavior and experiencing adverse effects—compared to just 7% four years earlier [3]. The report characterizes problems associated with social media as behavioral patterns indicative of addiction. These include difficulties controlling usage, withdrawal symptoms when offline, a preference for social media over other pursuits, and detrimental effects on daily life due to excessive engagement.

2.2. Social Media does Specific Harm to Students

Social media provides students with a platform to showcase themselves, explore their identity, establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. However, it may also exacerbate psychological problems among college students, such as social comparison, information overload, and internet addiction. The student period is a crucial stage in one's life development, accompanied by the emergence of multiple psychological characteristics, presenting complexity and diversity, and they are highly susceptible to being influenced in the context of social media. Firstly, frequent exposure to social media weakens people's communication ability and social adaptation skills in real life, leading to a decline in language and social skills, a disconnect between thought and speech, and affecting logical thinking and deep understanding. Not only that, information on social media is mixed, with a lot of information, including pornography, violence, extreme language and behavior, false information, and untrue reports. It may also lead to confusion and misunderstandings, some extreme views and thoughts, which are easily to make the psychologically unstable, morally uncultivated, and trend-chasing and novelty-seeking college student group have erroneous ideological and value concepts, increasing psychological pressure and emotional fluctuations. Besides, some tragic events, pessimistic remarks, cyberbullying, etc. may also trigger negative emotional responses from college students. These contents may lead to anxiety, fear, sadness, etc., affecting emotional stability and psychological health [4]. Students utilize social media as a platform to shape and maintain their personal image, which in turn affects their emotional well-being. Positive experiences and social recognition garnered through self-presentation on social media contribute to better emotional adaptation. Conversely, negative feedback or a lack of recognition in self-presentation can potentially trigger feelings of anxiety. When students come across others' posts showcasing success and happiness on social media, they may experience envy and jealousy, leading to self-doubt as they perceive themselves as inferior in certain aspects compared to their peers. Consequently, they might hesitate to engage with individuals who are more accomplished than them

or initiate communication with their teachers. Furthermore, evaluations and feedback received on social media platforms also have the potential to influence college students' perception of themselves; excessively concerning oneself with how others perceive them can result in losing sight of one's own identity [1].

2.3. The Impact of Social Media on Female Students

On Douyin, people can find similar terms, such as “square shoulders”, “BM girls”, “how to whiten skin”, and “A4 waist”. These terms express women's anxiety about their body shape and appearance. The influence of distorted aesthetics spread through social media on women cannot be ignored. We can see that the current trend of whitening and mainstream aesthetics is deviating from a healthy perspective, distorting young women's perception of their bodies, numbing their thoughts, altering their understanding of beauty standards, and forming a distorted aesthetic concept. However, these demanding requirements for appearance and body shape will subtly affect students who have not fully formed their aesthetic views yet, leading to anxiety, depression, body shame, etc., reducing individuals' sense of self-identity with their bodies as well as self-esteem and self-worth. Foreign scholar Mariska and many researchers have found that people who are consistently dissatisfied with their own bodies have significantly increased risks of depression, low self-esteem, and other diseases. Domestic scholar Hua Lingling discovered through research on adolescent groups that negative body image plays a significant role in the development of depressive emotions [5].

3. Treatment of Adolescent Psychological Problems

3.1. Music Therapy

As a unique means of psychological intervention, music therapy has a positive impact on students' mental health. It does not require students to have any musical foundation; just listening to music can reduce students' stress and anxiety, promote self-expression and emotional release, and finally improve cognitive function. Based on the application advantages of receptive music therapy, further analysis shows that it has certain application value and can become an important "helper" to solve students' mental health problems, which is mainly reflected in easing anxiety in academic, interpersonal and social aspects and employment, promoting mental health development and enriching forms of mental health education. The scientific basis for the positive impact of music therapy on students' mental health lies in the fact that music can trigger the reward mechanism in the brain and release neurotransmitters such as dopamine, thus bringing people a feeling of pleasure and relaxation [6]. Music therapy includes a variety of treatment methods, mainly song discussion, musical muscle relaxation training, musical memory and guided musical imagination, which are cleverly integrated into various treatment occasions [7].

3.2. Art Therapy

In the expression of art therapy, painting is an important therapeutic method that is suitable for people of all ages and particularly beneficial for students. The principle behind it is that through the creative process of painting, artists can use artistic tools to bring forth repressed emotions and conflicts from their subconscious. This process not only helps release negative energy, relieve stress, and vent emotions but also aids in healing psychological trauma and filling the void in one's inner world, ultimately leading to a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment, and self-confidence, resulting in positive diagnostic and therapeutic effects. Painting-based expressive art therapy has been proven effective in addressing psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts while also enhancing emotional well-being and conflict resolution [8]. Not only that, painting therapy can

also be targeted at patients who have depression, or who are resistant to speech therapy, so that they can release their emotions through painting. This approach greatly increases the treatment rate, and helps patients express their inner feelings and release pressure in more diversified ways.

3.3. Group Psychotherapy

The primary characteristic of group psychotherapy is that over time, group members naturally develop a close-knit, cooperative, mutually supportive relationship and atmosphere. Group psychotherapy serves as an exceptionally suitable psychological treatment and targeted intervention strategy for adolescents with depression. Through phased treatment, it can effectively enhance patients' mood, social functioning, and medication adherence while boosting their confidence levels. Additionally, it helps individuals recognize the detrimental effects of the illness and reduces the risk of relapse. By means of shared experiences within the framework of group psychotherapy, patients are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and experiential analysis. This approach guides them towards understanding appropriate behaviors and rectifying misconceptions through incorporating psychological suggestion techniques alongside occupational therapy interventions. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on assisting patients in improving their disease cognition to facilitate targeted psychological rehabilitation [9].

4. Prevention of Students' Psychological Problems and Corresponding Measures from all Walks of Life

4.1. The Response Measures of all Sectors of Society

4.1.1. National Level

The state plays a crucial role in mitigating the impact of social media on students' mental health by establishing a safer and healthier online environment for youth through various means, including legislation, education, support, and research. It is imperative for the state to oversee Internet platforms, mandating them to diligently review user-generated content, promptly remove inappropriate material, and effectively combat the dissemination of false or harmful information to ensure students can thrive in an optimal online setting. By providing financial assistance and policy guidance, schools and communities should also be encouraged to offer diverse extracurricular activities that foster student engagement in offline pursuits such as sports, arts, and community service.

4.1.2. School and Community Practices

In order to protect students' mental health, schools need to fully reveal the double-sided nature of social media, so that students can form a correct ideological understanding and rational treatment and use of social media tools on the basis of understanding its advantages and disadvantages. Not only that, but also to strengthen the students' cultural quality and moral quality education. In the social media environment, various cultural concepts and values are intertwined, which easily leads to the ambiguity and confusion of college students' values. By strengthening the cultural and moral education of students, we can help them better identify bad culture and establish a correct world outlook, and outlook on life and values. The most important point is that the school should pay attention to the dynamic changes of students in a timely manner, discover and solve psychological problems in a timely manner, increase investment in mental health education, and establish a high-level and professional team of teachers. Various psychological health knowledge lectures, psychological salons and other activities can also be held to let students fully understand their mental health, guide them on how to make correct mental adjustments, how to correctly deal with the

evaluation and opinion of others on social media, and maintain a strong heart and not be easily influenced by others [1]. On the social front, it is important to strengthen cooperation with social media platforms and push them to take measures to reduce the negative impact on youth, such as content moderation and mental health promotion. Through education, communication, participation and support, we can effectively prevent students from being negatively affected by social media.

4.1.3. Family Perspective

The family should encourage parents to engage in moderate monitoring of their children's Internet usage, establish clear guidelines to limit exposure to inappropriate content, and prioritize the mental well-being of their children. Additionally, they can foster healthy face-to-face connections with others by organizing family gatherings and community events that reduce both the time spent on social media and its frequency. It is crucial to create an open communication environment where students feel comfortable discussing any concerns related to social media with teachers or parents, who can provide timely support and guidance. Moreover, it would be beneficial to introduce cyber literacy courses in schools and at home, aiming to educate students on identifying misinformation, combating cyberbullying, recognizing negative influences, and enhancing their critical thinking skills. Through active involvement and support from parents, children can develop better coping mechanisms for the challenges posed by social media.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, this article elucidates the impact of the social media environment on students' psychological well-being. Its purpose is to enhance students' comprehension of the dual nature of media and networks, discourage excessive immersion in the virtual world, enable them to discern intricate and intertwined information, safeguard themselves from potential harm, and foster a sound value system. In cases where students already experience psychological issues, there are treatments available that can alleviate symptoms and aid in identifying their underlying problems. The article also advocates for increased attention from schools and society towards students' mental health conditions by undertaking preventive measures, providing assistance and resources for those who have suffered psychological harm, as well as assuming societal and educational responsibilities. It should be noted that the data and survey presented in this paper are limited to specific regions within China; therefore, generalization to all students may not be applicable. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the treatment methods proposed herein have certain limitations. Music therapy and art therapy primarily serve as tools for psychological assessment or addressing mild psychological issues; severe problems necessitate prompt medical intervention or medication. Future research endeavors could focus on determining which types of internet content are more likely to influence students adversely while exploring strategies to mitigate the dissemination of such detrimental information online. Additionally, efforts should be made towards creating a safe cyber environment conducive to teenagers' well-being. Although social media poses multifaceted challenges to student mental health presently, improvements are anticipated with advancements in education technology and policy development.

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