The Effect of Undesirable Internet Information on the Formation of Antisocial Personality among Adolescents

Xiwen Lei[1,a,*]

[1]*Beijing New Channel school, Beijing, 100086, China*
a. Ariellei0625@outlook.com
*corresponding author

Abstract: The impact of mixed messages on the Internet on the mental health status of adolescents needs to be taken seriously. In this article, a study is conducted to investigate the influence of online information and antisocial personality disorder among adolescents. Firstly, the definitions of bad information and antisocial personality disorder are explained, and the seven diagnostic criteria for antisocial personality according to the DSM-5 and the categorisation of bad information are described. Secondly, the paper explains why adolescents are more vulnerable to the influence of bad information on the Internet. The paper also explains the possible adverse behaviours of adolescents that may be caused by bad information. These behaviours are similar to some of the behavioural characteristics of antisocial personality. Since antisocial personality disorder can only be diagnosed in adulthood, and other disorders may produce similar symptoms. Therefore, it does not follow that Internet malinformation has a significant contributory effect on the development of antisocial personality disorder. Finally, this article describes what the state, society, and the family can do to reduce adolescents' exposure to online maladaptive behaviours, and what psychological concerns should be raised.

Keywords: personality disorders, antisocial personality disorders, internet information

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of the Internet, it is becoming more and more convenient for people to obtain information. For young people who have not yet developed mature values and discernment of information, this means that exposure to undesirable information will also continue to increase. The most frightening point is that the impact of such information and views on young people is sometimes hard to detect. Parents are also unable to notice in time what information their children are being exposed to. Another reason for this matter is that teenagers are a very private stage and they think that their parents cannot understand their feelings [1], so they don't inform their elders honestly about their feelings and opinions. This leads to the fact that once a teenager is exposed to information that affects them negatively, there is no way that these effects can be adjusted or changed. The likelihood of adolescents developing distorted values increases. However, these distorted values can contribute to psychological disorders in adolescents [2]. Personality disorders are persistent, fixed patterns of psychological and behavioural behaviours that deviate from the socio-cultural context and cause distress to the individual or harm to the surrounding area, caused by genetic, congenital and acquired adverse environmental factors in the course of the individual's development and growth.

This is a big concept encompassing many categories, as detailed in the next section. In this article, it will be carried out about the effect of online information on the formation of antisocial personality disorder. Antisocial personality disorder is defined as a pattern of socially irresponsible, oppressive and guilt-free behaviour that begins in childhood or early adolescence. The disorder usually lasts throughout life and leads to dysfunction. It's also considered one of the most damaging personality disorders to society. This is another reason why it is important to choose to study antisocial personality.

2. Literature review

2.1. Antisocial personality disorders

2.1.1. Definition

The concept of personality disorders inherits well-known difficulties from psychiatric and antisocial concepts, which were once used as waste paper classifications for patients who could not be diagnosed in any other way [3]. In the context of psychopathology, a personality disorder is a behavioural trait that falls between mental illness and normal behaviour [4], follow-up studies describes personality disorders as "significant deviations from the norm that begin in childhood or adolescence and continue throughout life". Furthermore, personality disorders are divided into several different categories. DSM-IV classifies personality disorders into 10 subtypes according to the clinical symptoms of each type: A, B, and C. Type A is paranoid or eccentric personality disorder, including paranoid and schizotypal personality disorders, which are characterised by interpersonal detachment, a narrow range of emotions, and unusual experiences of the surrounding environment; type B is affective personality disorder, which is characterised by interpersonal detachment and a narrow range of emotions. It includes Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Performing Personality Disorder and Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Patients are characterised by disorganisation of life, relationships and emotions; group C is the anxious, fearful type, including avoidant, dependent and obsessive-compulsive personality disorders, characterised by narrow behaviour [5].

Antisocial personality disorder is a branch of personality disorder. However, people used to know very little about antisocial personality. This was because there was no way to make a good distinction between the symptoms of diagnosed psychosis and the symptoms of antisocial personality [6]. As follow-up studies are conducted, antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) is usually associated with repeated acts of unlawful behaviour and is a personality disorder characterised by chronic neglect and violation of the rights of others [7]. That's what this article defines as antisocial personality disorder.

2.1.2. Previous research on antisocial personality disorders

Diagnostic criteria for antisocial personality disorder are a very important part of the research. The two main international systems for diagnosing somatic symptoms and related disorders are the International Classification of Diseases (eleventh edition, ICD-11) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fifth edition, DSM-5). While these two diagnostic systems are more consistent, differences still exist [8]. This post references the dsm5 criteria for antisocial personality disorder. There are seven criterions. 1) Repeatedly engaging in the behaviour that justifies the arrest, which does not conform to social norms; 2) Deception, as evidenced by repeated lying, use of an alias, or deceiving others for personal gain or pleasure; 3) Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead; 4) Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fighting or aggression; 5)disregard for one's own safety or the safety of others; 6) Consistent irresponsibility, as evidenced by repeated failure to maintain consistent work behaviour or meet financial obligations; 7) Lack of remorse, i.e.,

indifference or rationalisation for hurting, abusing or stealing from others [9]. Patients also have some characteristics [10]. (1) There is a significant gender difference in the prevalence of antisocial personality disorder among offenders, with male offenders having a higher prevalence than female offenders.

(2) There is an age difference in antisocial personality disorder among offenders. The prevalence of antisocial personality disorder decreases with age, with the highest prevalence of antisocial personality among offenders aged 18-24 years and the lowest prevalence of antisocial personality disorder among offenders aged 45 years and older.

(3) The prevalence of antisocial personality disorder among offenders differed in terms of education level. The prevalence of antisocial personality disorder among offenders with college education and above was lower than that of other education groups.

(4) The prevalence of antisocial personality disorder among unmarried offenders was significantly higher than among married and divorced offenders.

(5) The prevalence of antisocial personality disorder was significantly higher among recidivists who had been imprisoned twice or repeatedly than among first-time offenders.

2.2. Undesirable Internet information

2.2.1. Definition

At present, "undesirable information on the Internet" is not a proper term, and there is no uniform standard for the legal definition of the scope of this concept in the world, due to the differences in the laws of each country and its specific national conditions, as well as the differences in the understanding and determination of undesirable information on the Internet. Undesirable information on the Internet refers to illegal information such as crime, gambling, obscenity and fraud; information that undermines morality, such as superstition, violence, exposure of privacy and deviation from human decency; and information that undermines security and stability, such as cyber viruses, cyber rumours and undesirable ideologies. Such information is harmful information that brings pollution to the human spirit and causes confusion in thinking and psychological abnormalities. Specifically, it refers to information displayed on Internet platforms that spreads violence, pornography, gambling inducement, fraud, pseudoscience, and other anti-social morality, information security, and anti-social order content by means of text, pictures, audio and video, advertisements, games, live broadcasts, and so on [11]. According to the different contents and nature of the undesirable information on the Internet, there are mainly the following major classifications:

1. Violent information. It refers to network information that promotes bloody contents such as fighting, kidnapping, murder and terror in an irrational form, so that people lose their minds and are reckless in order to achieve their goals. Promote both physical violence, such as punching, kicking, biting, pinching, wringing, pushing, shoving, slapping and other physical injuries, including the promotion of mental violence, such as ridicule, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation and other acts of mental fear of others.

2. Obscene and pornographic information. Refers to sexual or human nudity as the main form of information presented on the network in the form of text, sound, video, pictures, animation, etc., does not have any educational, medical, or artistic value, the purpose is to tease, trigger the user's sexual desire.

3. False information, information on the Internet whose content is not true.

Networked information is a very large concept that is difficult to summarise in a precise sentence. However, for the purpose of this essay, the concept of bad information will be defined as information that will lead to the above mentioned bad guidance for the youth.

3. Discussion

3.1. Influences

According to the survey, 31.4% of teenagers do not think that "lying in online chat is immoral", 37.4% of teenagers think that "it's no big deal to speak foul language on the Internet once in a while", and 24% of people think that "You can do anything on the Internet without fear," and thus there are teenage hackers, online fraud. The internet is full of foul language, swearing, abuse, attacks and venting [12]. As Wallace of the United States said in her book "Internet Psychology", attack, revenge and catharsis are the style of the Internet. If these uncivilised, immoral and even illegal behaviours spread on the Internet, they will undoubtedly seriously distort the personalities of young people and cause harm in real life.

This article argues that bad online information can exacerbate or stimulate antisocial personality disorder. Although juvenile offenders are able to identify pornography, violence and other undesirable information on the Internet, they generally have a vague knowledge of undesirable information on the Internet that disturbs minors' outlook on life and values, and lack the ability to distinguish between them. Some undesirable information is disseminated in the form of pictures, videos and other visual effects, which are very attractive to teenagers [13]. Once minors become addicted to it, they may not be able to distinguish between reality and virtual, and keep living in an unreal way in real life. In the long run, their character will become withdrawn and indifferent, and they will be accustomed to looking for answers in the virtual environment on the Internet, unwilling to communicate and exchange with people around them. The body and mind of minors are in the process of growth and development, and are not yet sound enough. Therefore, the violent information on the Internet and the killing scenes in online games will lead some minors to imitate these plots and adopt violent forms to solve some problems in their lives [14]. As mentioned earlier, violence, irritability and physical conflict are among the characteristics of antisocial personality disorder. Furthermore, gory, violent and extreme pictures, messages and information on the Internet can be a strong stimulus to the teenage brain. When the reality of the situation is not as extreme as it is on the Internet, adolescents become numb and do not recognise it enough or see it as a serious situation. There will be no sympathy or concern about it which is another feature of antisocial personality disorders. For example, if teens are used to seeing some of the videos of murders and deaths that appear on social media, they may not take some of the less-than-deathly but serious injuries as seriously. Moreover, related research suggests that a lack of empathy early in life has an impact on later life. Consistent with the hypothesis that antisocial behaviour is associated with "active" empathy deficits, early neglect of others predicts later ASPD symptoms. Early neglect of others was significantly associated with items from the Self-Report Psychological Disorders Scale on the factors Interpersonal Relationships and Emotional Deficits, but not on the factors Impulsivity and Poor Behavioural Control [15]. These results suggest that there is a tendency toward adult antisocial personality disorder symptoms and psychopathic factor interpersonal and emotional deficits that can be assessed early in development.

On the basis of these alone, it is too one-sided to say that antisocial personality disorder can exist in minors exposed to undesirable Internet information. Because adolescence is supposed to be a very chaotic and turbulent period, sometimes intense distress, fear of disintegration, confusion, loss of ability to symbolise and sublimation may result as the processing of emotional states that cannot be controlled and dealt with in any other way [16]. Compulsive and repetitive behaviours such as self-mutilation, violence against others, addictions, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, hypochondria, states of confusion and dissociation, and the possibility of suicide can also occur [16]. In other words, it is difficult to draw a line between normalcy and pathology in adolescence. These are less strongly related to external information and more of an internal struggle and entanglement

within the self. It is also a necessary part of growing up. But it has to be denied that overexposure to bad information can still have many negative effects on teenagers. For example, distraction, Internet addiction, and the establishment of wrong values [13]. Teenagers are the future of our country and the backbone of society in the future. If the values of young people have problems, the impact on society will be huge. That's why every country attaches great importance to the protection and education of young people.

3.2. Solutions

In order to alleviate the negative impact of bad information on young people, the State, schools and families should take a number of measures. Trying to prevent young people from being exposed to bad information is one of the most effective ways.

(1) Legislation is the basis of Internet regulation, and many countries have legislated against information offences. The survey shows that more than half of the underage offenders believe that the state should enact laws related to the protection of minors on the Internet. In the real society, these undesirable information are subject to all kinds of restrictions in the process of making, transporting, spreading and viewing, while in cyberspace these resources are only accessible with a lift of the hand. The state should, according to the development of the network, formulate targeted management methods to combat illegal behaviour on the network, increase penalties, and institutionally regulate the responsibilities, rights and interests of all responsible parties. Specifically, it can implement a real-name system for the network and a grading system for network information, so that all of society can be clear about what kind of information is bad information on the network. At the same time, the State can also reduce the amount of undesirable information on the Internet by strengthening the development and research of network security technology and promoting the installation of network undesirable information filtering software and other measures.

(2) Schools should strengthen the education of adolescents

Schools are an important responsible body for managing Internet bad information. The survey found that nearly half of the minors raised the point that in the past, in the information technology classes at school, the teachers did not teach how to deal with undesirable information on the Internet at all, and other courses also covered little about it. Therefore, schools should take a more active role and play a greater role in combating undesirable information on the Internet. The survey shows that underage offenders believe that in the management of undesirable information on the Internet, the school's ideological education of young people and education on the rule of law on the Internet is crucial. School teachers have the responsibility to supervise underage students not to come into contact with undesirable information on the Internet. In addition, teachers should raise their concern for the psychological state of all students, and schools should invite professionals to give talks on relieving stress and solving psychological problems. Professional psychologists should also be invited to provide counselling to students.

(3) Families should strengthen communication with minor children

Strengthening family management is an important foundation for online information content management. The influence of family education on the social behaviour, character, psychology and values of underage children is long-term. If parents do not actively guide their children's behaviour during adolescence, various social problems will easily arise. Parents need to control their time on the Internet appropriately. Parents should take the initiative to exchange feelings with their children, and when their children encounter learning and life difficulties, they should give them care and help, and reduce their children's need to go to the virtual world of the Internet to seek answers to their problems. At the same time, when they find that their children have psychological problems or are depressed, they should take correct and soothing ways to enlighten them. If the child shows some

overly extreme behaviours, such as violent behaviours, or self-injury, it is important to stop them or seek medical attention in a timely manner.

3.3. Limitations

This study still has many limitations. Firstly, many of the ideas are established based on previous studies. However, since each person's environment, genes, personality, and psychological condition are different and rapidly changing, it would be too broad and general to make any inaccurate generalisations. In addition, each country and region is very different and creates different cultures. Findings applicable to adolescents in one country may not necessarily be used as evidence for relevant research in another region. Because antisocial personality disorder can only be diagnosed in adulthood, and some personality disorders and psychiatric illnesses may have similar symptoms, it is not accurate to infer whether an antisocial personality develops in adulthood from the pathology that is likely to develop in adolescents over a period of time. Control and prevention during adolescence would then be less effective. This study is not equipped to conduct a large number of individual independent studies and lacks the support and analysis of relevant and accurate data. It is hoped that the next step in the research can be followed up.

4. Conclusion

Heavy exposure to undesirable information on the Internet can indeed have a negative impact on the mental health of adolescents. Whether it has a very significant effect on the formation of antisocial personality requires follow-up research. With the development of technology, the demand for electronic products is increasing, which means that access to the Internet is becoming easier and the age of first contact with the Internet is decreasing. Adolescence is a very volatile stage where emotions are amplified and the way they are dealt with is sometimes more extreme, which, coupled with the immaturity of the mind, makes them more susceptible to information stimulation. The Internet does provide a lot of convenience in terms of payment, study and work. In the process of using the Internet, we should try our best to bring out the advantages of the Internet, and try to avoid the disadvantages of the Internet. In addition to bad information, some information from other people may also bring anxiety and other negative emotions to teenagers. This is another topic that deserves follow-up research. It is a good sign that society's concern for psychological problems is increasing. However, in many areas, the handling and treatment of psychological problems is not perfect. For example, in China, there are still a lot of parents who do not consider psychological problems important and are more concerned about their children's academic performance. This may also be due to parental ignorance. Psychology lectures at school are also used by most Chinese children for homework. Some of the perceptions of psychological problems still need to be improved. We can only say that there is a long way to go for subsequent improvement. In addition, since many people nowadays don't know much about psychology, when they can't identify whether a piece of information is accurate or not by its content, they will judge it by the authority of the media that publishes it. This leads to the problem that even if a piece of information is incorrect, people will choose to believe it because the media outlet is authoritative. This is very scary when it comes to psychology, and incorrect treatment can lead to even worse results.

References

[1] Guerrero, L. K., & Afifi, W. A. (2013). What parents don't know: Topic avoidance in parent–child relationships. In Parents, children, and communication (pp. 219-245). Routledge.

[2] Weismoore, J. T., & Esposito-Smythers, C. (2010). The role of cognitive distortion in the relationship between abuse, assault, and non-suicidal self-injury. Journal of youth and adolescence, 39, 281-290.

[3]   Eysenck, H. J. (1987). The definition of personality disorders and the criteria appropriate for their description. Journal of Personality Disorders, 1(3), 211-219.

[4]   Münch, R., Walter, H., & Müller, S. (2020). Should behavior harmful to others be a sufficient criterion of mental disorders? Conceptual problems of the diagnoses of antisocial personality disorder and pedophilic disorder. Frontiers in psychiatry, 11, 558655.

[5]   Yang, F. D., D. Li, & C. F. Ji. (1999). Classification and treatment of personality disorders. Sichuan Mental Health, 12(1), 66-68.

[6]   De Brito, S. A., & Hodgins, S. H. E. I. L. A. G. H. (2009). Antisocial personality disorder. Personality, personality disorder and violence, 42, 133-153.

[7]   Mulay, A. L., & Cain, N. M. (2020). Antisocial personality disorder. Encyclopedia of personality and individual differences, 206-215.

[8]   Biedermann, F., & Fleischhacker, W. W. (2016). Psychotic disorders in DSM-5 and ICD-11. CNS spectrums, 21(4), 349-354.

[9]   Lynam, D. R., & Vachon, D. D. (2012). Antisocial personality disorder in DSM-5: Missteps and missed opportunities. Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment, 3(4), 483.

[10]   Jiang, J, & Xu, Y. (2007). A survey of antisocial personality disorder in offenders. China Special Education, (5), 80-85.

[11]   Lui, Y. H. (2021). Countermeasures for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency under the Influence of Adverse Information on the Internet (Master's thesis, Xinyang Normal College).

[12]   Lin, L.. (2004). Negative effects of the Internet on the personality development of adolescents. Engineering and technology research, (3), 47-48.

[13]   Zhang, Z. F.. (2017). The influence of online bad information on juvenile delinquency. Research on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, (1), 31-37.

[14]   Lim, S. A., Kim, E. K., & You, S. (2019). The effects of internet use on school adjustment and delinquency. Current Psychology, 38, 901-907.

[15]   Rhee, S. H., Woodward, K., Corley, R. P., du Pont, A., Friedman, N. P., Hewitt, J. K., ... & Zahn-Waxler, C. (2021). The association between toddlerhood empathy deficits and antisocial personality disorder symptoms and psychopathy in adulthood. Development and psychopathology, 33(1), 173-183.

[16]   Bronstein, C. (2020). Psychosis and psychotic functioning in adolescence. The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 101(1), 136-151.