

Research on the Influence of Peers, Family Environment and Internet Use on Juvenile Depression

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, more and more adolescents are diagnosed with depression all around the world. The healthy growth of adolescents is related to the future development of a country, so studying the causes and coping strategies of depression in adolescents has become a hot topic. In this paper, the author analyzed the causes and solutions of adolescents depression through literature review. This paper focuses on the influence of family environment and the Internet using. According to the research result, there are a few factors that lead to adolescents depression, namely, the pressure from schoolwork or college enrollment, the relationship between schoolmates or friends, the divorce of parents and relatives. Among them, the most common pressure source is the social environment, which consists of the online social networking, sophisticated friendship and the high expectation from family. At the end of this paper, the author has given some suggestions on how to improve the family and social networking environment to reduce the possibility that teenagers might be diagnosed with depression such as making stricter rules and laws to regulate people's words and deeds online, or setting classes and lessons for parents who want to improve their relationships with their children, and etc.

Keywords: *Adolescent depression, social environment, peer pressure, networking influences, family relationships*

1. INTRODUCTION

Depression is now a very common mental health disease among teenagers, and it might be induced by different causes, such as pressure, heredity or unstable emotion. According to the Report on National Mental Health Development In China, 2020, about 24.6% adolescents are diagnosed with depression. Among them, 17.2% of them are mild depression and 7.4% of them are major depressive disorder. Not surprisingly, as the teenagers get into higher grades, they are more likely to get a depression disorder. Deeply researching into this topic, the author found out several factors that might cause this phenomenon. In this paper, the author will analysis the current situation from three aspects that might lead to the teenager depression, namely, peers, family environment and Internet use. In addition, some solutions might be introduced here to alleviate the current circumstance. The author hopes that this paper can be a reference for the future study in this area.

The author performed a literally systematic review for the causes analysis into three sorts listed the peer pressure from schoolmates, the relationship between family

members and the pressure and network violence while using the Internet. Research papers published after 2000 and up to 2021 is searched using keywords like 'adolescent depression', 'peer pressure', 'social networking and depression' and 'family relationships'.

2. PEER PRESSURE FROM SCHOOLMATES

Getting into college is extremely competitive for each high-school student, especially who wants to get a higher education degree. This competition might sometimes bring huge stress to students, cause the students' sustaining low mood as well as increasing irritability and anxiety to them. In table 1, the author have listed some possible factors appeared in school environment which might lead to the depression of teenagers.

Table 1 below has adopted data and conclusions from 5 different papers from "bullying" and "peer pressure" two perspectives. Among them, the research aiming at highlighting the nature and prevalence of bullying in Bangladesh schools using a questionnaire booklet including Multidimensional Bullying Victimization

Scale[11] and personal information questionnaires has been wrote by Ahmed M Z and several authors. To make classifications on peer pressure, the author has cited four authors' conclusions as listed. Hopko and Mullane used the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression[12] to test the behavioral therapy's influence to teenager cancer and

depression patients. Also, Amanda Chusid, Joiner and Shadiah Nakiberu has claimed several possible reasons that might lead to huge peer pressure to adolescents in their papers. In sum, two type of pressure source and the possible reasons might lead to them are summarized in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Factors appeared in school environment that may lead to the depression of teenagers

Type of pressure source	Possible reasons	Source
Bullying	Cursing/Yelling	Ahmd, et al. 2021 [1]
	Shaming/Teasing	
	Hitting/Shoving	
	Excluding	
Peer pressure	Lack of social contact	Hopko & Mullane, 2008 [2]
	Excess school demands	Chusid,2020 [3]
	Low self-esteem ones lack assurance of self worthy	Joiner, 2000 [4]
	Prone to negative outcome	Nakiberu,2019 [5]

Besides, it can also be seen in the table 1 that the bullying and high demand and expectations from the social environment might be highly probable to facilitate the depression of teenagers. From the author's perspective, making stricter school rules which forbid the bullying actions can in some extent decrease the percentage of teenagers that were bullied to depression. Strengthening the ideological and moral education is also a necessary thing that the government and schools need to do to reduce the number of teenagers that get depressive disorder.

3. PARENTS' IMPACT ON TEENAGERS EMOTION

Besides schoolmates and teachers in the school, parents also play an important role in teenagers' daily life. In the recent years, it is not a rare phenomenon that a climbing number of children are diagnosed with depression due to their parents' wrong education methods. Apparently, the way of family education might have critical effects on teenagers' mental health, and the author

has looked up several papers to conclude some main family education methods that would cause adolescents' depression disorder as shown in the table 2 below.

The table 2 below has adopted data and conclusions from 3 different papers researching the relationships between family education methods and the possibility that adolescents might get depression. In these paper, Zheng Ruizhi and other authors have used a Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale-Chinese Version[13] to test how huge will parents support affect children's self-confidence and depressive level. Nomura Y and other authors followed 182 offspring of depressed or non-depressed parents to assess the parental depressions' effects on children. Also, Wu Guolan and several scholars have made 879 middle school students in Hebei province, China to have a Self-rating Depression Scale (SDS) test to test the family emotional expression's effects on different age and gender's teenagers depression level. Some possible factors that might influence adolescents mood and depressive level and their relations to depression are shown below.

Table 2. Family education methods that would cause adolescents' depression disorder

Possible factors	Result of those factors	Relations to depression	Source
Parents support towards children	Make children feel confident	Negative correlation	Zheng, et al. 2012 [6]
Conflict between parents and children	Make children cope things in negative ways	Positive correlation	Nomura, et al. 2002 [7]

Parents have low degree of education	/	Positive correlation	Wu, et al. 2013 [8]
Good family atmosphere and close link between family members	High happiness index for teenagers	Negative correlation	Wu, et al. 2013 [8]

Obviously, family circumstances do play a crucial role to the growth circumstances of adolescents. Readers can get to know what factors might cause a relief family atmosphere, and what factors might lead to a depressive atmosphere or even do damage to teenagers' mental health. The research done by Guilan Wu (2020) has also suggested that the height of families' living places might also affect the depression index of teenagers, but the conclusion above still needs to be approved by researching more samples [8].

4. ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS' INFLUENCES

With the flourish of online social networks, millions of teenagers have got to use different networking apps to interact their own opinions and thoughts with other users online. While using the social networking apps, different problems have come to people's eyes. The number of

teenagers that are diagnosed with depression has increased after the present of social medias. To find out the reasons why had the number of depression patients increased, the author has concluded several factors that might influence the mental health of teenagers while using the networking apps in the table 3 below.

Table 3 below has cited data and conclusions from 2 papers aiming to analysis the relations between the frequency of using Internet and possibility of getting depressed. The Fu Chunchang and several authors use SDS and a self-made questionnaire to assess how do the Internet or online networking apps influence the adolescents' level of depression in the year of 2019. Also, the Ying Liang has done a research on teenagers to find relationships between the frequency they use social media and their mental health conditions. The author has summarized the two papers' points and conclusions into the chart 3 below.

Table 3. Factors of using the networking apps that might affect the mental health of teenagers

Possible factors	Result of those factors	Relations to depression	Source
Using social media to get to know more information	Getting to know new things decreases depression level	Negative correlation	Fu Chunchang, 2019 [9]
Talking to friends on social media	Sharing feelings decreases depression	Negative correlation	Fu Chunchang, 2019 [9]
Teenagers need to schedule their time of using social media	Improve the ability of self-controlling	Negative correlation	Ying Liang, et al. 2018[10]
Frequent usage of social media	Addiction to the internet	Positive correlation	Ying Liang, et al. 2018[10]
Lack of communication with people around them	Self-imposed isolation	Positive correlation	Ying Liang, et al. 2018[10]

As can be seen from table 3, the online social networks can influence adolescents' mental health in some extent, both positively and negatively. If people can control teenagers' time of using such social media and lead adolescents to use them in a correct way, some problems such as getting isolated or addicted to the internet would not happen. What is more, it is important for governments to publish rules to promote certain websites to limit the openness or using time to users

under 18 in order to reduce the possibility that they're addicted to the internet.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, adolescents' depression can be caused by three main kinds of factors: the school environments, the parents educating methods, and the frequency of using social media. Some suggestions are given by the author here. Firstly, schools and governments should publish more rules and policies to prevent students from

bullying others, at the same time school should set more ideological and moral courses to educate and inform students that it is incorrect and illegal to bully others at school. Secondly, for the family relationships between parents and children, the author strongly suggest that parents need to communicate with teenagers more and try to make the family atmosphere warmer and sweeter instead of unstoppable conflicts and arguments, which could make adolescents be more willing to interact their own ideas and thoughts instead of being isolated. Last but not least, it is necessary to control the time of using social media to prevent them from getting addicted to the internet world.

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