

An analysis of the relationship between social media addiction and family functioning in adolescents

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Abstract: This study explored the relationship between adolescent social media addiction and family functioning, using literature analysis, case studies and intervention strategies. Studies have found that insufficient family functions, such as lack of emotional support, lack of educational guidance and inadequate life care, are likely to lead to adolescents' unmet psychological needs, reduced self-efficacy and negative coping styles, and thus increase the risk of social media addiction. To provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for preventing and solving the problem of social media addiction, we propose some intervention measures such as improving family function, enhancing teenagers' psychological quality and social support.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the proliferation of smartphones and mobile Internet, social media has become an important part of teenagers' daily lives. However, the consequent problem of adolescent social media addiction has become increasingly serious, and has become the focus of attention in the field of society, family and education ^[1]. Adolescents are at a critical stage in their development of physical, psychological and social resilience, and the behaviours and habits of this period have a profound impact on their future growth. As the primary environment for the growth of adolescents, the role of family in adolescent social media addiction cannot be ignored ^[2]. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between social media addiction and family functioning in adolescents, and to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for preventing and solving this problem. By combing through the latest data, the current situation of adolescent social media addiction, the influence of family function on addictive behavior and its mechanism are analyzed, with a view to providing useful references for research and practice in related fields ^[3].

2. An overview of adolescent social media addiction

2.1. Definition and characteristics of social media addiction

2.1.1. Definition

Social media addiction, as an increasingly common behavioral addiction phenomenon, mainly refers to a state of excessive dependence gradually formed by individuals in the process of using social media for a long time. This dependence is manifested in the individual's serious impact on

psychological, physiological and social functions ^[4].

2.1.2. Features

①Overuse: individuals spend a lot of time on social media, beyond the normal social needs, and even affect daily life and study and work.

②Withdrawal difficulties: When individuals try to reduce or stop using social media, they may experience a range of withdrawal symptoms that reflect how dependent they are on social media. According to relevant studies, these withdrawal symptoms are similar to drug addiction and may include physical and psychological reactions such as anxiety, irritability, shaking and sweating.

③Increased tolerance: As time of use increases, individuals need to spend more time or use social media more frequently to achieve the same satisfaction, which is similar to the phenomenon of tolerance in substance addiction.

④Impaired social function: Excessive use of social media will lead to a decline in the social ability of individuals in real life, which is manifested in a decrease in interaction with family and friends, and interaction on social media is often limited to superficial greetings and likes, lack of in-depth and sincere communication, and even social isolation.

2.2. Status quo of adolescent social media addiction

The latest survey data show that the rate of social media addiction among Chinese teenagers is increasing year by year, and it has become an important factor affecting the physical and mental health of teenagers. According to the Youth Internet Use Survey Report (2024), the number of underage netizens in China has exceeded 193 million, and the Internet penetration rate has reached 97.2%. Teens' reliance on social media has increased significantly, with more than four in 10 saying they use social media for more than three hours a day. Studies have shown that prolonged use of social media is strongly linked to mental health problems in adolescents. Teenagers who use social media for more than three hours a day are twice as likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and other psychological problems. In addition, teenagers' over involvement in social media has also led to lower academic performance, poor sleep quality, and social isolation.

3. The relationship between family functioning and adolescent social media addiction

3.1. Connotation of family function

Family function covers many aspects such as emotional support, educational guidance, life care, behavior control and problem solving, and is the key ability to meet the physiological, psychological and social needs of family members. In terms of emotional support, mutual care and support among family members can help adolescents establish positive self-identity and mental health; Educational guidance, through the example and guidance of parents, has a profound impact on teenagers' academic achievement and value formation; Life care ensures the basic housing, diet and health needs of adolescents, which directly affects their life satisfaction; Moderate behavior control is helpful to cultivate adolescents' good behavior habits, while problem solving ability promotes family harmony and the development of adolescents' strategies to cope with challenges.

3.2. Influence of family function on adolescents' social media addiction

3.2.1. Emotional support

Adolescents with insufficient family emotional support are more likely to have negative emotions such as loneliness and anxiety, and then seek comfort on social media, leading to addiction. Studies have shown that adolescents who lack family emotional support are more inclined to seek emotional sustenance and social approval in the virtual world. This lack of emotion not only increases teenagers' dependence on social media, but also may lead to a decline in their social skills in real life, further exacerbating the phenomenon of addiction.

3.2.2. Educational guidance

Problems such as improper family education and poor parent-child communication may lead teenagers to seek identification and a sense of belonging on social media, exacerbating the degree of addiction. Effective family education should include guidance and supervision on the appropriate use of social media by young people. However, many families fall short in this area, leading teens to opt for escapism through social media when faced with academic pressures and social challenges. In addition, poor parent-child communication also makes it easier for teens to seek emotional support and acceptance on social media.

3.2.3. Life care

Adolescents with inadequate family life may seek attention and affection on social media to meet their needs. Family life care includes providing a safe living environment, proper eating arrangements and healthy living habits. When families fail to meet the needs of adolescents in these areas, adolescents may turn to social media for psychological and emotional satisfaction. This alternative form of gratification not only fails to solve the actual problem, but may lead to the teenagers' dependence on social media further.

3.3. Mechanism of family function affecting adolescent social media addiction

3.3.1. Satisfying psychological needs

Family function plays a key role in satisfying the psychological needs of adolescents. The emotional support and security provided by the family can satisfy adolescents' needs for belonging and self-esteem. When family functions are inadequate, adolescents may turn to social media for emotional sustenance and social approval, thereby increasing the risk of addiction. For example, studies have shown that teens with poor emotional support at home are more likely to seek virtual emotional connections on social media to make up for emotional deficits in real life.

3.3.2. Self-efficacy

Family function has an important effect on adolescents' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief that he or she can successfully complete a task. Family education and support can enhance adolescents' sense of self-efficacy and make them more confident and capable in facing challenges. However, inadequate family functioning can lead to low self-efficacy in adolescents, making them feel helpless and powerless in real life, thus relying on social media to escape from real problems. For example, a home environment with poor parenting or a lack of effective communication may cause adolescents to feel defeated academically and socially, and to seek fulfillment and acceptance through social media.

3.3.3. Coping methods

Family functioning also affects adolescents' coping styles, i.e. the behaviors and strategies individuals adopt in the face of stress and challenges. Effective family functioning fosters positive coping styles in adolescents, enabling them to adopt constructive solutions in the face of stress. Conversely, inadequate family functioning may lead adolescents to adopt negative coping styles, such as avoidance and reliance on social media. Research shows that teens with poor family communication and insufficient emotional support are more likely to turn to social media to escape real-world problems in the face of stress.

4. Case study

4.1. Case description

Xiaoming (pseudonym), 16 years old, a senior high school student. Since Xiao Ming entered high school, due to the increasing pressure of study and the lack of care and companionship from his busy parents, Xiao Ming has gradually become addicted to social media. He spends a lot of time on social media every day, interacting with netizens, and even staying up late to browse moments and watch short videos. With the passage of time, Xiao Ming's academic performance declined, communication with his family became less and less, and his personality became more solitary.

4.2. Case analysis

In Xiao Ming's case, the lack of family function is an important factor leading to his social media addiction. First of all, the lack of family emotional support makes Xiao Ming unable to get enough care and comfort from his family when facing academic pressure, so he turns to social media to seek psychological sustenance. Lack of family education guidance, parents did not find Xiao Ming's behavior changes in time, and carry out effective intervention. Finally, the poor care of family life led to Xiao Ming's lack of attention in real life, which further intensified his dependence on social media.

5. Intervention strategies and suggestions

5.1. Improve family functions

Families should strengthen education and guidance, enhance parent-child communication ability, and jointly create a harmonious family atmosphere. Family education guidance should pay attention to scientific and systematic, to help parents master effective education methods and skills. The improvement of parent-child communication ability not only helps to enhance the understanding and trust between family members, but also effectively prevents social media addiction among adolescents. Research shows that a harmonious family atmosphere can provide teenagers with the emotional support and security they need to reduce their reliance on social media. Families should focus on creating a warm and supportive environment to encourage young people to actively participate in family activities and enhance family cohesion.

5.2. Enhance the psychological quality of teenagers

Educators and parents should cultivate adolescents' self-awareness, improve their psychological resilience, and reduce the risk of social media addiction. The cultivation of self-cognition ability can help teenagers to know and evaluate themselves correctly, and enhance self-confidence and self-

esteem. The improvement of psychological endurance will help adolescents to adopt positive coping strategies in the face of pressure and challenges. Schools and families should work together to help adolescents build a healthy mental state and reduce their dependence on social media through mental health education and counseling. In addition, encouraging teenagers to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports and art will help them develop comprehensively and improve their psychological quality.

5.3 Social Support

Schools, communities and other social forces should work together to pay attention to the problem of youth social media addiction and jointly create a healthy social atmosphere. Schools should strengthen the management and education of students' use of social media, carry out relevant publicity and education activities, and raise students' awareness of the dangers of social media addiction. The community should provide more places and resources for youth activities to enrich their extracurricular life and reduce their dependence on social media. The government and social organizations should strengthen cooperation, formulate and implement relevant policies and measures, and build a youth social media addiction prevention and control system with the participation of the whole society.

6. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the relationship between adolescent social media addiction and family functioning, this study draws the following conclusions: Family functioning plays a key role in the occurrence and development of adolescent social media addiction. Inadequate family functions such as insufficient emotional support, lack of educational guidance, and inadequate life care will lead to unmet psychological needs of adolescents, reduced self-efficacy, and negative coping styles, thus increasing the risk of social media addiction. Therefore, in order to prevent and intervene social media addiction, it is necessary to improve the family function, enhance the psychological quality of adolescents and social support. Family education institutions, schools, communities and other social forces should jointly strengthen family education and guidance, improve parents' parent-child communication ability, create a harmonious family atmosphere, and cultivate adolescents' self-cognitive ability and psychological tolerance. At the same time, it is necessary to attach great importance to and solve the problem of adolescents' social media addiction, and build a prevention and control system involving the whole society. Thus, it can effectively reduce the addiction rate of teenagers' social media and promote their healthy growth.

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