

Influence of Social Media and Family Environment on Adolescent Anxiety Disorder

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Abstract. Adolescent anxiety disorder is a prevalent psychological disorder that has a substantial impact on the mental health and total development of adolescents. This study reviews and investigates the definition, characteristics, and the two essential etiological components of anxiety disorders in adolescents, namely social media and home environment. This is achieved by describing and analyzing prior research pertaining to anxiety disorders and adolescent mental health. The paper begins by defining adolescent anxiety disorder, noting that it is primarily characterized by excessive concern and tension, which is frequently accompanied by physical discomfort and emotional distress. Adolescents may exhibit social distress, avoidance behaviors, and academic difficulties that impair their daily functioning and learning. As a significant aspect of adolescents' existence, social media has a significant effect on their anxiety levels. Social anxiety, body image anxiety, and other stressors brought on by social media may aggravate anxiety symptoms. Moreover, online violence and negative remarks may have a negative effect on adolescents' mental health. Another crucial etiologic factor is the family environment. Instability, conflict, and tension in the home may increase the risk of adolescents developing anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders have also been linked to parental styles and economic circumstances. Although numerous scientific studies have been conducted on adolescents and anxiety disorders, additional research is required to shed light on the progression of mental health disorders in adolescents and bring them to the attention of society.

Keywords: Adolescent; Anxiety disorder; Mental health; Social media; Family environment.

1. Introduction

Anxiety disorders are typically characterized by excessive worry, apprehension, and dread regarding real or imagined future events or situations [1]. Anxiety is a normal human emotion that all individuals experience on occasion. When confronted with difficulties, challenges, changes, or difficult decisions, individuals may experience anxiety. Anxiety is an emotion that can alert individuals to peril and serve as a warning; however, anxiety disorders are dysfunctional responses to situations that cause anxiety [1]. The distinction between anxiety moods and anxiety disorders is that anxiety disorders can cause severe effects and distress in people's lives, health, and mental health [1].

Anxiety disorders in adolescents are characterized by the presence of persistent, excessive, and irrational anxiety during adolescence, as well as the physical and psychological responses that cause significant distress and impair their daily functioning. Typically, clinical evaluations and standardized questionnaires are used to quantify adolescent anxiety disorders. Commonly used to assess screening for anxiety-related mood disorders in children and adolescents, (SCARED; used for patients 8 years and older) [2] is a test administered to patients aged 8 and older. It is a 41-question self-assessment questionnaire pertinent to prevalent anxiety symptoms. The SCARED can be used to assess the severity and type of anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents, thereby facilitating the initial screening and diagnosis by a medical or mental health professional. Nevertheless, it is not the sole diagnostic criterion; a clinical evaluation is still necessary. Clinical consultations are a common technique of assessment. A healthcare professional or mental health professional will conduct an in-person interview with the adolescent to gather information regarding their symptoms, medical history, home environment, and daily functioning. This method can help determine the severity, duration, and daily impact of an individual's anxiety symptoms.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) outlines the characteristics of a variety of anxiety disorders, including adolescents' difficulty with social activities, which can cause them to avoid social situations, conversations, or expressing themselves, or to be overly sensitive to the judgments and criticisms of others; adolescents' attention spans and concentration, which can make it difficult for them to remain focused on tasks or learning [1]. Anxiety disorders are associated with a wide range of physical symptoms, including but not limited to headaches, muscle tension, stomach pain, sleeping difficulties, and fatigue. In most cases, there is no evident physical cause for these symptoms; however, anxiety can make them worse or even cause them to disappear. Typically, adolescents with anxiety disorders are excessively preoccupied with the possibility of unfavorable events and have persistent concerns about their own and others' well-being, health, and performance. In addition, adolescents may try to reduce their anxiety by avoiding situations or activities that could potentially cause them to feel apprehensive. They are able to disengage from social activities, avoid going out in public, avoid attending school, and avoid other situations that cause them anxiety. In order to distinguish anxiety disorders from other illnesses, it is necessary to recognize both the symptoms and the diversity of anxiety disorders.

2. The Impact of Social Media

The use of social media platforms enables users to communicate with one another, share content, and gain access to a variety of information sources. It is characterized by being real-time, ubiquitous, anonymous, and modifiable, which enables the dissemination of information to occur more rapidly and on a broader scale. The use of social media, which refers to a variety of internet applications that enable users to create and share content with others, has emerged as an integral aspect of the lives of young adults [3]. The use of social media provides not only a new projection surface for concerns related to the development of adolescents, but also a window into the previously concealed domain of adolescents' peer culture [4].

Although social media may be a window for maintaining contact with the outside world, this window does not filter out all false information. Consequently, when adolescents are exposed to all information, they may receive incorrect information and experience internalized symptoms, which can contribute to negative psychological issues. During adolescence, when self-identity is developing, concerns about receiving unfavorable feedback are heightened [5]. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the increasing availability of information causes adolescents to become dependent on social media out of fear of missing out on updates and social isolation, a phenomenon known as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Real-time, pervasive, and shared characteristics of social media contribute to the emergence of FOMO. People often see other people's exciting moments on social media while they themselves are doing less exciting or fascinating things, which can cause them to question the quality and satisfaction of their own lives. In an effort to avoid missing any information, adolescents overuse social media, which may exacerbate their anxiety and discontentment. It has been shown that social anxiety levels among adolescent social media users correlate positively with via the internet behavioral traits, including the tendency to judge a person's attractiveness based on others' YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat photographs [6]. During adolescence, adolescents using social media want to be popular and pursue a sense of social belonging. Online socialization is a continuous means that can be used to satisfy the ego, but it also carries an alluring risk because it can lead to addictive behaviors and exacerbate anxiety symptoms [5].

Chang et al. note that adolescence is a time period characterized by the occurrence of physical changes and the formation of an individual's sense of self, as well as heightened awareness of one's own and others' bodies [7]. The adolescent years are a crucial period for adolescents to develop their bodies and explore their sense of self-worth. Therefore, adolescents may develop skewed self-perceptions if they are overexposed to social media. Recent research by Fardouly and colleagues indicate that eating disorders are positively correlated with frequent comparisons of one's appearance to that of others on social media and with the belief that others are more attractive than oneself in

male and female adolescents. It is believed that these behaviors are linked to dietary disorders [6]. According to research, social media use is associated with reduced body image self-esteem. Adolescents may develop exaggerated expectations of the "perfect" body and appearance if they are exposed to glamorized images on social media and are encouraged to share them. Comparisons to "perfect" images in the media can result in feelings of self-denial and anxiety about one's own body shape and appearance. Misleading image dissemination and detrimental content on social media can also exacerbate mental health risks [5]. Teens are likely to indulge in extreme behaviors such as excessive plastic surgery, anorexia, alcoholism, self-harm, and substance addiction in order to conform to the social media image of the "cool" boy or girl. These anxiety-inducing behaviors can also result in persistent online harassment, creating a vicious cycle.

In addition to media messages, users of social media can also induce anxiety in adolescents. Social media has a very open space for comments and spreads very rapidly, but it can only show one side of a story, not the entire picture of a person or event. Due to the nature of the media, many individuals may engage in cyberbullying through the use of biased and excessively egotistical comments. Groups or individuals frequently utilize information and communication technologies, such as email, smartphones, text messaging services, and social media platforms, in order to support antagonistic, deliberate, and repetitive behavior toward defenseless victims. Cyberbullying is the term for this form of conduct [5,8]. Although individuals are unable to commit violent acts online, cyberbullying as well as verbal violence can cause significant psychological stress. According to recent data, 46% of adolescents with the surname have been the target of cyberbullying on various online platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and YouTube (see the July 14, 2023 article by C. Petrov on cyberbullying statistics). Almost half of adolescents have been cyberbullied online, according to the data. Cyberbullying victims have much greater anxiety levels than non-victims, according to a study that was carried out by Shalir et al. which establish the current prevalence of bullying behavior on social media [9]. The study also found that the younger the cyberbullying victim, the more likely they were to suffer from a mental illness and the greater rates of self-reported depression and anxiety they had. This is the evidence that the environment of social media can significantly influence or exacerbate mental illness. In order to maintain online safety, social media platforms have implemented features like reporting, barring, and deleting.

3. The Impact of Family Factors

Parents are the most influential factor on adolescents' cognitive and social competence and identity development [10]. As the family environment persists throughout a child's development, the family environment can impact a child's mental health in a positive or negative way. Guo et al. found that family dysfunction was a significant risk factor for anxiety in adolescents, particularly in early adolescents with an awoken need for autonomy that leads to more conflict with parents [11]. Instability in the family environment, ineffective communication between parents and adolescents, and negative relationships that develop between parents and children can lead to anxiety in adolescents. In addition, adolescent social anxiety disorder symptoms can be triggered by traumatic events that occurred during childhood (e.g., intrafamily conflict) [12]. When there is too much internal conflict in the family, children may grow up with family influences that make it difficult for them to form normal relationships, preventing them from socializing with others and from forming new relationships. Negative events in the family, such as witnessing violence, mental illness in the family, serious parental injuries or illnesses, parental divorce, parental illnesses, separation from parents, or parental separation, can also lead to anxiety disorders in adolescents [13].

The family environment, which is a fundamental microsystem, not only has a direct effect on the internalized and externalized behavioral problems of adolescents, but it also has an indirect effect by operating as a mediator between the individual and the social environment [11]. In addition to this direct effect, the family environment also has an indirect influence on these issues. As a child matures into an adolescent and then an adult, developing a healthy sense of self-worth is crucial to becoming

an independent person. People with lower self-esteem are more likely than those with higher self-esteem to exhibit negative emotions and maladaptive behaviors in response to elevated levels of stress [11]. In order for adolescents to be able to manage stress, one can conclude that they must grow up in a nurturing environment. Maracy et al. assert that a variety of familial contexts and circumstances can influence adolescents' personal perspectives, social development, and overall well-being [10]. These factors include a family's educational attainment, its overall functioning, and its financial situation. The educational method adolescents are exposed to can also have a substantial effect on both their individual characteristics and mental health.

Anxiety disorders in adolescents are significantly influenced by parenting approaches. Many studies have focused on the positive and negative effects of parenting styles. Parenting styles are typically situated on a continuum between two anchors, laxity and excessive punitiveness, with extremities in either direction being deemed negative [14]. Positive parenting is a parenting style in which the parent demonstrates affection, empathy, acceptance, and a responsiveness to the needs of their kid [14]. Authoritarian, authoritative, tolerant, and rejection-neglect style are the four broad classifications of homeschooling styles [15]. Different parental styles can cause adolescents to have varying levels of stress resistance. Scharf and associates found a correlation between demanding parenting and moderately elevated rates of symptoms of internalization, such as anxiety, depression, and withdrawal [16]. In an authoritarian parenting style, although the child is better able to comply and meet the necessary goals, the child does not have effective communication with the parent and the parent sets strict rules for the child [17]. Children who receive this type of upbringing will exhibit high levels of aggression, a lack of socialization, and a lack of autonomy [17], and they will be vulnerable to threats and anxiety due to low self-esteem. Although a tolerant educational approach gives children a great deal of freedom, children who grow up in such an environment can be self-centered and lack self-control [17]; as a result, they exhibit radical behaviors or thoughts in response to stress. Children who grow up in a rejection-neglect environment are more independent because their parents do not place excessive expectations on them. However, Xu et al. found a positive correlation between social anxiety in adolescents and parental rejection and overprotection [14]. Despite children's growing independence, the absence of parental instruction makes coping strategies less effective and makes maintaining or fostering social relationships difficult [17]. In contrast, authoritative parenting approaches instruct kids how to control their emotions and gain self-assurance [17]. Accordingly, authoritative parental styles are less likely to result in psychological issues in children, adolescents, and adults. Negative parental behaviors such as authoritarianism, harshness, pampering, and rejection can be learned through various parenting styles and serve as risk factors for adolescents who may develop anxiety disorders during the self-perception formation process.

In addition to the domestic environment and the level of education of the family, family finances may also affect adolescents' mental health. Kim et al. [18] found that adolescent risk for poor mental health outcomes was associated with a number of family socioeconomic issues. Family economic deprivation is characterized by a low socioeconomic status (SES) and a low family income, all of which can expose families to precarious social environments. As a result, adolescents may experience adverse environments, such as domestic or neighborhood violence, earlier or more often. The prevalence of mental health disorders increases as socioeconomic status decreases [19]. This grading effect is also supported by research demonstrating that low SES children are exposed to family instability earlier and more often, which explains their more frequent and protracted emotional distress and greater cumulative risk exposure compared to their higher SES peers [19]. This research demonstrates that a reduced socioeconomic status of parents can contribute to family instability and the inability to provide adolescents with the financial support they need to be stable during their formative years. Inadequate education, social unrest, and personal incapacity are a few of the potential causes of low family income. These elements can contribute to family conflict, weakened connections, and financial strain. Low-income families may also be unable to provide adolescents with a respectable educational environment and timely treatment for mental and physical illnesses, which can result in negative behaviors and negative emotional states. In the study conducted by Kim et al.,

it was determined that, in terms of anxiety, adolescents experiencing financial difficulties were more likely to report anxiety than adolescents from lesser socioeconomic backgrounds [18]. Consequently, it is comprehensible that family economic difficulties are more likely to lead to internalizing problems among adolescents.

4. Discussion and Suggestion

There are many factors in today's social milieu and family environment that may influence adolescents to develop psychological anxiety as they mature into adults. Teenagers now live in an age of information explosion in which they may receive thousands of communications per day on various social platforms. Teenagers are continually passively exposed to new information as opposed to actively acquiring it. Despite the fact that social media platforms can help adolescents interact and connect with peers, family, and the outside world, excessive use has been linked to anxiety. Due to their unique characteristics (searching for personal values and gaining self-awareness), adolescents are also at risk of losing themselves in the harsh standards propagated by various media outlets. The mental health of adolescents may be affected not only by the media's extreme standards, but also by other users of social media platforms who may cause anxiety online. The prevalence of cyberbullying and the management of online safety are essential for adolescents, as statistics indicate that nearly half of adolescents have experienced cyberbullying on different social platforms.

Teens are unable to escape their family environment, which may affect them for the remainder of their lives. Teenage development may be influenced by parental relationships, communication, emotional involvement, and behavioral control in the home environment. A stable family environment provides adolescents with emotional stability and the capacity to modulate their emotions independently. Another factor that affects adolescents' mental health is their upbringing. There are currently four distinct parenting styles, each of which results in a distinct form of child. It has been demonstrated that Authoritarian and Uninvolved parenting styles are more likely to result in anxiety issues. Therefore, homeschooling is a crucial factor in the maturation and development of adolescents. Lastly, the economic condition of the family appears to be one of the factors measured in the majority of studies on the effect of family environment on the mental health of children or adolescents, but there has been little analysis and investigation of the effect of family economic condition on adolescents' anxiety with the family. Unquestionably, families with lower incomes are more likely to experience mental health issues than families with higher incomes. Families with low incomes are less able to support their children's education and lives, so children may begin to experience social life early, assist their families with financial pressures, and therefore not complete their education, or they may not be able to try or participate in activities that their peers can try or enjoy. Due to a dearth of stable family support, adolescents may experience anxiety or low self-esteem.

Current research provides information about the environment in social media as well as factors in the home environment that may contribute to anxiety and how the home environment contributes to the avoidance of socialization that occurs as children grow into adolescents, but very little research has explored what specific factors in the home environment, such as the education of the family and the impact of familism, contribute to adolescents experiencing anxiety issues. However, there are numerous other adolescent mental health issues for which there is no effective treatment. While the family environment can help to alleviate negative emotions, family problems can lead to mental health problems, and if the family is an unavoidable environment, society and communities need to focus on how adolescents can maintain themselves in a negative family environment and protect themselves from domestic violence and abuse. Social media is also an unavoidable aspect of life; therefore, it is necessary to determine how to assist adolescents in filtering out false information on social media and whether social media platforms can recognize that their standards are too extreme and harsh and promote more neutral or welcoming content. The next step that media networks must take in order to make a clear decision and discover methods to correct the cyberbullying environment

is to determine what negative speech should be blocked in order to preserve online health. Protecting the mental health of adolescents by regulating the social environment and stabilizing the family environment is a crucial objective of psychology.

5. Conclusion

Anxiety disorders in adolescents are characterized by a variety of symptoms, including excessive concern about the future, fear of losing control, anxious moods, and physical symptoms. Teenagers may refrain from engaging in social or school-related activities or display obstinate behaviors that interfere with their daily lives and learning. After grasping the characteristics of adolescent anxiety disorders through prior research, this article summarizes and analyzes the factors that may trigger adolescent anxiety disorders. The article examines social media as an etiological factor, and the prominence of social media has exposed adolescents to new social pressures. Teenagers' anxiety disorder symptoms may be exacerbated by social anxiety, appearance anxiety, and cyberbullying. Second, the family environment is an important etiologic factor that is investigated. The family environment is essential for adolescents' mental health. The adolescents' psychological development is influenced by the family environment, parental styles, and financial situation. Adolescents are at a unique stage of development and growth; consequently, anxiety disorders during adolescence can have a significant impact on their future lives and education. Anxiety disorders in adolescents are a psychological issue requiring attention, with social media and the family environment serving as two of the most significant contributing factors. Providing timely psychological support and intervention to alleviate anxiety symptoms, help adolescents develop positive coping mechanisms, and promote their mental health and overall development requires early identification and intervention of anxiety disorders in adolescents. Families and society should collaborate to foster a supportive, empathetic, and welcoming environment for adolescents to better manage the challenges of anxiety as they mature.

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