

Potential Influencing Factors of Adolescents' Well-Being

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Abstract. There were many studies that study the cause and effect of mental illness, but there is a small number of studies that study well-being. Adolescence is a sensitive period that needs focus. This paper is a literature review that aims to summarize some potential factors that influence adolescents' well-being. This review will discuss adolescents' well-being from the following factors: family, social media, and peers. The relationship between parents and adolescents may be the core factor among the family factors that influence adolescents' well-being. How the Internet influences adolescents remains complex; the outcome of friend support varies, and the effect on adolescents' well-being depends on the behaviors of friends. Mindfulness is also discussed. Gaps of research are also identified.

Keywords: Well-being, adolescents, family, social media.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period in which many changes occur, which include changes in specific brain regions, changes in cognitive processing speed and intellectual functioning, and changes in emotional capacities, such as better at reading social cues [1]. The relationship between adolescents and parents also becomes more egalitarian over time [2]. Many researchers in the past focused on the treatment of mental illness, but there are very few studies that focus on positive features that make people flourish, especially adolescents. Positive psychology aims to change the previous view of curing the disease not only by healing but also by building positive qualities that make life worth living [3]. There were many studies about how environmental factors, such as family and social media, influence adolescents' well-being, but there is a relatively small amount of research on how personal qualities constitute adolescents' well-being. This paper aims to summarize the main focus of the researchers who investigate adolescents' well-being and identify the future direction.

2. Method

An extensive literature search was conducted using Google Scholar. The following search term and their derivatives were entered in relation to adolescents' well-being: "adolescents," "well-being," "family," "conflict," "relationship," "peers," "friends," "Internet," and "mindfulness." Studies were included if they: (1) include adolescents as participants; (2) refer to at least one of the influencing factors of adolescents' well-being; (3) topic include "well-being."

3. Literature Review

There is no universal definition of well-being. Many studies define well-being from different standpoints [4]. Ryff summarized six convergence features of psychological well-being theories: (1) Self-acceptance, (2) Positive relations with others, (3) Autonomy, (4) Environmental mastery, (5) purposes in life, and (6) personal growth [5]. Ryan proposed three basic psychological needs that foster well-being: competence (mastery of environment), autonomy (making one's own choices and taking responsibility), and relatedness (connected with others) [6]. Seligman identified five elements of well-being: positive emotion (the pleasant life), engagement(flow), positive relationships, meaning (belonging to and contributing to something that is larger than self, such as Politics, knowledge, community), accomplishment(achievement) [7].

For adolescence, Scales et al. identify seven indicators of thriving: (1) school success, (2), leadership, (3) helping others, (4) physical health, (5) delay of gratification, (6) Valuing diversity, (7) overcoming adversities [8]. In addition, Kern proposed the model of well-being that arises from Seligman model: (1) engagement, (2) perseverance, (3) optimism, (4) connectedness, and (5) happiness [9]. Ross defined adolescents' well-being as that adolescents can gain confidence resources and support in an environment where they can be healthily connected to others. They also proposed five domains that are interrelated for adolescents' well-being: (1) Good nutrition intake and mental and physical health, (2) contributions to others and interpersonal skills, (3) safety and supportive environment, (4) Skills and adequate resources to learn, (5) resilience and self-esteem [10].

3.1. Influencing Factors of Adolescents' Well-Being

3.2.1 Family

Family factors play an important role in adolescents' well-being. According to Offer, eating family meals with both parents is associated with more engagement, positive affect, and lower stress levels in teenagers [11]. This coincides with Skeer's research that regular family meals could protect against at least one type of risky behavior. Meier's study indicates that family meals contribute to adolescents' well-being and may depend on the quality of family relationships [12]. Adolescents who have high-quality parent-child relationships have less depression and misconduct when they frequently have meals with their parents. In contrast, those who have poor-quality parent-child relationships benefit little from frequent family meals. As Pinquart indicates, adolescents with secure attachment to parents have higher than average self-esteem and more satisfactory communication with their parents [13]. Traylor et al. also indicate that adolescents who have greater emotional closeness with their parents are less vulnerable to peer pressure than others [14].

There were also studies examining the role of the family structure. There are a large number of studies that demonstrate that adolescents in most other types of families are more likely to report overall lower health compared to those in two-biological-parent families [15, 16]. However, there are also studies that suggest that there is no association between family structure and adolescents' well-being. Mcfarlane indicates that an effective atmosphere and a caring and empathetic parenting style is the key determinant of adolescents' mental health [17].

Family conflict may play a role in adolescents' well-being. Based on Mcfarlane, adolescents in divorced families in conflict-free settings reported higher well-being levels compared to adolescents in intact families with constant conflicts. According to Fosco, adolescents in families with more conflicts exhibit a higher average level of depression, anxiety, and anger mood [18]. This may suggest that the quality of parents' relationship with adolescents is the core factor in all the factors that impact adolescents' well-being.

3.2.2 Social Media

Internet use also influences adolescents' well-being. Previous researcher found that internet addiction in adolescents is associated with lower-level well-being. Adolescents who are addicted to the internet express lower self-esteem, lower life satisfaction, and more depression symptoms [19]. Adolescents who are in a bad mood are more likely to browse the internet as a coping strategy, but they may be more likely to be addicted to the internet. Both Yu and Ma found that Poor mental health is the result of internet addiction rather than the cause, they also suggest that internet gaming disorder leads to poor psychological well-being [20]. Research suggests that internet communication is positively associated with adolescents' well-being when adolescents communicate online to maintain existing friendships, while internet communication is negatively associated with well-being when adolescents communicate with strangers online [21].

3.2.3 Peers

Peers also influence adolescents' well-being. Based on Bukowski, friendship become increasingly important for early adolescents [22]. Townsend indicates that intimacy in friendship is associated with higher self-esteem for adolescents instead of popularity, the number of being liked by peers [23].

Taylor indicates that friend support is important, but the result of friend support depends on friends' behaviors. Adolescents with less support from friends who have positive behaviors have higher well-being compared to adolescents with more support from friends who have maladaptive behaviors. This coincides with the guess of Scholte, who finds that adolescents with extremely low family support but high friend support appear to have more externalizing problems and report lower self-esteem. One interpretation is that friend support does not compensate for the lack of family support. Another interpretation is that adolescents may find friends who have similar characteristics to them. If friends have maladaptive behaviors, the effect of behaviors may be magnified, thus decreasing their well-being.

Adolescents have the tendency to evaluate themselves negatively. Mindfulness is defined as being aware of the feeling and sensing the present moment without judgment based on Siegel's study [24]. A number of studies have found that mindfulness is related to adolescents' well-being. Based on Ciarrochi's research, acting with awareness, emotional awareness, and experimental acceptance predicted an increase in adolescents' well-being [25]. Observing experiences did not predict adolescents' well-being. According to Bluth, cultivating mindfulness and self-compassion may enhance adolescents' well-being [26]. The interpretation may be that adolescents may be more likely to embrace their imperfections and embrace others, and they may have fewer conflicts with others and themselves, which may increase emotional well-being. According to Tan, mindfulness is positively associated with self-esteem and resilience among healthy adolescents,

Based on previous research, mindful parents may contribute to adolescents' well-being as adolescents were more likely to view parents as positive, secure attachment figures and build higher self-compassion and mindfulness. Also, a loving atmosphere and a feeling of significance in the family contribute to adolescents' well-being, whereas family conflicts, unfortunate events that happened to family members, or heavy dependence on family members were associated with adolescents' well-being [27, 28].

4. Implications

This paper has implications on family factors that influence adolescents' well-being. More research on how parents interact with adolescents needs to be conducted because the quality of parents and adolescents' relationship seems to be the core factor among all the family factors that influence adolescents' well-being [29, 30]. Parents may need to build a loving atmosphere at home and help adolescents establish a sense of significance that adolescents are important members of the family. Parents can allocate family tasks to adolescents to help them build a sense of significance. Parents also need to be supportive of adolescents when adolescents face adversities. Parents can seek professional help to contribute to the relationship between parents and adolescents. This paper also has implications on how peers impact adolescents' well-being. Intimacy with friends may have a greater impact on adolescents' psychological well-being than popularity. Schools and parents need to be aware of the behaviors of adolescents and their friends' behaviors. Maladaptive behaviors may have detrimental effects on adolescents' well-being. Schools and parents need to know why adolescents are attracted to friends with such behaviors and fix the behavior as soon as possible.

This paper has implications for future research. Much research focuses on the influence of the environment on adolescents' well-being, but there is a relatively small number of research on personal qualities that contribute to adolescents' well-being. Additionally, more research needs to be conducted to study well-being, as many theories of well-being are not grounded by evidence.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, family factors influence adolescents' well-being. Parents' quality with adolescents may be the core factor influencing adolescents' well-being. Adolescents who are addicted to the Internet have lower well-being. In addition, intimacy with friends influences adolescents' well-being,

and the outcome of friends' support can be negatively or positively associated with adolescent well-being. Mindfulness may also contribute to adolescents' well-being. Overall, much of the researches about adolescents' well-being focused on environmental factors such as family and social media. However, there is a relatively small number of studies that focus on the personal qualities that could enhance adolescents well-being. There is also a lack of all the factors that contribute to adolescents' well-being. Much of the research is about the association and not causation.

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