

Exploring Adolescent Mental Health Through Television: A Case Study of Adolescence (TV Series)

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Abstract

The emotional changes that teenagers experience during their growth process tend to be more concentrated during the adolescence stage, and the psychological problems they face are also more complex. The emotional, psychological, and physiological changes during this period will all affect their behavioral choices in real life. They not only have to deal with various emotional issues, such as social interactions with peers and other groups, but also face inner loneliness, depression, trauma, and identity issues. Of course, during this stage, teenagers will try to obtain more information from the outside world, including digital media. Therefore, when teenagers see this information on TV series, they will imitate or learn from it, thereby influencing their attitudes towards shaping mental health. *Adolescence* (TV series) is a psychological crime drama aimed at the teenage audience, and it reveals the real challenges faced by the teenage group through the psychological predicament of the protagonist, Jamie Miller. This review examines the emotional and identity construction of most teenage groups in their daily lives by analyzing the plot and characters of *Adolescence* (TV series), in order to explore its impact on the mental health awareness and understanding of teenage viewers.

Keywords

Teenagers; Mental Health; Identity Construction; *Adolescence* (TV Series).

1. Introduction

The emotional responses and relationship handling faced by the adolescent group are fully depicted in *Adolescence*. Specifically, *Adolescence* reflects the adolescents' cognition of identity, peer pressure, loneliness, family conflicts, and relationship handling through the personal struggles and experiences they encounter during their growth [1]. Undoubtedly, the emotional changes and cognitive processes that occur and develop during adolescence are significant. Adolescents need to empathize with others by recognizing their emotions or understanding the possible impact of their individual behaviors on others' emotions. Therefore, they can find ways of handling emotions from people of similar age in *Adolescence* and incorporate some good methods into their own behaviors. For instance, the mental health issues exposed by the protagonist Jamie in *Adolescence* are effective cases for studying the psychological development of adolescents [2]. The TV series reveals a large number of Jamie's emotional entanglements, inner conflicts, and emotional outbursts, which are all emotional problems that the adolescent group needs to face and handle in real life. The main plot of *Adolescence* revolves around a 13-year-old named Jamie Miller who is arrested for allegedly committing murder at school. The entire series delves into Jamie's personal experiences and encounters before and after the crime, and profoundly depicts how his identity as a teenager dealt with feelings of guilt and constructed his sense of self. This TV series attempts to strengthen the connection between the main characters and the audience through direct shots

and relationships. This is a way of mutual linking and can directly convey the emotional changes and impact of the characters in the TV series to the audience. In other words, it is an immersive sense of involvement and enables the audience to reflect on and examine their own choices and situations in real life based on the behaviors of the teenage characters in the TV series. Therefore, the teenage group, as the target audience of this TV series, can find their own reflections in the characters, thereby providing a more comprehensive perspective for teenagers to understand themselves during adolescence. Of course, this TV series also offers effective assistance in helping teenagers establish correct mental health management methods.

2. Observations and Analysis in Adolescence

This TV drama directly immerses the audience into the troubled behaviors of teenagers. In the first episode, it delved into Jamie, who was also a teenager, and his arrest for murdering a classmate. Such an exposure of an individual's behavior during adolescence is presented in a form that is both serious in terms of plot and hierarchy, and is intended to draw attention to their problems among the adolescent group, parents guardians, and school authorities. Furthermore, throughout the entire TV series, Jamie's emotional state and psychological defense mechanism were on the verge of collapse. He not only displayed a solitary and pathological mentality, but also fell into an emotional predicament of post-traumatic stress disorder. This image of teenagers struggling with mental health issues is vivid. Jamie is the focal point of the entire story in the series, and his inner conflicts have become the key to character development and shaping. When his criminal behavior stems from more deeply rooted psychological trauma, the sense of worthlessness and self-loathing that Jamie exhibits is a manifestation of his struggle and his attempt to move towards mental health. The exposure of Jamie's behavior and psychological state in *Adolescence*, including his emotional distress, provides a richer depiction of the struggles and loneliness of individuals during adolescence through the emotional connection with himself and others. Clearly, in *Adolescence*, the predicament Jamie faces and his act of murder are not directly defined as mental health issues, but the state he presents is similar to the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. When Jamie chose to lock himself in his room and immerse himself in the online world after encountering problems, his inner dynamics might have taken a more extreme and unpredictable direction. When his mother recalled Jamie's state, the sense of family support for teenagers completely vanished. For example, review. After he came home, he slammed the door, rushed upstairs, and sat in front of the computer review [2]. The mother's recollection of Jamie's behavior directly confirmed that this kind of closed-off mentality of teenagers who lack communication is pathological. This behavior of closing off his emotions can represent the phenomenon that occurs in the majority of the adolescent population when their cognition and psychology are not strong enough to support their choices. This is a manifestation of the harm caused by intergenerational communication, and it is also due to the fact that teenagers are unable to appropriately express their feelings when facing problems [3]. Moreover, *Adolescence* also serves as a direct warning that the silence and lack of emotional processing of adolescents can bring them more negative psychological consequences. Apart from the protagonist Jamie, the other characters in the series also profoundly reflect the predicament of teenagers regarding mental health issues. For instance, Jamie's parents having less communication with him and being unable to achieve effective communication are factors that have a crucial impact on the healthy development of teenagers' psychology [2]. This draws people's attention to the emotional supportiveness of Jamie's family and his growth environment, as well as the significance of dysfunctional family relationships for the physical and mental development of teenagers. In the school environment where Jamie is located, the indifferent or ignoring attitude of his classmates and

teachers towards his situation exacerbates Jamie's sense of loneliness and isolation, thereby worsening his psychological development [2]. Furthermore, an interesting relationship to consider is that between the detective and his son. When the detective's son was ridiculed in front of his father for his facial bone problem, his sense of inferiority and inner pain were revealed [2]. Facing different psychological issues and behaviors from Jamie, they effectively demonstrated the psychological trauma caused by physical defects (inherent factors) and insufficient family emotional support and poor communication (acquired factors) in teenagers. These issues deeply shaped their personalities and guided their behaviors, even violent ones. Therefore, factors such as social media, peer pressure, and intergenerational trauma, which are different in nature, all have an impact on the shaping of teenagers' personalities and self-identity [4]. When teenagers are confronted with academic pressure and emotional problems, the influence of family support, peer care, and the surrounding environment, such as schools, will guide their correction and choices. This might lead to a psychological counseling outcome where they are willing to communicate, or it could result in a psychological health predicament of isolating themselves and becoming more withdrawn.

3. The Impact of Adolescence on the Health Domain

The impact of *Adolescence* on the health of teenagers mainly manifests in the aspect of mental health, including the positive aspects of strengthening teenagers' empathy and awareness. However, it also has some potential negative effects, namely the stigmatization of psychological problems.

3.1. Positive Impacts

Specifically, Jamie's performance in the TV series conveys an image of emotional struggle and inner turmoil to the audience. As a result, for teenagers who have experienced trauma or have low family emotional support, they will see their own reflections in Jamie. The inner pain and genuine emotional turmoil in Jamie's heart are directly presented during the continuous shooting process, and this direct and unadorned depiction will inspire and enhance the mental health cognition of teenage viewers [5]. They will pay more attention to whether individual behaviors are in a positive and healthy psychological state in their lives. It is worth noting that Jamie's role in the TV series can also be a way to improve people's mapping of the pain that teenagers are experiencing, so that when they encounter such individuals, they can provide them with help and psychological support. Regarding Jamie's personality defects and psychological unhealthiness caused by his excessive exposure to the online environment, the in-depth exploration of him in the drama enables viewers to see the projection of their daily behaviors. Moreover, since Jamie was young when he was arrested, and he could not be accepted by the juvenile correctional system, it was crucial that the training center where he was detained before the trial had multiple evaluations by mental health experts [2]. This, to some extent, also serves as correct guidance for the teenage audience group, and it indicates that the cognitive and psychological development of teenagers requires a constructive solution for guidance, and when they encounter similar psychological problems like Jamie's, they must receive psychological treatment intervention immediately. In fact, the psychological dilemmas and challenges that teenagers encounter during their growth process are normal, and this is also a crucial way for them to shape their self-identity and build confidence [6]. When teenagers experience psychological problems due to various complex reasons, they need to have a correct awareness to receive psychological treatment or be properly guided. This is a necessary channel to help them establish a positive psychological development.

3.2. Negative Impacts

Of course, *Adolescence* may also have some negative impacts on young viewers and other groups. This is mainly because the audience may attribute Jamie's psychological unhealthy state to his dangerous or violent behavior, forming a causal relationship in their minds. As a result, the stigmatization of mental health issues reflected in this TV series will deepen. Since Jamie is more of a criminal character, it is implicitly reinforcing the audience's prejudiced perception of mental health problems and violent or criminal behaviors. If some viewers continuously strengthen this erroneous perception, even if they have some mental health problems in real life, they will avoid seeking treatment due to this stigmatization [1]. This unintentional negative impact will have a negative effect on certain groups and directly delay their timely access to psychological treatment.

4. Suggestions on How to Improve Media Contents

Therefore, in terms of presenting topics related to the psychological health development and challenges of the youth group, this TV series provides the public with more effective solutions through professional psychological counseling or treatment plans. By introducing the role of a psychological counselor or therapist, the show allows viewers to see Jamie's psychological problems and predicaments as positive guidance [7]. For groups with mental health issues, some positive treatment plans can be professional psychological counseling assistance, or they can be accomplished through self-assessment and reflection [8]. For example, some mindfulness exercises and peer support are practical ways for young viewers to optimize and manage their mental health. Another point that can be improved for *Adolescence* is to present more diverse mental health problems. The negative behavioral results brought about by Jamie's psychological predicaments and challenges are his act of murder, and this violent means or handling method is not the only emotional outlet and catharsis for patients with mental disorders. The television series, as a key form of media communication awareness, should present a diverse perspective. This can effectively help more teenagers understand the consequences of their actions or the corresponding psychological issues in real life, and also further adjust and optimize their behavioral choices. *Adolescence* reveals the psychological pain hidden deep within this group of teenagers by exposing their behavioral problems. People can use this as a reference point to analyze and clarify their own behaviors. When the teenage group encounters similar behaviors like those of Jamie, they will actively deal with their emotions and psychological problems, or provide peer support and care for those with similar experiences. All of these help teenagers adjust their behaviors and shape a more positive and optimistic mental state.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, *Adolescence* conducts a cautionary and profound exploration of the mental health of teenagers, and portrays Jamie, a 13-year-old, from his perspective. The inner traumas, guilt, and loneliness revealed by Jamie after his arrest for murder are manifestations of his insufficient understanding of his mental state. Moreover, he has not received adequate support from his family and peers, which further lowers his mental health level. This TV series does an excellent job of presenting the complexity of the protagonist Jamie's emotions, as some direct filming techniques enable viewers to connect more deeply with the protagonist. From the characters and conflicts in *Adolescence*, teenage viewers can develop a stronger sense of empathy and confront the psychological dilemmas and loneliness of individual teenagers. As a highly promotional digital media, this TV series should have a positive impact on teenagers by addressing their mental health issues and social behaviors, including adding supportive content on mental health care and rehabilitation for improvement. This is the

responsibility that digital media should undertake in the future development and progress of society and the advancement of the Internet. They need to disclose the inappropriate behaviors and mental health dilemmas of teenagers, and also responsibly provide them with channels to solve problems.

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