

Adolescent Mental Health Status and Its Influencing Factors

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Abstract Background In recent years, the detection rate of mental issues among adolescents has been continuously rising. The mental health problems of adolescents have become increasingly prominent, showing a trend of universalization, diversification, and younger age involvement. This has brought widespread and profound negative impacts on adolescents, families, and society, becoming a focal point of social attention. **Objective** This paper aims to explore the mental health status of adolescents and its influencing factors, with the hope of providing reference suggestions for the educational work of adolescents. **Methods** Using the keywords "adolescents + mental health + influencing factors," a literature search was conducted on search engines such as Pubmed, Web of Science-SSCI, Social Science Research Network (SSRN), LexisNexis, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, CNKI, Baidu Scholar, and Wanfang Database for full-text articles published in the past 20 years. **Results** A total of 35 articles were included, with 19 in English and 16 in Chinese. Previous literature shows that most adolescents have positive and stable emotions, but 10% to 30% of them exhibit mental issues including cognitive biases, self-awareness problems such as self-perception dissonance, low self-esteem, and low self-acceptance, emotional issues such as anxiety and depression, various traditional and novel behavioral problems, as well as gender identity disorders. The incidence, manifestations, and development trends of adolescent mental health problems are influenced by various factors, including demographic characteristics, socio-cultural features, family environment and upbringing, school education, and personal traits. **Conclusion** Paying attention to adolescent mental health issues is of great significance for cultivating sound personality, preventing mental illnesses, and promoting social harmony. Adolescent mental health problems are complex and diverse, requiring the joint efforts of the entire society. Through in-depth analysis of influencing factors and the implementation of effective measures, we can promote the development of adolescents' mental health and lay a solid foundation for their future.

Keywords: Adolescents, Mental Health, Influencing factors

Adolescent mental health is a crucial issue related to the future of the nation, social harmony, and family happiness. With the rapid development and transformation of society, the adolescent population is facing unprecedented psychological stress and challenges, and their mental health status has increasingly garnered widespread attention [1]. In recent years, consistent research both domestically and internationally has shown that adolescent mental health issues are on the rise, with emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem becoming major factors affecting their healthy growth [1, 2]. According to the "2022 Adolescent Mental Health Survey Report" released by the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences [2], the detection rate of depression risk among primary and secondary school students in China is 14.8%, with junior high school students particularly prominent, showing a significantly higher detection rate compared to primary school students. This data not only reveals the universality of adolescent mental health issues but also highlights their characteristics of being younger and more complex, urgently requiring in-depth discussion and effective intervention from all sectors of society.

Adolescence is a critical stage of rapid development in individuals' physiology, psychology, and social roles. The mental health status during this period directly affects their academic achievements, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, and future career development. However, the impact of current adolescent mental health issues extends far beyond the individual level, affecting families, schools, and even the entire society. For example, psychological problems may lead to a decline in academic performance, deterioration of social skills, and even extreme behaviors such as self-harm or suicidal tendencies, which not only cause profound harm to personal growth but also increase the burden on families and society [2]. Therefore, understanding the current status and causes of adolescent mental health issues has become an urgent task for educators, parents, and policymakers.

The factors influencing adolescent mental health are intricate and multifaceted, encompassing multiple levels such as family, school, society, and individual aspects [2-3]. As the primary environment for adolescents' growth, the family atmosphere, educational methods, and economic status all exert profound impacts on their mental health. Harmonious family relationships foster emotional security, whereas conflicts or neglect may induce anxiety and low self-esteem. School factors are equally crucial; academic stress, teacher-child dynamics, and peer interactions directly affect adolescents' emotional state and sense of self-worth. Furthermore, rapid societal changes, such as the information explosion and multicultural impacts, further exacerbate the psychological burden on adolescents, posing additional challenges in the formation of values and social adaptation. These intertwined factors collectively shape the trajectory of adolescent mental health.

Faced with this complex situation, this article aims to systematically analyze the latest state of adolescent mental health, delve into its influencing factors, and propose targeted countermeasures. By integrating domestic and international research findings and empirical data, this article not only reveals the current status and trends of adolescent mental health issues but also emphasizes the importance of multidimensional intervention, providing scientific basis and practical guidance for families, schools, and society. We hope that through this research, we

can contribute to promoting adolescent mental health and building a supportive growth environment, helping them grow into physically and mentally healthy future pillars.

I. The current status and underlying causes of adolescent mental health issues

1.1 Current situation analysis

1.1.1 The prevalence of mental health issues

(1) Overall global and domestic data

According to a report by the World Health Organization, approximately 10%-20% of adolescents globally suffer from mental health issues, and the onset age is showing a trend of decreasing [1, 3].

According to the "Report on the Development of Chinese National Mental Health (2021-2022)" [4] released by the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the rate of poor mental health among urban adolescents is 12.63%, while in rural areas it is 11.90%. Depression is particularly prominent, with the detection rate of depression among junior high school students exceeding 30% in 2024 and reaching 40% among high school students. Going back to 2022 [2], the detection rate of depression risk among adolescents was 14.8%. Among them, the detection rate of mild depression risk was 10.3%, and the detection rate of severe depression risk was 4.5%. The risk of depression increases with grade, from about 10% in primary school, to about 30% in junior high school, and then to nearly 40% in high school. Another survey covering 12 cities nationwide [5] found that approximately 15% of adolescents aged 13-18 have varying degrees of psychological problems, with anxiety, depression, and social disorders being the most common. It is evident that the incidence of mental health issues among adolescents is increasing year by year.

(2) Regional, urban-rural and female-male disparities

The mental health level of adolescents in the western region is significantly lower, with higher scores in indicators such as depression, loneliness, and mobile phone addiction compared to those in the eastern and central regions. The detection rate of depression among rural adolescents is higher than that in urban areas [2, 4]. However, adolescents with registered residence in urban areas exhibit higher levels of anxiety compared to those in rural areas. In addition, the reduction in depression risk among female adolescents (54%) is significantly greater than that among males (25%) [2, 4].

1.1.2 The increasing prevalence of mental health issues among younger age groups

As mentioned in the previous text [2], psychological issues begin to emerge during primary school, and their incidence tends to increase as students progress through the grades.

The junior high school stage is a high-risk period for psychological issues. Surveys [2, 4] indicate that depression, anxiety, and social disorders are most common among junior high school students, with a detection rate of depression exceeding 30%. In high school, the detection rate of depression reaches up to 40%, and the detection rate of severe depression increases significantly. Students at this stage face multiple challenges such as academic stress and interpersonal relationship difficulties, leading to the highest incidence of psychological issues.

Meanwhile, school bullying occurs more and more frequently, becoming another "killer" of adolescent mental health. According to Zhang Wenxin's monograph (2022) [6], the incidence of school bullying in China is two or more times per month. The proportion of primary and secondary school students involved in school bullying varies across different regions. In some areas, the proportion of students who have been bullied is as high as 23.0%, the bullying-to-bullied ratio is 19.9%, and the proportion of bullies is 0.8%.

1.1.3 Diversification of problem manifestations

Adolescent mental health issues not only manifest as emotional disorders, but also encompass behavioral problems (such as internet addiction and violent tendencies), cognitive biases (such as low self-esteem), and gender identity issues. The interplay of these issues exacerbates the risk of psychological crises [1-4].

(1) Mood disorder

The onset age of emotional disorders is continuously advancing, with depressive symptoms emerging during primary school. In middle school, emotional disorders have become a common psychological issue. The incidence rate of depression among adolescents is twice that of boys [2-4]. This gender difference is particularly evident in late adolescence, possibly related to girls' tendency to attribute stress internally. The anxiety levels among urban adolescents are generally higher than those of rural adolescents with registered residence [2-4]. However, due to the scarcity of medical resources in rural areas, the actual diagnosis rate may be lower than in urban areas. On the other hand, emotional disorders among adolescents exhibit a "hidden" characteristic, with some children appearing normal in real life but venting emotional fluctuations in cyberspace. Due to parents' insufficient understanding of emotional disorders, imperfect school screening mechanisms, shortage of professional medical resources, and the negative impact of the online environment, the incidence rate of emotional disorders among adolescents has been increasing year by year. However, the diagnosis and treatment rates are not high, especially in developing countries. Taking China as an example, 64% of newly diagnosed patients were previously misdiagnosed as "rebellious," with an average delay of 17 months from symptom onset to diagnosis and a treatment waiting period of up to 23 days [7].

① Global average

According to the World Health Organization's 2025 report [1, 8], approximately 15% of adolescents globally exhibit significant psychological distress, with a 2.6% incidence rate of depressive disorders among adolescents, and 30% experiencing subclinical depressive symptoms.

② Incidence rate in China

According to the data from the "Epidemiological Survey of Mental Disorders in Chinese Children and Adolescents" published in 2021 [9], among school students aged 6-16 in China, the prevalence of mood disorders reached 17.5%, with anxiety disorders accounting for 4.7% and depressive disorders accounting for 3%. A

nationwide survey in 2023 [10] revealed that approximately 16% of adolescents exhibited symptoms of mood disorders such as anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression. The latest research in 2025 [11] indicated that the detection rate of depressive symptoms among middle school students ranged from 20% to 30%, while the detection rate of anxiety symptoms reached 25% to 35% [10].

(2) Behavioral issues

Adolescent behavioral issues can be categorized into destructive and non-destructive behaviors. Destructive behaviors encompass aggressive actions (such as fighting, losing temper), cyber deception, and property infringement; whereas non-destructive behaviors include interpersonal relationship distress, rule violations (such as truancy and disciplinary infractions), and confrontational behaviors [12]. Among these, cyber deception [1, 3] represents a novel type of destructive behavioral issue. In today's digital age sweeping across the globe, the Internet has become a crucial platform for adolescents' learning, entertainment, and social interaction. However, the virtuality and anonymity of cyberspace also provide a breeding ground for adolescents to engage in deceptive behaviors. From prankish dissemination of false information, carefully orchestrated online fraud, to the combination of cyberbullying and deception, the trend of adolescent cyber deception is diversifying and occurring at younger ages. This not only inflicts psychological and financial harm on victims but also severely affects the healthy growth of adolescents and the establishment of a social trust system.

① Incidence of behavioral problems among Chinese adolescents

The incidence of behavioral issues among Chinese adolescents is approximately 20%-30%, with a detection rate of problematic behaviors ranging from 20% to 44% [11]. The incidence of aggressive behaviors is relatively high, with fighting being the most common among adolescents. Simultaneously, the incidence of digital behavioral issues such as internet addiction and cyberbullying has significantly increased, becoming a significant public health concern [13, 14].

The incidence of destructive behaviors (such as fighting and aggression) among male adolescents is significantly higher than that among female adolescents, while female adolescents may exhibit a higher proportion of non-destructive behaviors (such as rule violations) [8, 13, 14]. This difference may be related to gender role orientation and socialization processes.

② Comparative data on behavioral issues among international adolescents

The incidence of problematic behaviors among adolescents abroad is approximately 15%-25%. Compared to China, the incidence of behavioral issues among adolescents in Western countries is relatively lower, yet emerging behavioral problems such as internet addiction are becoming increasingly prominent [8, 13].

Cultural differences in the incidence of problematic behaviors among adolescents abroad are evident. In collectivist cultures, adolescent behavioral issues may manifest more as rule-breaking and oppositional behaviors; whereas in individualistic cultures, aggressive behaviors may be more prominent [8].

(3) Cognitive bias

Cognitive biases refer to systematic errors caused by subjective factors in the information processing of individuals, which are particularly prominent among adolescents [15]. Adolescence is a critical stage for the rapid development of cognitive abilities, but it also brings various challenges such as self-cognition and social adaptation. Studies both domestically and internationally have shown that adolescents exhibit significant cognitive biases in risk perception and decision-making, which not only affect their daily life and learning but may also have long-term impacts on their mental health and social adaptation [15].

The incidence of cognitive biases among adolescents is approximately 20%-30% [15]. Specifically, the incidence varies across different manifestations.

① One-sided interpretation

Approximately 15% of adolescents tend to interpret social phenomena in a one-sided manner [16]. For instance, when they witness celebrities gaining high attention through hype, they may believe that any means necessary can be employed to achieve fame. This cognitive tendency can easily lead to the following three cognitive biases: Firstly, in terms of risk perception, adolescents generally exhibit an "optimism bias", meaning they believe that negative events are far less likely to occur to themselves than to others. For example, in the context of cybersecurity risk perception, adolescents tend to believe that they are far less likely to encounter online fraud than others, and this bias is particularly evident among junior and senior high school students. Secondly, in decision-making, adolescents display an "anchoring effect", meaning they rely too heavily on initial information when making decisions, leading to outcomes that deviate from reality. Thirdly, they also exhibit a "confirmation bias" in decision-making, which refers to the tendency to seek and accept information that aligns with their own views while ignoring or rejecting information that contradicts them.

The degree of one-sided interpretation varies depending on cultural backgrounds and social environments [15]. For instance, in Western countries, adolescents tend to have a relatively rational understanding of health risks. However, in developing countries, due to limitations in educational levels and access to information, there are significant deviations in adolescents' perception of health risks.

② Negative attribution

Negative attribution refers to an individual's tendency to attribute failures or negative events to internal, stable, and uncontrollable factors. This attribution pattern may lead to feelings of helplessness, low self-esteem, and avoidance behaviors [16]. Negative attribution during adolescence often manifests as unreasonable explanations for academic failures, interpersonal conflicts, or family problems. For example, a teenager who performs poorly in mathematics may attribute their poor performance to the belief that they are "not cut out for mathematics," which not only undermines their motivation to learn but may also trigger long-term feelings of low self-esteem. Some adolescents tend to make negative attributions when encountering negative social events, leading to extreme viewpoints. For instance, upon seeing a conflict on the street, they may perceive society as full of violence and insecurity, ignoring the fact that most people are friendly and abide by social order.

The psychological mechanism of negative attribution involves cognitive dissonance theory [15] and social learning theory [15]. Cognitive dissonance theory posits that when an individual's behavior is inconsistent with their self-perception, it can lead to psychological discomfort, which is then alleviated through attribution adjustment. For instance, a teenager might attribute their failure in an exam to "lack of ability" to avoid acknowledging the fact that they did not put in enough effort. Social learning theory, on the other hand, emphasizes that adolescents form their own attribution patterns by observing and imitating the attribution behaviors of others. For example, negative attribution behaviors of parents or peers may influence adolescents through imitation or social learning mechanisms.

The causes of negative attribution among adolescents can be attributed to four aspects [16]: Firstly, family factors, such as authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles, neglectful upbringing, financial difficulties within the family, and internal conflicts. Secondly, school factors, including severe academic pressure, poor teacher-student relationships (neglect or inappropriate negative evaluations by teachers), poor peer relationships, or negative attribution from peers. Thirdly, social factors, such as negative media portrayal of events, frequent social comparisons on social media, and cultural values emphasizing "fatalism" or "luck determinism". Lastly, individual factors, such as low self-efficacy, anxiety, or depressive emotions

③ Self-cognitive bias

Self-awareness refers to an individual's perception and understanding of themselves and their relationship with the external world, and serves as a crucial foundation for mental health [16]. Adolescence is a phase during which an individual's self-awareness develops rapidly. However, influenced by physiological, psychological, and social factors, it is prone to self-awareness biases. These biases manifest as overly high or low evaluations of one's own abilities, appearance, personality, and other aspects, subsequently affecting emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships.

Self-cognitive biases manifest in the following three forms [17]. Firstly, overvaluation of self, such as overconfidence: some adolescents develop an overly high self-evaluation due to successful experiences or excessive praise from family. They may exhibit a self-centered tendency: adolescents may pay excessive attention to their own needs and ignore the feelings of others due to enhanced self-awareness; they may reject criticism: they adopt a defensive attitude towards feedback from others, viewing criticism as an "attack". Secondly, undervaluation of self. For example, feelings of inferiority: some adolescents experience feelings of inferiority due to their appearance, academic performance, or family background. Self-denial: they pay excessive attention to their own shortcomings and ignore their strengths. Avoiding challenges: they avoid difficult tasks due to fear of failure. Lastly, self-cognitive instability, such as emotional evaluation and external-dependence evaluation. The former refers to that self-evaluation is influenced by emotional fluctuations, alternating between confidence and inferiority. The latter refers to they rely excessively on feedback from others to adjust their self-cognition. For example, a certain adolescent becomes confident due to praise from peers and feels inferior due to criticism, lacking a stable standard for self-evaluation.

(4) Gender identity issues

Gender identity refers to an individual's internal perception of themselves as female, male, transgender, or another gender identity. It differs from the concept of biological sex based on physiological characteristics and is related to gender-based cultural roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes [18]. The development of gender identity begins in early childhood and is consolidated during adolescence and early adulthood. It is a specific aspect of the development of personal identity [19]. Gender identity during adolescence can predict the trajectory of later gender role development. If properly guided during this stage, it can contribute to the healthy growth of adolescents [20].

Gender identity issues refer to the psychological and behavioral characteristics of individuals who do not identify with or prefer their biological gender, or who exhibit transgender traits, and even desire to change their biological gender[12]. Large-scale studies abroad have shown that 1% to 3% of adolescents identify as gender nonconforming or transgender[21]. Domestic research indicates that approximately 2.6% of male college students and 15.6% of female college students tend to dislike their biological gender. A survey of a transgender community reveals that about 10% of adolescents exhibit gender identity confusion before puberty, but most are identified during adolescence due to physical changes. Many adolescents conceal their true feelings due to social stress, leading to an actual incidence rate that may be higher than statistical data [20, 22]. 70% of transgender individuals experience gender dysphoria, with most having had thoughts of suicide. 90% of families are unable to accept their children's transgender identity, resulting in strained family relationships[23-24].

Adolescents experiencing confusion around their gender identity are prone to sexual psychological distress, which manifests in two main ways. Firstly, there is gender identity conflict. Adolescents may experience persistent distress due to a mismatch between their biological sex and psychological identity, such as self-doubt expressed as "Why was I given a male body? I am clearly a girl!" Secondly, there is confusion around sexual orientation, where some adolescents may develop complex emotional experiences towards either the same sex or the opposite sex during their growth [23-24].

1.1.4 Increased social attention to mental health issues among adolescents

In recent years, the mental health issues of adolescents have increasingly become a focal point of social attention. From the spread of anxiety and depression on campus, to discussions of extreme behaviors online, and to escalating parent-child conflicts within families, the mental health status of adolescents has evolved from an individual issue into a phenomenon with widespread social impact. Concurrently, with the popularization of mental health knowledge, society's awareness of adolescent mental health has deepened. Coupled with the shift in societal perception of mental health from "treatment only when sick" to "prevention first," the attention paid to adolescent mental health issues has rapidly increased [25].

(1) The volume of media coverage has seen a significant increase

The volume of reports related to "adolescent mental health" in 2023 increased by 50% compared to 2022, indicating a significant increase in media attention towards adolescent psychological issues [26]. This attention is

not only reflected in the quantity but also in the depth of reporting. For instance, in September 2023, CCTV.com reported on "back-to-school syndrome", providing a detailed analysis of the psychological adjustment process for adolescents transitioning from summer vacation to school, along with practical coping suggestions. Such in-depth reporting aids the public in gaining a more comprehensive and objective understanding of adolescent mental health issues.

(2) Policy support has been intensified

In 2023, the Ministry of Education and 16 other departments jointly issued the "Special Action Plan for Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Student Mental Health Work in the New Era (2023-2025)" [27], elevating student mental health work to a more prominent position. This policy document clarifies a "four-in-one" work system encompassing mental health education, monitoring and early warning, counseling services, and intervention and disposal, reflecting the government's high priority on this issue. The increased support from policy is a significant indicator of heightened social attention.

(3) The public discourse has been gaining momentum

In 2023, discussions related to "youth mental health" on social platforms increased by 60% compared to 2022, reflecting a significant increase in public attention to this issue. Such discussions are not limited to professional fields, but have also extended to ordinary families, schools, and communities. For example, many parents share their experiences and coping methods for children's mental health issues on social media, forming a widespread social discussion network [26].

II. Causes of mental health issues among adolescents

2.1 Academic stress and competitive environment

In contemporary society, academic pressure and competitive environment have emerged as significant factors that cannot be overlooked in the growth of adolescents. From primary schools to high schools, and even extending to the universities, adolescents seem to be embroiled in a war without gunsmoke, burdened with heavy academic loads and striving forward in fierce competition. This phenomenon not only affects their physical and mental health but also reflects deep-seated issues within the education system and societal values [28].

2.1.1 The multiple sources of academic stress on adolescents primarily stem from the following three aspects.

(1) The burden of family expectations

The family serves as the primary environment for the growth of adolescents, with parental expectations often emerging as the foremost source of academic pressure. Numerous parents regard their children's academic achievements as the sole criterion for measuring their future success, a perspective that is particularly pronounced in East Asian cultures [28]. For instance, in China, numerous families are willing to invest substantial resources in providing extracurricular tutoring for their children, enrolling them in various supplementary classes from the primary school stage onwards. This phenomenon of excessive focus on academic performance, termed

"overparenting" by psychologists [11], deprives children of the space for independent exploration and growth, leading adolescents to feel helpless and anxious when confronted with academic challenges.

(2) Enhancement of school education

The design of the school education system has also inadvertently exacerbated academic stress [28]. The score-oriented evaluation mechanism forces students to devote a significant amount of energy to exam preparation, neglecting the cultivation of comprehensive qualities. Especially during high school, competitive stress escalates further, requiring students not only to excel academically but also to engage in various extracurricular activities to enhance their competitiveness. This "comprehensive competition" model has led many students to be under constant high pressure, even resulting in psychological issues.

(3) The promotion by societal culture

Broader sociocultural factors also shape the academic pressure on adolescents. In a highly competitive social environment, academic performance is seen as the primary pathway for social mobility, a belief deeply ingrained in many people's minds. The media's excessive portrayal of "success stories" further reinforces the erroneous perception that "only high scores can lead to success"[28], making adolescents prone to self-doubt and anxiety when facing academic setbacks.

2.1.2 The dual-sided effect of the competitive environment

(1) Positive aspects: motivation and growth

A moderate competitive environment can indeed stimulate the potential of adolescents, prompting them to continuously challenge themselves and pursue excellence. Numerous studies have shown that competition within a reasonable range can cultivate adolescents' time management skills, stress resistance, and self-regulation abilities. These skills not only contribute to academic success but also lay a solid foundation for their future integration into society [29].

(2) Negative aspects: psychological and health crises

However, when the competitive environment becomes excessively intense, it can lead to a series of negative impacts. Prolonged exposure to high pressure can result in psychological issues such as anxiety and depression among adolescents, potentially triggering severe health crises [28, 30]. In recent years, academic pressure has emerged as a significant factor contributing to adolescent suicide [30]. Furthermore, excessive competition may also distort adolescents' values, causing them to view academic achievement as the sole goal in life, while neglecting other crucial aspects of life [30].

2.2 Family Environment and Parent-Child Relationship

Family environment and parent-child relationship are the two most important elements of family factors. Family factors have a profound and complex impact on the psychological state of adolescents, which can either

alleviate their stress and maintain the mental health, or exert stress and undermine the mental health. The role of family factors in adolescent mental health is specifically manifested in the following six aspects.

2.2.1 Physical environment and psychological sense of security

The physical environment of the home serves as a fundamental condition for the psychological development of adolescents, directly influencing their sense of psychological security [31]. A clean, organized, and nurturing family space can significantly enhance adolescents' sense of psychological security. Studies have shown that adolescents residing in crowded, noisy, or privacy-deficient family environments are more prone to developing anxiety and depressive symptoms. For instance, in families with multiple children, limited living space may exacerbate conflicts among siblings, leading to emotional instability in adolescents. Conversely, having an independent and comfortable private space can make adolescents feel respected, thereby enhancing their sense of self-worth.

2.2.2 Economic status and psychological stress

Family economic status is another significant factor affecting the mental health of adolescents. Families facing economic difficulties may encounter issues such as unstable housing and scarce resources, and these pressures can be directly transmitted to adolescents [32]. Economic stress may prevent parents from meeting their children's educational needs, such as providing extracurricular tutoring or participating in school activities, thereby triggering feelings of inferiority and frustration in adolescents. Simultaneously, parents' economic anxiety may also manifest as excessive expectations for their children, increasing academic pressure [33]. However, it is worth noting that economic status is not a decisive factor, and positive family communication and emotional support can mitigate the negative impact of economic pressure on mental health to some extent [32, 33].

2.2.3 Cultural Atmosphere and Value Shaping

The family cultural atmosphere plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' values and worldviews [31, 32]. A family immersed in a learning environment can stimulate adolescents' curiosity and foster their intellectual development. For instance, through reading, discussion, and participation in cultural activities, parents can cultivate their children's critical thinking and creativity. Furthermore, the family cultural atmosphere also encompasses moral and ethical education, where parents' behavioral examples and value impartation directly influence adolescents' moral judgments and behavioral norms. A positive cultural atmosphere can assist adolescents in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships and enhancing their social adaptability.

2.2.4 Communication Quality and Emotional Expression

Parent-child relationship serves as an emotional bond between adolescents and their parents. Parent-child communication is the core of this relationship, and high-quality communication can facilitate adolescents' emotional expression and mental health. Effective communication encompasses not only verbal exchanges but also non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions. By listening and empathizing, parents can assist adolescents in understanding and managing their emotions, thereby reducing emotional fluctuations [32]. For instance, when adolescents face academic stress, supportive communication from parents can bolster their coping abilities, preventing anxiety and depression. Conversely, a lack of communication or poor

communication may lead to feelings of loneliness and misunderstanding among adolescents, elevating the risk of psychological issues [32].

2.2.5 Parental Behavior and Psychological Modeling

Parental behavior serves as a direct model for the psychological development of adolescents. The mental health status of parents directly influences children's emotional management and behavioral patterns. If parents exhibit anxiety or depression, adolescents may learn these negative emotions through observation, thereby affecting their own psychological state. Furthermore, parenting styles have a profound impact on adolescents' self-esteem and self-efficacy. An authoritative parenting style, which combines warmth and rules, can promote positive development in adolescents, while authoritarian or permissive parenting styles may lead to behavioral issues and mental health challenges [34].

2.2.6 Family structure and relationship stability

Family structure and relationship stability are crucial components of parent-child relationships [32]. Nuclear families (parents and children) typically provide stable emotional support, whereas single-parent or blended families may face additional challenges. In these families, parents need to make more efforts to maintain stable parent-child relationships to ensure the mental health of adolescents. For instance, single parents may need to balance work and parenting responsibilities, which may lead to reduced parent-child interaction. However, through positive parent-child activities and emotional support, these families can also cultivate mentally healthy adolescents.

2.3 The impact of misleading online information on adolescents' mental health

2.3.1 Direct harm of online information misguidance to adolescents' mental health

(1) Misleading information exacerbates psychological issues

Misleading information on the internet directly exacerbates psychological issues among adolescents. When adolescents encounter incorrect descriptions or glorified content related to suicide and self-harm, they may imitate such behaviors, leading to psychological crises [1, 3, 25]. For instance, incorrect interpretations of suicidal behavior on some online forums or social media platforms can trigger despair among adolescents, even prompting them to attempt extreme actions. Furthermore, misleading information can also exacerbate symptoms of anxiety and depression. For example, the excessive promotion of a "perfect life" on the internet may induce feelings of inferiority and stress in adolescents.

(2) Misleading information undermines social support networks

Misinformation on the internet can undermine the social support network of adolescents [1, 3, 25]. When adolescents develop incorrect cognitions and behaviors due to misleading information, they may lose close relationships with family, friends, and teachers, leading to the collapse of their social support system. For instance, adolescents may clash with their family members due to incorrect advice on the internet, or neglect real-life interpersonal relationships due to excessive reliance on virtual socializing, thereby exacerbating loneliness and psychological stress.

(3) The negative impacts of social networks

① **Social comparison and self-esteem**

Information presented on social networks is often carefully curated, and this "perfected" virtual world is prone to trigger upward social comparison among adolescents [32, 35]. They see the "perfect" lives of others through social media, leading to feelings of inferiority and anxiety. Xi Jie's research indicates that adolescents who use social networks more and invest more emotionally in them tend to have poorer sleep quality. Furthermore, through the mediating effect of upward social comparison and self-esteem on social networking sites, it has a significant positive predictive effect on depression [35].

② **Cyberbullying and psychological stress**

The anonymity and widespread nature of social networks facilitate cyberbullying. Adolescents may experience verbal attacks, malicious comments, and other bullying behaviors on social media, and these negative experiences can severely damage their self-esteem and mental health. Studies have shown that excessive social network use can also increase the risks of cyberbullying, online harassment, and online stalking for adolescents. Individuals who spend more time and use social networks more frequently are more vulnerable to cyberbullying [1, 3].

2.3.2 The impact of misinformation on the accessibility of mental health services

(1) Misleading information hinders the willingness to seek help

Misleading information on the internet, such as stigmatizing psychological issues as "weakness" or "abnormality," severely inhibits adolescents' willingness to seek help. Many adolescents choose to bear their psychological distress alone rather than seek professional assistance, fearing negative labeling. This phenomenon of self-stigmatization causes adolescents to miss the golden opportunity for early intervention, leading to the exacerbation of psychological problems. For instance, some adolescents may develop the misconception that "my problems are not worth mentioning" after seeing incorrect interpretations of psychological issues on social media, thereby avoiding psychological counseling services [1, 3, 25].

(2) Misleading information disrupts service selection

Misleading online information also leads adolescents to choose informal help-seeking channels, such as relying on anonymous online forums or confiding in friends, instead of seeking professional psychological counseling. These informal channels lack systematicness and professionalism, making it difficult to provide effective psychological support. For instance, adolescents may attempt inappropriate self-help methods due to incorrect advice on the internet, such as relying excessively on online games or virtual socializing to relieve stress. These behaviors not only fail to help solve problems but may also trigger more severe psychological crises [1, 3, 25].

2.3.3 The impact of misleading online information on the effectiveness of mental health services

(1) Misleading information diminishes trust in services

Misleading information on the internet may undermine the trust of adolescents in mental health services. When adolescents encounter incorrect depictions of psychological therapy, such as "psychological counseling is

useless," they may develop doubts about professional services and refuse treatment. This lack of trust significantly diminishes the effectiveness of mental health services and may even lead to service disruptions. For instance, some adolescents may cancel their appointments or refuse to continue treatment after reading negative reviews about psychologists online [1, 3, 25].

(2) Misleading information affects service providers

Misinformation on the internet not only affects adolescents but also indirectly impacts mental health service providers. When service providers (such as psychologists) encounter incorrect psychological knowledge or methods, it may lead to a decline in service quality and effectiveness. For instance, some non-professionals disseminate unproven psychological intervention techniques online, which may mislead service providers to adopt inappropriate treatment methods, thereby affecting the recovery process of adolescents [1, 3, 25].

2.4 Indirect effects of peers on adolescent mental health

2.4.1 Peer support and psychological resilience

Positive peer relationships can provide adolescents with emotional support and a sense of belonging, enhancing their resilience. In social networks, adolescents engage in two-way communication and interaction by sharing photos and experiences, thereby gaining more online social support and peer feedback. This proactive social network usage behavior can effectively promote mental health and enhance positive self-evaluation [32].

2.4.2 Peer pressure and behavioral imitation

Peer relationships have a significant imitative effect on the behavioral patterns of adolescents. In social networks, adolescents are more likely to be exposed to peer behaviors such as smoking and drinking, and are influenced by peer stress. Research indicates that both the process of peer selection and the process of influence jointly contribute to behavioral changes in adolescents. Among these, the selection process plays a greater role in non-reciprocal friendships, while the influence process intensifies over time. This imitative effect may lead to issues such as internet addiction and competitive mindset among adolescents [32].

2.4.3 Peer interaction and social competence

Social networks have transformed the social interactions of adolescents, and the ease of online communication may contribute to the decline in offline social skills. Adolescents may be more inclined to express themselves in the virtual world, neglecting face-to-face interactions in real life. This decline in social skills could potentially impact their adaptability in the physical world, leading to distant interpersonal relationships and social anxiety [32].

2.5 The impact of physiological changes and self-cognition on adolescent mental health

2.5.1 Impact of physiological changes

(1) The impact of physiological changes on self-cognition

① Acceleration of physical development and self-image cognition

Adolescence marks a significant acceleration in physical development, during which adolescents experience rapid changes in height, weight, body shape, and the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics. These changes prompt them to start paying attention to their body image and form a preliminary self-perception. However,

differences in the speed of development can lead to polarization in self-image cognition: adolescents who develop early may feel inferior due to a mismatch between physical maturity and mental maturity, such as early puberty in girls or early appearance of Adam's apple in boys, which can easily lead to self-denial of "I am not mature enough"; while adolescents who develop later may experience self-denial due to "not fitting in", feeling that they are "abnormal", gradually solidifying the cognition of "I am different from others" and affecting self-acceptance. This cognitive difference may lead adolescents to feel isolated in social interactions, thereby affecting their mental health [16].

② Sexual maturity and self-role identity

Sexual maturity is a significant hallmark of adolescence, marked by the development of sexual organs and a surge in sex hormones. Adolescents begin to develop curiosity and interest in sex. On one hand, they have a strong desire to explore sexual issues, but without scientific guidance on sexual knowledge, this may lead to sexual deviant behaviors or even sexual crimes. On the other hand, their emotional attraction towards the opposite sex intensifies, and they are eager to understand the opposite sex and gain attention. These changes prompt adolescents to deepen their understanding of gender roles, learn to interact with the opposite sex appropriately, and thereby form a more comprehensive self-role identity. However, sexual maturity may also bring shame and panic, such as physical changes triggered by first ejaculation or menarche, which may exacerbate their psychological fluctuations and affect their self-evaluation and emotional stability [16].

③ The interaction between physical changes and social evaluation

The physical changes during adolescence not only directly impact self-perception but also indirectly shape self-image through social evaluation. Adolescents become aware of the reactions of others to their physical changes, such as the changing attitudes of parents and teachers towards their growth. This interaction prompts them to construct a new social self, demanding more respect and independent space, which may lead to conflicts and alienation from parents. Positive or negative feedback from social evaluation also significantly affects adolescents' self-esteem levels, thereby impacting their mental health. For instance, positive evaluations may enhance self-confidence, while negative evaluations may trigger feelings of inferiority and anxiety [16].

(2) The impact of self-awareness on mental health

① Self-awareness enhancement and mental health promotion

With the enhancement of self-awareness, adolescents are better equipped to engage in self-regulation, accelerate the refinement of their personality traits, and foster the improvement of their cognitive abilities. This development enables them to delve deeper into their inner world, form a comprehensive and objective self-perception, and thereby establish a solid foundation for mental health. For instance, when confronted with stress, they can cope by engaging in self-reflection and adopting adjustment strategies, thereby enhancing their psychological resilience. The enhancement of self-awareness also assists adolescents in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, proactively adjusting their behavioral patterns, and promoting the formation of positive psychological states [3, 16].

② Self-cognitive bias and psychological crisis

However, biases in self-cognition may trigger psychological crises. Physiological changes during adolescence may lead to fluctuations in self-evaluation, such as disharmony in physical development or motor coordination, which can easily lead to feelings of inferiority and decreased self-esteem. Physical issues such as acne may also affect appearance, further reducing self-evaluation. At the same time, the immaturity and instability of adolescents make them prone to negative changes under the influence of external factors, such as fluctuating self-perception, alternating between confidence and depression. Such cognitive biases may lead to psychological issues such as anxiety and depression, and even trigger self-harm behaviors [3, 16].

③ The correlation between self-awareness and social adaptation

Self-perception also profoundly influences adolescents' social adaptation. Positive self-perception aids them in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships and enhancing social adaptability; whereas negative self-perception may lead to social withdrawal or excessive dependence on peer approval. For instance, adolescents may feel uneasy due to self-image issues in social networks, which in turn affects their offline social skills, leading to distant interpersonal relationships and social anxiety. Such issues may further exacerbate stress, forming a vicious cycle [3, 16].

III. Conclusion

The mental health status of adolescents presents a complex trend of both positive and negative aspects. On one hand, most adolescents show a positive development trend in emotional stability, self-awareness, and social skills. They are able to objectively evaluate themselves, maintain positive and stable emotions, and hold optimistic attitudes towards life, learning, and the future, demonstrating strong adaptability and psychological resilience. This positive mindset lays a solid foundation for their growth and makes them more capable of facing challenges. On the other hand, the psychological issues faced by some adolescents cannot be ignored, and they are becoming more complex, occurring at younger ages, and showing a high incidence trend. Cognitive biases, errors in self-awareness, low self-acceptance, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and other emotional disturbances are relatively common, and some adolescents even exhibit thoughts and behaviors of suicide. These issues not only affect the growth of adolescents but may also trigger a series of social adaptation problems, such as declining academic performance, strained interpersonal relationships, and increased behavioral issues.

Adolescent mental health issues constitute a complex social phenomenon, influenced by various factors such as family, school, society, and individual characteristics. To enhance the mental health of adolescents, concerted efforts from families, schools, and society are essential. This involves creating a healthy and harmonious environment for their growth and establishing effective mechanisms to safeguard their mental well-being. Simultaneously, adolescents should bolster their resilience and proactively tackle difficulties. Only by doing so can we foster comprehensive development among adolescents, thereby laying a solid foundation for social harmony.

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