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Social Media Usage of Holistic Well-Being in Adolescence: A Review

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Abstract. An increasing number of studies indicate that teenagers' overall wellbeing will be impacted by their use of social media. In order to examine the connection between social media use and teenagers' overall wellbeing, this systematic review searches the pertinent literature. This review adopts the method of literature retrieval. The retrieval database is Web of Science, and the literature published since 2021 is included. After screening 899 articles, 13 studies were included. In this review, the sample of adolescents is limited to the age of 12 to 20, and holistic well-being is divided into three aspects: body image, mental health, and subjective well-being. The research method and questionnaire mode generally have shortcomings in the included research, and deeper and more detailed research is still needed in the future. Future research should also combine clinical samples and objective measurement tools to clarify the concept definition, so as to more clearly clarify the mechanism and consequences of the impact of social media use on adolescents' overall well-being.

Keywords: Social media usage, Holistic well-being, Adolescent, Problematic social media use

1. Introduction

With the increasing popularity of the Internet, social media continues to iterate, and audio, short video, live broadcast and other functions are rapidly popularized, enriching the content of social media platforms [1]. At present, youth's accesses to social media is getting earlier and earlier, and the daily use duration is increasing [2], failure to effectively intervene and actively guide this situation will easily lead to problematic social media use (PSMU) [3]. Adolescence is a critical transitional period of severe remodeling of nerves and psychology. At this stage, adolescents' well-being generally decreases, and the risk of psychological problems such as depression, emotional disorder and interpersonal sensitivity increases significantly. In the past decade, teenagers' mental health has continued to worsen [3].

A study collected the social media usage of 479 teenagers for 100 days and found that 60% of them had negative effects on both the psychological level and subjective well-being, 13.6% of teenagers had dual differentiation. This suggests that social media use has both positive and negative effects on people [4]. According to this study, social media's benefits cannot be disregarded and must be thoroughly assessed, even though the majority of literature research focuses more on the

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negative effects on teenagers. Another study used an online questionnaire to collect 1204 reliable samples of data from young Chinese people. According to this study's findings, the more frequently and intensely young people use social media, the more severe their concerns about employment [5]. This undoubtedly reflects that in the process of using social media, teenagers will inevitably be affected by social media information because of their comparative psychology, which will interfere with their psychological state. These studies demonstrate the need to specifically separate the responses of all facets of teenagers' overall well-being to the usage of social media and identify practical guidance systems that can be put into practice in accordance with various research findings.

However, recent studies have focused on how the use of social media has a negative impact on adolescents' subjective well-being, mental health and body image. Mental health, body image and subjective well-being are naturally integrated into the concept of holistic well-being, which makes it clearer how the use of social media affects these three aspects. This review not only provides practical suggestions for clinical treatment and prevention, but also supplements the research perspective by focusing on the mechanisms and methods of social media's dual impact on holistic well-being. As a result, this review collects relevant studies conducted in the past five years and summarizes the mechanisms of social media use affecting adolescents' holistic well-being. In view of this, the research question of this study is the impact of social media use on adolescents' holistic well-being.

2. Method

2.1. Research method

This research mainly conducted systematic review method. The research was performed on 7/2026 in the Web of Science database. The keywords included "social media use", "adolescents", and "mental health", with the logical operator "AND" applied.

Four inclusion criteria conducted which including: (1) social media platforms commonly used in daily life (such as Instagram, TikTok, Xiaohongshu, etc.); (2) holistic well-being primarily includes three aspects: physical health, mental health, and subjective well-being; (3) research involving teenagers with an average age of 12 to 20 years; (4) publications released within the last five years.

2.2. Theoretical framework

Because well-being is a multi-dimensional and multi-meaning term. This study takes a holistic approach to well-being, encompassing subjective well-being, mental health, and body image. Especially at the level of mental health, this review not only pays attention to the negative impact of social media use on mental health, but also pays attention to the positive impact and the reaction of psychological problems on social media usage.

3. Main Content

3.1. Social media usage and body image

In this era of rapid development of science and technology, social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Xiao Hongshu have become an indispensable platform for teenagers to express content. Previous studies have shown that teenagers' use of social media is closely related to their body image. Using the cluster sampling method, Shuang Li, Xiaomei Chen, and their colleagues

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distributed electronic questionnaires to 2600 college students from two public institutions located in various locations. They then utilized the negative body image scale to gauge the students' use of social media. In the end, it was discovered that social disengagement was strongly correlated with negative physical intention and social media issue use [1]. In this study, body image exists as an intermediary variable. Because of the inappropriate usage of social media, combined with social comparison theory, teenagers are dissatisfied with their appearance, which leads to negative body image, and ultimately affects the display of their social behavior. Furthermore, additional research has demonstrated that social media has emerged as a site where bullying related to weight occurs frequently. Teenagers are more likely to develop a poor body image and eating disorder behavior when they experience physical shame and weight bullying on the Internet since their minds are still developing and it is more difficult for them to discern and understand online information [6].

Poor social media use might result in negative body image and can externalize into specific social behaviors, lifestyle choices, and food habits, all of which have an adverse effect on physical health. According to the previously cited studies. However, moderate use of social media will also bring positive hints to body image, which will also be beneficial to physical health. After the COVID-19 pandemic, a study used non-probabilistic convenience sampling to send questionnaires to 251 college students majoring in sports science to investigate their cognition of the role of social media in guiding and promoting sports activities. Teenagers who use social media covertly absorb professional fitness content, which effectively relieves their health issues of being sedentary and not exercising because of the high pressure of the course, according to the questionnaire's results and the theory of use and satisfaction. This indicates the positive role of social media in guiding body image [7].

According to the aforementioned studies, social media use directly affects physical health and body image. How to play the positive role of social media use and curb its negative impact is a problem that the government and universities should consider in the future.

3.2. Social media usage and mental health

Social media use and mental health are strongly correlated, according to a number of prior studies. This evaluation divides it into two categories: the impact of social media use on mental health and the impact of mental health conditions on social media use.

3.2.1. The impact of social media use on adolescent mental health

Because of the constant improvements in new media and mobile communication technology, social media has profoundly changed people's daily attitudes and actions. Teenagers' reliance on social media has grown dramatically due to peer communication, online learning, and the drive for personalized content. Ting Jin, Yanshan Chen, and Ke Zhang use online surveys to gather information from 1204 Chinese youth in order to investigate the impact of social media use on job anxiety. The findings indicate that employment anxiety can be positively predicted by social media use intensity [5]. According to the study's findings, young people who are exposed to a lot of information about social media will unavoidably become dissatisfied with their current circumstances as a result of social comparison theory, which can lead to psychological issues like anxiety. There are many similar studies on college students, which have important implications for college students to adjust their mental conditions. For instance, Hala and Ellatif Elsayed once investigated the connection between social media use, academic achievement, mental health, and college students' FOMO. This study uses a cross-sectional questionnaire survey to gather data from

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521 college students using a quantitative correlation research approach. It is found that fear of missing is strongly positively correlated with social media use. However, in terms of the relationship with mental health, the study concluded that the relationship was not one-way and overall negative: that is, if you take the initiative to use it, it can meet social needs and alleviate psychological internal friction to a certain extent; On the contrary, passive browsing (such as only watching push content without interaction) will strengthen psychological internal friction [8]. Furthermore, research by Christian Montag, Zsolt Demetrovics, and Jon D. Elhai shows that passive use raises the risk of problematic social media use [9]. The majority of this research demonstrates how passive social media use can result in teenage social media problems and even have an impact on their mental health. However, in order to investigate the connection between passive social media use and internal distress, Maria Tibbs, Sonya Deschênes, Peter van der Velden, and Amanda Fitzgerald extracted the four rounds of supporting questionnaire data from the Social Sciences Longitudinal Network Panel run by centerdata at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands between 2019 and 2022 [10]. This study shows that passive use has no relationship with individual internal fluctuations. On the one hand, this study does not specifically distinguish the use of certain types of social media, on the other hand, it also provides new ideas and guidance for related research and clinical practice: when studying the impact of passive use on psychological problems, we should distinguish the content we browse or use, and then analyze the specific problems.

3.2.2. The impact of psychological issues on social media usage

Over the past 15 years, the global level of adolescent mental health has continued to decline. While the majority of research focuses on how social media use affects teenagers' psychological issues, some investigate whether teens with mental illnesses utilize social media differently. Amy Orben, Andrew K. Prybylski, Tamsin J. Ford, Luisa Fassi, and Amanda M. Ferguson chose more than 3000 teenagers in England. The professional clinical evaluators used the multi-source standardized diagnostic tool to determine whether the subjects had mental diseases to study whether there were differences in their use of social media. Adolescents with mental illness spent more time on the online self-assessment, according to the findings [11]. This demonstrates that teens' psychological issues do affect their use of social media. Other studies have found a positive correlation between the level of problematic social media use and pleasure-driven social media use [9].

3.3. Social media usage and subjective well-being

Teenagers are at an important stage of physical and mental development, their world outlook and values are not stable, and their risk perception and digital media literacy are insufficient. As a result, social media use is more likely to influence their opinions and emotions. Therefore, studies on how teens' use of social media influences their subjective. In addition to providing a theoretical basis for families and society, well-being is essential for safeguarding the mental health of teenagers. Social media's effects on subjective well-being have been the subject of contradictory studies in the past. J. Loes Pouwels, Ine Beyens, Loes Keijsers and Patti M. Valkenburg recruited 745 teenagers in grades 8 and 9 from a middle school in southern Holland. After layer by layer screening, 297 valid samples were selected. The questionnaire was collected using the explosive measurement design. It was concluded that the impact of social media on personal subjective well-being has personality differences, which can not be generalized, but should be analyzed in detail [12]. Another study collected 44211 daily diary data from 479 teenagers, and the result showed that 60% of teenagers' emotional well-being, self-esteem and friendship intimacy were damaged synchronously after using

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social media (Unified negative effect), indicating that social media is an important inducement for most teenagers' psychological distress [4].

4. Discussion

With the development of science and technology and the full coverage of electronic devices, it is necessary and inevitable for teenagers to use social media. However, due to the instability of teenagers themselves, schools and parents have the responsibility to guide their proper use of social media. Therefore, this review collects the relevant research results in the past five years, aiming to provide strong theoretical support for parents and schools.

Inappropriate social media use has been the subject of numerous studies. The effects of social disengagement on college can be implicitly represented by body image. The impact of inappropriate social media use on specific social behaviors and physical image [1]. The chance of problematic social media use increased with the percentage of passive use, according to other research that looked at the concept [9]. These studies offer compelling evidence in favor of the particular application of social media usage guidelines for teenagers. For example, school management and teachers should issue a unified mobile phone management policy for the whole school, covering students and teaching staff; Set up media literacy and emotional literacy courses throughout the primary school stage, and organize classroom discussions on healthy online use behavior; Parents' lectures were held simultaneously to reduce the risk of online injury [13]. However, these suggestions are mostly at the theoretical level and lack specific practical experience. With a large number of teenagers and individual behavior differences, it is difficult to take the same measures to effectively solve this kind of problem. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to systematically explore which parenting methods, campus policies, government controls, and environmental factors can effectively reduce teenagers' use of problematic social media.

As mentioned above, a large number of studies on Teenagers' social media use have concluded that passive use will have a negative impact on Teenagers' physical and mental health. However, most of these studies use inter individual analysis, that is, to observe the average change trend of the whole sample (group level), which can not capture the internal fluctuations of each individual over time and covers up the real impact of social use on psychology at the individual level. The study by Maria Tibbs, Sonya Desch ê nes, Peter van der Velden, and Amanda Fitzgerald found no longitudinal association within individuals with passive social media use [10]. The main reasons for this opposite conclusion are as follows. Firstly, this study did not provide a detailed breakdown of passive browsing content, such as whether the browsing content is of entertainment type, knowledge type, or peer experience type; Secondly, the reasons for teenagers' passive browsing have not been investigated. For example, some teenagers choose passive browsing for the purpose of leisure and relaxation, while others become numb to browsing information due to being pushed by big data; Thirdly, all data is self-reported, making it difficult for teenagers to accurately grasp their specific situation and resulting in measurement bias; Finally, the questionnaire of this study was taken from the COVID-19 epidemic, and the data were inevitably affected by the home conditions during the epidemic.

The prior substantial literature on the detrimental effects of social media usage and the ambiguous definition of problematic social media use is supplemented by this review, which incorporates over 10 articles. Moreover, by integrating research conclusions, it was found that personalized measures should be taken to guide teenagers, which is a group with a large age span and a large number of people, to use social media correctly. Based on these findings, this study proposes classifying teenagers into three age groups: under 13, 13 to 18, and after 18. For teenagers

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before the age of 13, schools should play an important role in enlightening them, guiding them to have a correct understanding of social media use and holistic personal well-being during their immature stage of physical and mental development, and increasing control over their social media use [9]. Adolescents aged 13 to 18 are in a complex and sensitive stage of adolescence, during which they are easily confused by the abundant information on the internet and require parents to pay more attention and communicate in a timely manner. Teenagers over 18 years old have entered a new stage of their lives, possessing relatively high judgment abilities, but also facing new problems and academic and employment pressures. Universities should hold relevant psychological lectures to alleviate the pressure on college students.

5. Conclusion

Teenagers' holistic well-being is strongly associated with their use of social media. The impact of social media use on teenagers' overall well-being from three perspectives—body image, mental health, and subjective well-being—is summarized in this review, which examines thirteen relevant studies.

During the collection process, it was found that there were also some shortcomings in previous research, mainly including the following points. Firstly, the majority of studies adopt cross-sectional designs, which cannot capture the dynamic causal processes of variables over time and cannot strictly derive causal relationships. In the future, research can conduct longitudinal tracking to better observe the long-term evolution and explore the impact of social media use on holistic well-being. Secondly, most surveys are conducted through questionnaires, mostly using self-report scales, which can lead to subjective research results because of issues such as recall bias and self-awareness bias. Thirdly, the social media measurement tools used in different studies are not completely consistent, which may affect the authenticity and stability. In the future, a unified measurement method can be adopted. Finally, the divergent evaluation criteria constrain the development of research, and in the future, there is a need to unify the criteria for determining problematic social media usage [9].

Future research should focus on the following aspects. First, ESM tracking should be repeated across different periods to enhance the reliability of data [9]. Secondly, in the design of research methods, the use of multi-source objective behavior data with a subjective scale overcomes the limitations of single self-report. Third, in future research, we should unify measurement methods to measure and evaluate the impact of social media use on adolescents' holistic well-being more accurately. Drawing under the same measurement standard is more reliable, which makes up for the research gap. Finally, relevant research should be combined with clinical samples to clarify more clearly the mechanisms and consequences of the impact of social media use on the holistic well-being of adolescents.

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