

Peer pressure Influences Adolescents' Internet Addiction

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Abstract:

The focus of the study is on peer pressure, which is an important factor in adolescent development and how it interacts with Internet use and dependence. Adolescents' growing reliance on the Internet has led to peer pressure not only through traditional social interactions but also over extensive digital networks, resulting in psychological health problems and patterns of excessive online participation. This study gives measures to prevent Internet addiction and reduce free influence by identifying different types of free stress and influence on Internet usage. Finally, the study describes the relationship between Internet dependency and peer pressure among teenagers, so that we can better provide parents, educators, and policymakers with the necessary knowledge and tools that can support adolescents in managing their online interactions and maintaining a healthy balance between their digital and real-life experiences.

Keywords: Peer pressure; adolescent Internet usage; Internet addiction; parent attachment; social interactions; peer involvement

1. Introduction

Nowadays, as high technology develops rapidly, it has entered the digital era, and the general impact of the internet on adolescents has attracted significant academic and societal attention. This research focuses on introducing how peer pressure, a general and influential factor in adolescent development, interacts with internet use and dependency. The quick increase in the number of teenagers using online activities reshapes their social interactions and causes worries about their mental health and behavioral patterns. Although peer pressure is connected with direct social interactions in tradition, it has transformed with the advent of digital platforms. Adolescents today are not only affected by their direct areas, but also by the extended networks they can access through social media. This expansion of influence not only puts pressure on teenagers but also facilitates their excessive use of the Internet, which often leads them to rely on the Internet.

This research is predicated on the different types of peer pressure, ranging from positive reinforcement of group norms to outright coercion, that can significantly influence the degree of internet use and the tendency to develop an internet addiction among adolescents. The mechanisms of this influence are complex and multifaceted, involving factors such as the need for social approval, fear of missing out, and the facts of an idealized online persona.

In addition, this research is devoted to analyzing the path mechanism through which peer pressure affects Internet use, offering a detailed examination of how adolescents

navigate their social environments and how these environments may predispose them to unhealthy levels of internet engagement. This research seeks to provide suggestions that could prevent teenagers from getting internet addiction and reduce the negative effects of peer pressure among teenagers, by identifying different types of peer pressure influence and analyzing their impacts on using the internet.

This study is an important study, which can cause further discussion about adolescent mental health and internet addiction. By elucidating the link between peer pressure and internet dependency, we can better provide parents, educators, and policymakers with the necessary knowledge and tools that can support adolescents in managing their online interactions and maintaining a healthy balance between their digital and real-life experiences.

2. Peer pressure

Peer pressure is rampant among our teenagers nowadays, many research has shown that peer pressure is the cause of many mental health problems, and often leads to teenagers' bad behavior; among them, bad Internet use and Internet addiction have always been wide concern by the academic community, there has researches showed the harm to teenagers, an important phenomenon in lives of teenagers reflected by using narcotics or smoking (Rukundo, 2016). This research will devoted to reviewing the specific effects of different types of peer pressure on adolescent Internet use and its path mechanism, so that

it can provide useful reference for subsequent intervention on adolescent Internet addiction prevention and peer pressure. Nowadays, as the population grows, so does the competition between peers, more and more teenagers live under the shadow of peer pressure, and peer pressure has been a popular topic among teenagers. Peer pressure in peer involvement means teenagers tend to value their peer relationships highly because those relationships provide a sense of belonging and social connection. Involvement with peers is seen as a crucial way to establish and maintain these relationships in their eyes. For the purpose of successful and smooth peer involvement, teens may feel pressured to conform to the expectations and norms of their peer group. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by peer pressure in encouraging a person to change his or her attitude, values, or behavior in order to conform to particular group norms (Johal et al., 2023). During adolescence, children spend more time with their peers than when they are younger, teenagers will place a higher value on peer relationships. Involvement should always be regarded as the key tool for strengthening and developing peer relationships, peer pressure often be induced by the pursuit of the purpose of strengthening and developing peer relationships. In terms of expansion, in small groups, Aloysius Rukundo, who had research on teenagers' peer pressure, said that teenagers seek out friends who engage in similar activities who appear to be their role models and, in turn, are influenced by such activities and peer support remains an important phenomenon in lives of teenagers reflected by using narcotics or smoking (Rukundo, 2016). It means that teenagers often misconduct when they are in the pursuit of group identification and social connection, and peer pressure often is induced. On a larger level, especially in big cities, frequent school outings and frequent after-school recreational activities between students like parties may become involvement for students to have group identification and social connection, but the family conditions of adolescents vary greatly in the context, and peer pressure is induced by that. Peer pressure based on social norms refers to the requirements for consistency in the social environment experienced by students in the process of autonomous actions. Most of the time, because of the social form of the teacher teaches teenagers social norms that make them feel out of place, which is a form of peer pressure. Adolescent students have the desire to maintain their own unique actions and pursue to be unique and different. However, social norms shaped by social culture through teachers and peers in the school environment always constrain and limit their demand for showing their personalities. In that case, they have to face and bear the environmental scrutiny and evaluate them, thus, they may feel the pressure from the

involvement. Peer pressure in the family refers to the pressure that children suffer from their parents to compare them with their peers in terms of academic performance, daily behavior, and other aspects. In East Asian families, under the extremely high educational requirements of teenagers, there are conflicts between the external collective social activities and the family concept that peers can only compete with each other through study, so peer pressure appears in academic and social activities. All of these cases mean teenagers seek to construct identity in the pursuit of group cognition, then throw themselves into the network where do not need to pursue peer relationships through any form of involvement. These different type of peer pressure all leads to a bad influence on teenagers. To start with the misconduct, Aloysius Rukundo pointed out that when teenagers are in a group, their personalities are masked by the group making them subject to persuasion. The results of his study are that teenage hood is a period peculiarly susceptible to external influences (Rukundo, 2016). It means that when teenagers feel the peer pressure of belonging to a small group, they have to engage in certain criminal or deviant behaviors, such as smoking and drinking, for a long time, and it is encouraged to spread these vices among the teenage population. Secondly, the peer pressure grown in such large group activities will encourage children to constantly make spontaneous comparisons between peers or themselves in terms of material family background, which may encourage the hatred of and the mentality of keeping up with the comparing mentality among teenagers, making them pay more attention to these achievements in surface, such as money, ignoring things that are more important to them, including grades, friendships. Thirdly, the peer pressure of social norms may suppress children's personality and lead to serious identity confusion in the process of conformity and self-expression, because they do not know how to adapt to such social norms while maintaining their own personalities. In addition, peer pressure in the family will increase conflict, because parents' comparison between teenagers with their peers is often aggressive to teenagers, such as poor academic judgment, which may lead to teenagers' fear to face of competition because of their sense of self-worth and self-confidence are weakened by parents; moreover, personal connection will be weakened because of the conflicts between parents and teenagers.

3. Internet Usage's Influencing Factors

Nowadays, the internet represents a fundamental shift in how people connect with one another, gather information, and conduct their day-to-day lives, as the the Pew Research Center showed from their over twenty years of re-

search, internet usage has been nearly universal for young adults (Pew Research Center, 2024). A variety of factors influence adolescent Internet usage, which can be concluded in two aspects, proximal factors and distal factors. On the one hand, many proximal factors affect adolescent Internet usage, the immediate accessibility of devices and emotional responses to stress are two proximal factors affecting adolescent Internet usage. First of all, the immediate accessibility of devices is a significant proximal factor affecting adolescent internet usage. It is said that information and technology have become a major driver of the economy in recent years and where most people have access to high-speed Internet; such a high rate of mobile phone use is also reflected in the school-aged population; a report said, “mobile phone ownership among adolescents aged 12–19 years has exceeded 90%, accompanied by high exposure to mobile media and technologies in various ways” (Seo et al., 2016). If a teenager has a smartphone with constant Internet access, he or she can use social media, watch videos, and play games all day long. Then it’s much easier to let children use the Internet often, even during breaks or commutes. It means that if teenagers are able to use Internet devices, including smartphones and laptops continuously and conveniently, the opportunities of using the Internet will increase obviously. Additionally, smartphones are available, it has made it easier for teenagers to access Internet content even during breaks or late nights. This accessibility encourages the frequency and expansion of Internet use because it is less of an obstacle to logging in and staying connected; the easier these devices can be accessed and integrated into everyday life, the greater the likelihood that teenagers will spend a lot of time on the Internet. From this, we can see that the immediate accessibility of equipment is an important factor that affects youth’s Internet use. Secondly, emotional response to stress is another important factor influencing adolescents’ Internet use. Jun and Choi found that academic stress was positively correlated with negative sentiment and Internet addiction, and negative sentiment and Internet addiction were positively correlated (Jun & Choi, 2015). For example, teenagers suffering from academic stress due to upcoming exams use online games or streaming services as a refuge. They use these online activities to relieve stress for a while and distract themselves from the stress of studying. This means that adolescents manage their emotional state using the Internet as a coping mechanism. If teenagers feel stressed, anxious, or bored, they can engage in activities such as online games and watching videos. These online activities are shelters that provide a temporary escape and a way to manage or reduce their emotions. Therefore, higher emotional pressure may lead to more people using the Internet as a means of emotional

relief or attention lapse. It can therefore be seen that emotional response to stress is another important factor that affects adolescents’ Internet use.

On the other hand, many distal factors affect adolescent Internet usage. Psychiatric disorders are one of the distal factors, which are generally appear among teenagers, take social anxiety as an example, 6,034 apparently normal subjects aged 9–60 years were studied by questionnaire in order to compare the social anxiety prevalence of certain symptoms in adolescents with those at other ages, it points out that anxiety symptoms also showed a peak in the mid-teens (Abe & Suzuki, 1986). Lack of parental supervision during childhood and high levels of social isolation are two distal factors that make teenagers more susceptible to pathological internet use. To begin with how the distal factor, lack of parental supervision during childhood, makes teenagers more susceptible to pathological internet use. For instance, a teenager might be more susceptible to pathological internet use due to distal factors like a lack of parental supervision during childhood. It means that when children grow up without adequate monitoring or guidance from their parents regarding internet use, they may develop poor online habits and become more vulnerable to excessive use; this lack of supervision can lead to an absence of boundaries and limits, which are essential for healthy internet habits. It can be therefore seen that the distal factor, lack of parental supervision during childhood, makes teenagers more susceptible to pathological internet use. Secondly, a high level of social isolation can also be a significant distal factor influencing susceptibility to pathological internet use. Then, relying on social interaction on the internet can lead to overuse of the internet, as teenagers may use it to fill the blanks left by their lack of real-world connections; in the long term, this overusing can become pathological, especially if it begins to interfere with their daily life and well-being. It can be seen that the distal factor, a high level of social isolation, makes teenagers more susceptible to pathological internet use. This reliance on the internet for social interaction can lead to excessive use, as teenagers may use it to fill the void left by their lack of real-world connections; in the long term, this excessive use can become pathological, especially if it begins to interfere with their daily life and well-being. It can be seen that the distal factor, a high level of social isolation, makes teenagers more susceptible to pathological internet use.

Relationship between Internet addiction and peer pressure It is no doubt that young people spend a long time on social media nowadays; including scrolling through Instagram, creating videos on TikTok, or updating friends on Snapchat (Leijse et al., 2023). In the Netherlands, data from a large typical study pointed out that 31% of Dutch

adolescents aged 12 to 16 reported being in contact with social media all over the day. Making a comparison, the average for elementary school students, ages 4 to 12, was obviously lower, at 14.9% (Stevens et al., 2017); which highlights the importance of focusing on social media use by adolescents in particular.

Xiaopan Xu and other researchers pointed out that peer pressure on Internet use was positively associated with adolescent Internet addiction by inviting adolescents from two high schools in South China to finish an anonymous survey (Xu et al., 2023).

Nowadays, mobile phone use has become the normal behavior of peer groups. Following the norm behaviors of peer groups means not being snubbed and rejected by peers, so the risk of internet addiction will rise because adolescents often overuse mobile phones to maintain and build peer relationships. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable on the Internet due to their unique curiosity, thirst for new experiences, and the interactive, and immersive features of the current digital media (SOH, P.C. July 2017).

Data analyzed by Leijse et al. showed that adolescents who feel more stress from their peers are more likely to report higher levels of Internet use (Leijse, 2023). This means that young people increase their use of the Internet when they are under pressure from their peers or engage in Internet activities. The analysis of these data highlights the importance of peer influence in forming teenagers' digital habits. More specifically, this means that peer social pressure can lead to a higher level of online activity, highlighting the importance of how society in the digital age affects youth behavior. Therefore, adolescents with more peer or social pressure become more interested in social media use at a higher level.

Seon-Jeong Kim and Young-Jin Lim found that one important factor of Internet addiction in adolescents is peer pressure (Kim and Lim, 2020). Several studies have reported adequate psychometric properties for the Korean ver.

Therefore, peer pressure directly and positively predicts adolescents' Internet addiction. The consequences of the In Internet addiction include depression, neglect of work, poor grades, sleep deprivation, and loneliness (Soh, P.C. et al., 2017).

4. Prevention, Conclusion and Discussion

Given the significant impact of peer influence on Internet use and the huge risks of Internet addiction on adolescent development, timely and effective intervention measures are crucial. Many researchers also have focused on find-

ing protective factors related to peer relationships that can help prevent Internet addiction. Understanding these protective factors is critical to developing ways to reduce the negative effects of Internet addiction and to support healthy digital habits in adolescents.

Leijse et al. found that adolescents with a relatively low level of self-control are clearly affected by the social environment, which can be either positive or negative (Leijse, 2023). It shows that the higher the self-control scores they get in their study, the lower the risk of using social media. Based on this, the researchers figured and observed that adolescents with high self-control skills were less likely to engage in excessive or harmful social media behaviors by analyzing responses to self-control. The findings highlight the importance of developing self-control as a potential measure of preventing Internet addiction among adolescents. Promoting the self-control ability of adolescents can be a protective factor and can help them control the Internet environment more effectively, reducing the negative effects of excessive use of the Internet. Therefore, intervention measures to promote self-control may be an effective strategy to reduce youth's social media use problems.

This study highlights that family time plays an important role in Internet addiction (Leijse, 2023). Teenagers with close relationships with their parents and strong family cohesion are at lower risk of Internet addiction. Teenagers are less likely to spend too much time on the Internet when they watch television together or spend more time on other household activities. Strong family ties and frequent and active interaction with parents act as protective factors in preventing social media addiction, a study has found. This means that parents can create a supportive home environment and prioritize spending time together to help reduce the chances that their children will become overly dependent on the Internet. Therefore, strengthening family support and increasing the time adolescents spend with their parents can be effective maneuvers to lower the risk of Internet addiction and promote healthy Internet use habits.

Considering the social collectivization and coping motivations that mediate peer stress and social Internet addiction, effective youth Internet addiction prevention strategies should focus on dealing with these potential factors (Kim and Young-jin Rim, 2020). Specifically high peer stress is associated with an increase in social conformity and coping motivation, and since this increase leads to social network addiction, prevention should be aimed at reducing the impact of peer stress and improving resilience.

There are several ways to reduce the tendency to seek recognition through social media, including developing self-esteem, managing peer stress, and promoting healthy

social interaction.

Also, a support environment to reduce the fear of rejection and strengthen our domestic support, and with one's parents, teenagers, and increase the amount of time, increase the self-control of teenagers' online participation highlighted links in the real world rather than from the impact of excessive Internet use by teens to protect. There are several ways to reduce the tendency to seek recognition through social media, including developing self-esteem, managing peer stress, and promoting healthy social interaction.

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