Psychological Hardiness, Perceived Parenting, and Problematic Internet Use in Adolescent Mental Health: A Review

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Abstract: *Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social transformations, during which mental health becomes critically important. This literature review explores the intricate relationships between psychological hardiness, perceived parental behavior, and problematic internet use, and their collective impact on adolescent mental health. Psychological hardiness, defined by traits such as commitment, control, and challenge, has been identified as a significant predictor of mental resilience, helping adolescents manage stress and reduce the risk of depression and anxiety. Perceived parental behavior, particularly positive perception of parenting, is associated with positive mental health outcomes, whereas neglectful or authoritarian parenting styles can exacerbate psychological distress. Problematic internet use, especially excessive engagement with social media and gaming, has been linked to increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression among adolescents. The review synthesizes current research to provide a comprehensive understanding of these variables and their implications for interventions aimed at improving adolescent mental well-being. Findings suggest that fostering psychological resilience, promoting supportive parenting practices, and encouraging responsible internet use are essential strategies for enhancing mental health outcomes in adolescents. Future research may aim to explore these relationships to develop targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by adolescents in the digital age.*

Keywords: Psychological hardiness, Perceived parenting, Problematic internet use, Adolescent, Mental Health

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial phase characterized by extensive physical, emotional, and social transformations, making mental health during this stage critically important. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately one in seven adolescents suffers from a mental disorder, with depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders being the primary causes of illness and disability in this age group. Significant risk factors that contribute to these mental health problems include exposure to adverse conditions, peer pressure, the process of exploring one's identity, and the influence of the media. On the contrary, protective factors that promote mental well-being include maintaining healthy sleep patterns, participating in regular physical activity, developing effective coping skills, and being in supportive environments at home and school. These protective measures are essential to promote resilience and mental health among adolescents (World Health Organization (WHO)). Recent research has highlighted the complex interaction of various factors that influence adolescents' mental health, including psychological hardiness, perceived parental behavior, and problematic use of the Internet.

Factors Affecting Mental Health of Adolescents

The mental health of adolescents is influenced by a complex interplay of environmental, socioemotional, personal, and behavioral factors. Protective factors such as emotional competence, self-esteem, social support, and healthy lifestyles can mitigate mental health problems, while negative influences such as abuse, socioeconomic challenges, and poor sleep can exacerbate them. Furthermore, individual characteristics, family dynamics, and community context play a significant role, with sex differences and experiences of abuse or parental alcohol problems being particularly impactful. Addressing these factors through targeted interventions and supportive policies is essential to promote the mental well-being of adolescents.

Studies suggest that adolescents' mental health is influenced by a variety of factors including environmental aspects (physical, home, social, socioeconomic, digital and abuse), emotional and self-esteem competencies, social support, lifestyle choices, hormonal and psychological changes, family dynamics and educational methods, peer and school support, sleep quality, individual and community characteristics, and parental behavior such as alcohol use and experiences of abuse. Basu, S., & Banerjee, B. (2020) have found that environmental factors such as physical, home, social, socioeconomic, and digital environments significantly impact adolescent mental health, with abuse being a particularly detrimental factor.

The study by Barrera et al. (2019) revealed that emotional competence and self-esteem are protective socio-emotional factors that contribute positively to adolescent mental health and well-being, with variations observed based on gender, age, and family background. Nagy-Pénzes, G., Vincze, F., & Bró, E. (2020) found that socioeconomic status, social support, and health behavior, including healthy eating and physical activity, are influential on adolescents' mental well-being and social support is a strong protective factor against mental health problems. Lee, B., Choi, M., & Choi, M. (2020) in their study found that individual characteristics such as satisfaction with grades and cell phone dependency, family dynamics, school environment, and community factors are all significant determinants of mental health development in adolescents.

Short et al. (2019) found that duration and quality of sleep are closely related to mental health outcomes in children and

adolescents, with poor and inadequate sleep associated with mood and anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation. In their study, Sung, J., & Kim, Y. (2020). revealed that sex differences play a role in adolescent mental health, with women more likely to experience depression and somatic symptoms and men more prone to attention deficits. Parenting behavior, including abuse, affects mental health in both sexes. Zouini et al.(2019) revealed that parental alcohol use problems and the experience of abuse are associated with higher levels of psychological distress in adolescents, with somatization, hostility, and anxiety being prominent symptoms.

The studies by Hwang, J., & Toma, C. (2020) and Restrepo et al. (2020) reveal that higher levels of perceived parental support are associated with a lower probability of adolescent PIU, and this protective effect is amplified when adolescents also report high levels of subjective mental well-being. The above studies also reveal that the negative impact of perceived parental support on PIU is more pronounced when adolescents have higher mental well-being, indicating an interactive effect between these two factors. In their study, Chao, C., Kao, K. & Yu, T. (2020) found that community bonds and parental attitudes toward the Internet moderate the relationship between factors such as cyberbullying, internet pornography, internet fraud and PIU, suggesting that a supportive environment can mitigate risks associated with these negative experiences.

Reinecke et al. (2018) in their study found that procrastination of traits in adolescents is positively related to insufficiently controlled internet use, which in turn is associated with altered psychological functioning, including increased stress and decreased sleep quality and satisfaction with relationships with parents. These studies suggest that perceived parental support is a significant protective factor against problematic Internet use in adolescents, more so than the adolescents' own mental well-being, and that factors such as poor physical and mental health, weak community bonds, parental attitudes and behaviors on the Internet, as well as high trait procrastination, can negatively impact adolescents' mental health and contribute to problematic Internet use.

This review of the literature aims to explore the intricate relationships between psychological hardiness, perceived parental behavior, and problematic use of the Internet, and their collective impact on adolescent mental health. By synthesizing current research, this review seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of these variables and their implications for interventions aimed at improving the mental well-being of adolescents. Research is focused on understanding how the intersection of psychological hardiness, perceived parenting, problematic internet use (PIU) and their influence contribute to the mental health wellness of adolescents in the digital age.

Psychological Hardiness and Adolescent Mental Health
Psychological hardiness, defined by traits such as commitment, control, and challenge, has emerged as a significant predictor of mental resilience in adolescents. This construct helps individuals navigate stress and adversity, promoting better mental health outcomes. Studies have shown that adolescents with high psychological hardiness are less likely to experience depression and anxiety, as they possess the internal resources to cope with life's challenges effectively (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi, 2006).

Impact of Psychological Hardiness
Psychological hardiness, a personality trait that involves commitment, control, and challenge, has been associated with better mental health outcomes. Adolescents with higher psychological hardiness are better at managing stress and exhibit lower levels of anxiety and depression. Studies suggest that fostering psychological hardiness through targeted interventions can improve resilience and improve overall mental health (World Health Organization (WHO)). Psychological hardiness is a multifaceted construct that plays a significant role in the mental health and well-being of adolescents. It encompasses attitudes and skills that allow people to cope with stress and turn challenging situations into opportunities for growth.

Psychological hardiness is a critical factor in adolescent mental health. It helps people cope with stress, adapt to challenging situations, and maintain emotional well-being. Research indicates that hardiness can buffer against anxiety and improve general mental health, especially when combined with supportive environmental factors and family support. Interventions aimed at improving hardiness and providing psychosocial support can be beneficial for adolescents, particularly those facing adversity.

In their study, Malkin et al.(2019) have found that adolescents in different social groups exhibit varying levels of hardiness, which significantly affects their ability to adapt to stress and maintain mental health. Persiyantseva, S. & Artemenkov, S. (2023) revealed that psychological well-being and mental health in adolescents are positively correlated with hardiness, suggesting that higher levels of hardiness are associated with better mental health outcomes.

Reknes, I., Harris, A., & Einarsen, S. (2018) found that hardiness can act as a buffer against anxiety in the face of bullying, although it may not have the same protective effect against depression. Kovalenkova, A. (2022), has found that during times of adversity, such as military conflict, hardiness is considered a crucial resource for adolescents to prevent the development of depressive states and adapt to rapidly changing conditions. Protective factors such as food security and a safe environment, when combined with hardiness, can significantly improve mental health and reduce risk behaviors in adolescents living in adversity.

Toit et al.(2022) revealed that adolescents with motor impairments demonstrate that hardiness is correlated with adaptive coping strategies and emotional well-being, particularly in cases of mild impairments. Mushcherova, K. (2022), in his study, revealed that a high level of hardiness is associated with lower anxiety levels, indicating that hardiness can help mitigate the impact of stressors on mental health. Leslie, C. & Hutchinson, A. (2018) in their study revealed that hardiness has a mediated pathway to emotional distress through mental health conditions, suggesting that it can influence how adolescents react to sensitive topics and stress. Yang, L. et al. (2023) has revealed that family hardiness can mediate the effects of life stress on adolescents' quality of life,

highlighting the importance of family support in adolescent mental health.

Perceived Parenting Behavior and Adolescent Mental Health

Parental behavior, particularly perceived parenting styles, plays a crucial role in shaping adolescent mental health. Authoritative parenting, which combines warmth and structure, has been associated with positive mental health outcomes, while authoritarian or neglectful parenting can lead to increased psychological distress. Adolescents who perceive their parents as supportive and understanding are more likely to develop healthy coping mechanisms and exhibit lower levels of anxiety and depression (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2001).

Influence of Perceived Parenting

Parental behavior significantly affects the mental health of adolescents. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and structure, is associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety. On the contrary, harsh or neglectful parenting can lead to increased mental health problems. Research highlights the importance of parental support, supervision, and positive bonding in mitigating the adverse effects of bullying and other stressors (World Health Organization (WHO)).

The impact of perceived parental behavior on adolescent mental health is a multifaceted area of study that draws on various theoretical frameworks, including interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory, family systems theory, and psychological inflexibility theory. The collective body of research underscores the significant influence of perceived parental behavior on adolescent mental health. Positive parenting behaviors, such as emotional warmth, authoritative practices, and autonomy support, are consistently associated with better mental health outcomes and a reduced risk of mental health problems. On the contrary, negative parenting behaviors, including rejection, overprotection, and psychological control, are associated with poorer mental health and an increased risk of issues such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal behaviors. The protective role of healthy parenting is evident in various cultural contexts and underscores the importance of fostering supportive parent-adolescent relationships to promote adolescent mental well-being.

These studies suggest that various aspects of perceived parenting behavior, including emotional warmth, parenting style, support, relationship quality, understanding, monitoring, respect for privacy, burnout, and psychological control, are significantly associated with mental health in adolescents, influencing outcomes such as self-esteem, psychological inflexibility, emotional difficulties, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, anxiety, depressive symptoms, and suicidal behaviors. Peng et al. (2021) reveal that parental emotional warmth positively affects adolescent mental health through increased self-esteem and decreased psychological inflexibility, while parental rejection and overprotection have negative effects by lowering self-esteem and increasing psychological inflexibility. Singh, V., Gera, T. & Behmani, R. (2021) found that adolescents perceiving permissive parenting styles report poorer mental health

compared to those with authoritative or authoritarian parenting styles, suggesting the importance of incorporating healthy practices in parenting. The study by Patalay, P. & Gage, S. (2019) revealed that trends indicate an increase in depressive symptoms and self-harm among adolescents over time, with changes in health-related behaviors such as sleep and weight, suggesting complex relationships between these factors and mental health.

Macalli, M., Côté, S. & Tzourio, C. (2020). indicated that lower levels of perceived parental support are associated with a higher risk of mental health problems, including suicidal behavior, major depression, and severe generalized anxiety disorder, highlighting the importance of perceived parental support in mental health screening. Ebbert, A., Infurna, F., & Luthar, S. (2018) in their study found that changes in perceived quality of parent-adolescent relationships, particularly increasing alienation and decreasing trust, are associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, with these changes being more pronounced in girls. Shidhaye, R. (2021), in his study, found that a positive parent-adolescent relationship, characterized by understanding, monitoring and respect for privacy, has a protective effect against suicidal behavior of adolescents, with a slightly stronger influence in girls.

Yang et al. (2021) have found that parental burnout negatively impacts youth mental health, with less autonomy-supportive parenting mediating this effect; however, healthy emotion regulation by parents can mitigate these negative impacts. Marusak et al.(2018) have found that psychological control in parenting is linked to altered brain and behavioral responses to emotional conflict in at-risk youth, suggesting that healthy parenting can protect against emotional psychopathology.

Lei, S. (2023) has found that authoritarian parenting significantly affects the psychological health of adolescents, emphasizing the need to improve parenting skills and create a supportive family and educational environment. King et al.(2018) have found that specific authoritative parenting behaviors, such as expressing pride and helping with homework, are critical to protecting adolescents from suicide, especially in younger adolescents.

Problematic Internet Use and Adolescent Mental Health

On the contrary, problematic Internet use has become a growing concern in contemporary adolescent populations. Excessive use of the Internet, particularly for social networks and games, has been linked to adverse mental health outcomes, including increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. The ubiquitous nature of digital technology in adolescents' lives requires a deeper understanding of its impact on mental health and the potential moderating effects of factors such as psychological hardiness and parental behavior (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017).

Effects of Problematic Internet Use

Problematic Internet use, including excessive social media and games, has been associated with poor mental health outcomes in adolescents. High levels of Internet use can exacerbate feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. Studies emphasize the need for balanced media consumption

and the role of parents in monitoring and guiding Internet use to prevent negative mental health effects (World Health Organization (WHO)). Internet use has become an integral part of daily life, especially for adolescents. However, there is growing concern about the possible negative impacts of problematic internet use (PIU) on the mental health of young people. These studies suggest that problematic use of the Internet in adolescents is associated with a variety of mental health issues, including depression, ADHD, sleep disturbances, poorer physical health, and an increased risk of suicide ideation and behavior.

Research consistently indicates that problematic Internet use among adolescents is associated with a variety of mental health problems, including depression, ADHD, sleep disturbances, and suicidal ideation. The severity of PIU also correlates with risky behaviors and a decline in quality of life related to health. These findings underscore the importance of monitoring and managing Internet use in adolescents to safeguard their mental health.

Asam et al. (2019) in their study found that PIU is significantly associated with conduct problems, hyperactivity, depression, and poorer physical health in British children and adolescents, with men more likely to score higher on PIU. Kokka et al.(2021) found that problematic internet use negatively affects adolescent sleep quality and quantity, which is a crucial factor for their mental and physical health. Restrepo et al. (2020) found that PIU is positively related to depressive disorders, ADHD, higher levels of impairment, and increased sleep disturbances in a U.S. youth sample.

Gansner et al. (2019) found that among psychiatrically hospitalized adolescents, the severity of PIU is correlated with mood symptoms, risky behaviors, and suicidality, with higher PIU scores in those with aggressive and developmental disorders. Arrivillaga et al.(2020) found that problematic use of the Internet and smartphone is significantly related to suicide ideation in Spanish adolescents, with emotional intelligence potentially serving as a protective factor. Ortuo-Sierra et al. (2022) have found that adolescents at higher risk for PIU show higher scores on suicide behaviors and depression, indicating the need for prevention strategies targeting internet use.

Machimbarrena et al. (2019) have revealed that problematic Internet use is negatively and significantly correlated with adolescents' health-related quality of life (HRQoL), with severe PIU linked to a significant decrease in all HRQoL dimensions. Calpbinici, P., & Arslan, F. (2019) have found that the duration, purpose, and duration of daily internet usage, cyberbullying, and exposure to cyberbullying are related to self-reported mental health issues in adolescents. Kwak et al. (2022) have found that excessive internet use time is associated with poorer subjective health, higher stress levels, feelings of sadness, and suicidal ideation among Korean adolescents.

2. Conclusion

This review of the literature highlights the multifaceted influences of psychological hardiness, perceived parental behavior, and problematic internet use on adolescent mental health. The interaction between psychological hardiness, perceived parental behavior, and problematic internet use provides a comprehensive framework to understand adolescent mental health. Interventions aimed at improving psychological resilience, fostering supportive parenting practices, and promoting responsible use of the Internet are essential to improve mental health outcomes in adolescents. Future research should continue to explore these relationships to develop targeted strategies that address the unique challenges faced by adolescents in today's digital age.

3. Future Scope

Future research shall focus on longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects of psychological hardiness, parenting styles, and internet use on adolescent mental health. Developing tailored intervention programs that enhance psychological hardiness and promote healthy internet use is crucial. Exploring these relationships in diverse cultural contexts will help identify specific protective and risk factors. Additionally, the impact of emerging digital technologies on mental health needs further investigation. Finally, research findings can inform policies to promote school-based mental health programs and parental guidance initiatives.

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