

An Analysis of the Factors Influencing Adolescents' Attention Deficit--Case Study Based on Campus Psychological Salon

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Abstract: The information explosion in the Internet era has triggered the problem of attention deficit in adolescent groups. This paper attempts to construct a comprehensive analytical framework using social learning theory and group reference theory to explain how macro-environmental and micro-level individual learning imitation abilities lead to attention deficits in adolescent groups. The campus psychological salon case shows that human thinking is the result of the simultaneous influence of subject, behavior and environment, and the judgment of human thinking whether to allocate attention depends largely on the perception of environmental surroundings. If the environment or peers respond positively, individuals are more inclined to respond positively due to social learning and altered perceptions. Therefore, a simultaneous intervention at the behavioral, environmental, and individual thought levels is essential to improve the attention deficit of today's youth.

1. Introduction

Since the 21st century, China's mobile Internet has developed efficiently along with the upgrading of communication infrastructure. China's mobile Internet has undergone three large-scale adjustments and changes, with the government beginning to popularize 3G networks nationwide in 2009, starting large-scale deployment of 4G networks in 2014, and opening the exploration and innovation of the 5G network era in 2020. The three upgrades of mobile communication infrastructure have strongly contributed to the rapid development of China's mobile Internet and large-scale innovation in service and business models. Minors are an important subject of Internet use, along with technology improvements, the Internet use of minors presents some new features and problems: online learning is not as effective as desired, addiction to the Internet and physical and mental health are widely concerned, and education on Internet literacy still needs to be strengthened, etc.[1]

According to China's official data, in 2019, the size of China's underage Internet users was 175 million, and the Internet usage rate of minors reached 93.1%, with 74.0% having their own Internet access devices, of which 63.6% had their own cell phones[2]. In the era of Internet technology intervention, the attention span of minors continues to increase, but the depth decreases, and the most significant feature is that the stability of attention becomes weaker and the duration of attention becomes shorter[3].

Attention is a mental activity that allows the body to respond to objective objects with reflexes, which allows the body to clearly perceive the stimuli of the surrounding environment and respond accordingly[4]. In an era of attention fragmentation(individuals' lack of duration of attention), many adolescents have a lack of self-inhibition and a gradual increase in various behavioral problems, like impulsive language and behavior. When under stress, adolescents with attention deficits are less able to control their inhibitions and their hyperactive behavior becomes more severe. Along with the inability to complete structured or goal-oriented activities such as chores and homework; As well as the excessive academic demands and high pressure to advance to higher education, adolescents with attention deficit can easily be positioned as problematic adolescents, and at the same time lose interest in their studies because they are unable to fully utilize their abilities[5].This paper examines the

problem of attention deficit in adolescent groups by analyzing a psychological salon case in campus, and analyzes the factors influencing the phenomenon of attention deficit based on social learning theory and reference group theory, and proposes corresponding suggestions and solutions based on the findings of the study.

2. Theoretical Foundation

A framework of analysis combining environmental factors and individual behaviors is constructed to explain the attention deficit of adolescent groups through reference group theory and social learning theory, in which reference group theory focuses on environmental information, and specific information transfer refers to peer group behaviors, patterns, language, etc.; social learning theory aims to explain individual behavioral choices after receiving environmental information.

2.1 Reference Group Theory

Reference groups are those groups that serve as standards or models for people to follow. The influence of reference groups on individuals varies depending on the type of group, and reference groups can help individuals improve their cognitive patterns and behavioral frameworks, also they can have a negative influence on individuals. Reference groups serve normative and comparative functions. If an individual considers a group as his or her reference group, the goals, standards and norms of the group's activities will have a binding effect on his or her actions, and the individual will modify his or her behavior according to these standards.

According to different criteria, reference groups can be divided into formal groups and informal groups. Formal reference groups are those in which individuals belong to a group and have a clear common goal to which they are committed, such as labor unions, Mensa clubs, etc. Informal groups are those in which individuals share common preferences, interests or ideas with their peer group but without a specific goal to obtain, such as book clubs, psychological salons, etc. In addition to the first two, when an individual is in a reference group, the group is also divided into membership reference groups and disclaimant reference groups[6]. In the former group, individuals are in favor of the group's attitude, law, and behavior, so the group has more influence on individuals. In the latter case, although the individual is in the group, his attitude and behavior toward the group are in a state of refutation, and the group's influence on the individual is greatly reduced. Other similarly different types of reference groups include aspirational groups, and dissociative groups, all of which have different degrees of influence on the individual. In order to be accepted by the peer group, adolescents will conform to their peers. This congruence is evident in undesirable behaviors such as dropping out of school and transgressions, as well as good behaviors such as improving grades and college admissions.

2.2 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is concerned with the acquisition of information or the allocation of attention of individuals. Psychologist Albert Bandura proposed that human learning is brought about by social imitation. Social learning theory focuses on the role of social models, and the results brought about by this theory are widely used and fruitful according to the regulation of the individual's self-competence. Bandura attaches great importance to the role of observational learning in the acquisition of human behavior, through this alternative reinforcement, learners can quickly obtain a large amount of information about behavior patterns, thus reducing the cost of education and the redundancy of the educational process.

Bandura divided observational learning into attentional, retention, action reproduction, and motivational processes according to the model of information processing and the examination of the integrated role of various variables in the cognitive process. In the works of Miller and Dollard, imitation is emphasized as an important mode of social learning, and the essence of social learning is

the process of individual socialization. Bandura's social learning theory also emphasizes that individual behaviors are acquired through observation or imitation of others' behaviors and their reinforcement results. Thus, both Miller, Dollard, and Bandura, influenced by the behaviorist school, believe that social learning is the process by which an individual changes from a biological person to a social person through a series of social lifestyle stimuli. In this process, individuals follow established social norms (stimuli) through social interactions to change their behavior (responses) in order to adapt to the needs of their environment.

In general, adolescents' attention is greatly influenced by the reference group, and their cognition and behavior are changed by environmental factors. Different types of reference groups can also have different degrees of positive and negative effects. Bandura's social learning theory includes four key steps: attention allocation, memorization, repetition, and reinforcement. Individuals learn through observation and imitation of their environment. The first step is for the individual to allocate enough attention to the action itself, and then to process the information through memory encoding process. Under certain conditions, the individual has to have sufficient motivation and ability to repeat the learned behavior and to have appropriate motivation to reinforce the learned behavior in the future. Therefore, the decisions and actions made by the social environment can also greatly influence the cognition and acquisition of adolescents.

3. Case Study

In this section, the attention deficit problem of the adolescent group is discussed by combining the above basic theories with the actual case of the campus psychological salon. The campus psychological salon has about 25 members, and the content of the salon is to share psychological problems among members as a benchmark, and to discuss topics (such as school bullying, body anxiety, etc.) to increase the awareness of mental health. The salon members are divided into a facilitator (who focuses on connecting the topics and guiding students to voice their psychological problems), assistants, and participants.

3.1 Transmission of Group Environment and Information

In this case, the salon members were divided into two groups: an active group, represented by the facilitator, about half of the participants were actively involved in the icebreaker game. During the activity, the facilitator invited the members to divide into pairs, each drawing a portrait and stating the strengths of the another. The active members of the group showed concentration, they drew their portraits carefully and had a good interaction in the merit telling session. There were even active members who invited the facilitator to look at the drawings. With the cooperation of these active group members, the facilitator can complete the activity with the goal of meeting new people and increasing confidence through compliments. The second group members, who make up half of the salon, are less active and less involved, presenting a silent, wavering, and unclear attitude. In the session of drawing for each other, members of the second group with negative attitudes would finish the progress significantly earlier and the quality of the portraits was rougher (consisting of less than 10 strokes). Even in the process of discussing each other's strengths, both groups finished early, and the strengths they presented were all brief (e.g., "good grades" was only three words), without any elaboration, which did not achieve the positive purpose of the salon. The salon team was a reference group for qualification in terms of the perception of active participants. According to the reference group theory, individuals in the active participation group will respond positively to the salon theme because their ideas and attitudes match the salon theme, and then take actions that are consistent with similar ideas, such as careful drawing and patient explanation of their strengths. As for the perception of negative participating individuals, the salon team is a rejection type reference group. They were skeptical, bored and uninterested in the ideas conveyed by the salon, so their behaviors conveyed a more negative

message, which was reflected in the lack of patience in participating in the activity, lack of attention to the moderator's speech, etc.

3.2 Information Reception and Individual Choice

The two types of groups in the psychological salon transmit two kinds of environmental information, positive and negative, respectively. The process of individual exposure to information is also the process of shaping individual cognitive structure and behavioral adjustment.

The key bridge between information transfer and individual choice is the individual's self-regulation. Self-regulation is a process of internal reinforcement, in which an individual compares and evaluates his or her expectations of behavior with the reality of behavior to regulate his or her behavior. Specifically, self-regulation is subject to two factors, namely, internal and external factors. From the perspective of external factors, environmental information transmission can directly interfere with individual self-regulation. In the first round of two-person interaction presented in the psychological salon, if the initial portraitist (messenger) is more enthusiastic, e.g., has a serious drawing and a detailed evaluation of the merits, the second portraitist will allocate his attention to receiving positive information and then store memories about the positive attitudes that should be retained when participating in this activity. In terms of internal factors, individuals regulate their own cognitive structures and behavioral patterns through their individual abilities. By the time of the second round of interaction, there is a higher probability that the recipient of the information will also exhibit benign positive reactive behavior and repeat the previously learned impressions, again conveying a conscientious positive attitude. If the messenger expresses a negative non-participation attitude during the two rounds of interaction, it will also stimulate negative behavioral adjustments in the recipient, such as a lack of attention to the interaction. Overall, if the icebreaker phase has a good atmosphere, this information will be passed on and the individual will positively engage in a process of memory retention, cognitive conditioning, and action on the icebreaker phase.

Self-regulation emphasizes individual psychological initiative, which indicates that people have the ability of rational cognition to regulate their own behavior, which is more prominent in the “action reproduction process” and “motivation process”. After receiving a positive response from the partner (e.g., compliments, thanks from the other party), such attitudes toward the activity will be reinforced and carried to the next icebreaker when both internal and external factors are satisfied. Similarly, for some pairs, because one member has a negative attitude, this will have an impact on the cognitive reception of the other member, whose cognitive storage is the memory of the negative response to the session, and in the process of repetition and reinforcement, one will influence the behavior of the other to reduce the attention allocation to the salon, and both will become negative members in a small group.

In the process of social learning, an individual's psychology is the result of a continuous interaction between three factors: cognitive subject, behavior, and environment, and therefore human behavior should be understood in terms of various interrelated factors. In the case of the psychological salon, the two groups showed similar participation attitudes because the members were the group environment, and the others from the environment influenced the individual's cognition, which in turn influenced the subject's attitude and behavior, and the interaction of the three factors.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Combining the theoretical knowledge and case studies above, there is a strong connection between contemporary adolescents' participation and the information transmitted by the surrounding groups. When the surrounding group is positive, the attitude toward the activity is positive, and the individual's cognition classifies the group as a membership reference group, its positive responses to environmental peers will be stored in memory, repeated, and reproduced similar responses. This is followed by a series of cognitive adjustments that influence humans manifested attitudes and behaviors. Depending

on the judgment of peripheral reactions such as feedback and praise, this affects self-effects and perceptions of activities. This has a positive reinforcing effect on a series of imitative learning processes. Conversely, if the individual identifies the group as a disclaimant reference group, his or her disagreement with the group's attitudes and principles will lead to a decrease in the allocation of attention, and therefore to a disinterested and negative state of behavior. The information conveyed by such an atmosphere affects the individuals in the surrounding environment, and the influence of the reference group causes the cognition of the surrounding individuals to adjust to similar attitudes, resulting in a lack of concentration of most people and a failure to produce positive results from the activity.

Based on the analysis of the above case study, it is still a common topic to improve the attention problems of today's youth. Since the information conveyed by the environment influences the cognitive and attitudinal behavior of individuals, it is necessary to improve the attention skills of today's adolescents from various aspects. When the group environment conveys positive attitudes, adolescents' participation will also increase according to the cognitive influence to increase attention. This can be done by involving members in the planning of activities, enhancing the sense of participation and increasing group discussion, while enhancing the sense of belonging to the reference group. Firstly, Participation in collective decision-making can even help some members with negative attitudes to recognize the group's ideas and attitudes. When the perception of the group is adjusted to membership reference group, all positive social learning steps can be reinforced, achieving a positive result of increasing activity participation through environmental imitation. Secondly, considering the importance of partner transfer of information as mentioned in reference group theory, negative members should be paired with positive members to sensitize negative members through social learning principles thus achieving a small environmental impact. Finally, in addition to the environment and the interaction partners, direct interventions on the subject's attitude can be carried out, such as conducting ideological workshops, emphasizing the importance of moral discipline and behavioral norms for individuals, etc. With the combination of the above-mentioned environmental, peer, and individual interventions, the individual's cognition will be shaped and self-adjusted in a multidimensional way, and the attention will be allocated in a positive direction.

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