

# Relation between Social Anxiety, Self-esteem and Internet Usage

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**Abstract.** Background: With the progress of the times, teenagers' social ways have changed, and they are more dependent on online social communication, thus ignoring the reality, resulting in serious social anxiety, which is closely related to their self-esteem. Methods: A total of 16 articles on this relationship were included through literature search and screening. Results: Self-esteem and social anxiety are closely related, showing negative correlation, and network dependence is the intermediary relationship between them. It is also found that the level of self-esteem formed by different genders can also affect the level of social anxiety. Males generally have higher self-esteem and lower level of social anxiety than Females. Conclusion: The level of self-esteem can help regulate social anxiety, Teenagers with low self-esteem are more likely to have social anxiety through Internet dependence, there is a direct relationship between the self-esteem and social anxiety. In the future researchers should further explore the causal relationship.

## 1 Introduction

With the progress of the Times, social anxiety is becoming more and more common among teenagers, which refers to the tension and shyness of teenagers when they enter social occasions, and some of them even choose to avoid social scenes and refuse to communicate. In the current situation of big data, the problem of teenagers' social anxiety is even aggravated. Teens who suffer from social anxiety, when they are anxious about offline activities, actively engage in compensated activities online to escape life, and this behavior may negatively affect their social skills and self-esteem. Since it is verified that self-esteem is the factor most likely to affect social anxiety after synthesizing all risk factors, this study aims to explore the related impact of self-esteem on social anxiety [1].

Self-esteem is a kind of good mental state, which researchers believe is formed through social comparison. Everyone understands their position and value through the society. However, teenagers with social anxiety refuse to communicate with others in social occasions, so they have no way to recognize their own value, resulting in low self-esteem. They are more reluctant to engage in offline social activities, and social anxiety is becoming more serious, forming a closed loop from now on. How the correlation between self-esteem and social anxiety makes this study further explored.

Based on the above two factors, this review analyzes the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety. Based on previous studies, it is concluded that social anxiety and self-esteem form a negative correlation, so it can verify the regulation mechanism of self-esteem in the former theory, which can help people reduce social

anxiety [2]. It is concluded that the higher the self-esteem, the more rational the mentality of adolescents, which means the lower the level of self-esteem. Adolescents' social anxiety is more serious. In addition, foreign studies have verified that the two have a mutual predictive relationship. However, in order to avoid the bias caused by different regions of the study, this study combined several different studies to explain the insights and direct relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety, which is conducive to further laying the foundation for future research.

## 2 Self and social anxiety

Multiple risk factors for social anxiety have been discussed in the study, among which self-esteem is the most closely related one. This study used literature search and other methods to analyze the main effects of self-esteem and social anxiety and find that social anxiety is a negative emotion that appears in people with low self-esteem, and self-esteem is an anxiety reliving agent [1,3]. Finally, the paper defines the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem through meta-analysis and promotes self-esteem through classroom methods [4]. Compared with other papers, there are inevitably omissions in article retrieval, it may lead to unclear results, different conclusions, and no way to properly summarize the topic content that you want to study. cross-sectional research does not go too far into the causality.

Another study examines the relationship between self-cognition clarity and social anxiety in the life of adolescents, and self-cognition is the basis of self-esteem, which can affect self-cognition clarity from the

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perspective of adolescent self-esteem. The level of self-esteem has different starting points for adolescents' self-cognition, and the results are very different. [2]. The self-concept clarity scale and social anxiety scale were distributed. (The subjects were all teenagers in the unified school year, and the ratio of male to female was equal) SPSS software was used for descriptive statistics, and PROCESS V3.0 was used for structural equation model analysis and Bootstrap analysis. This study proved that there was a significant negative correlation between self-cognitive clarity and social anxiety. The lower the clarity of self-cognition, the lower the self-esteem, and the more serious the social anxiety. This study did not directly demonstrate the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety but demonstrated the relationship between them through the clarity of self-cognition. The experimental method is cross-sectional, so it is not possible to directly explain the relationship between social anxiety and self-perceived clarity from a causal level. Adolescents are in a period of sensitive and high self-esteem, when social rejection occurs, it will lead to severe social anxiety. In this case, adolescents have a depressed self-esteem, and may choose to avoid social interaction by hiding themselves, which leads to more serious social anxiety.

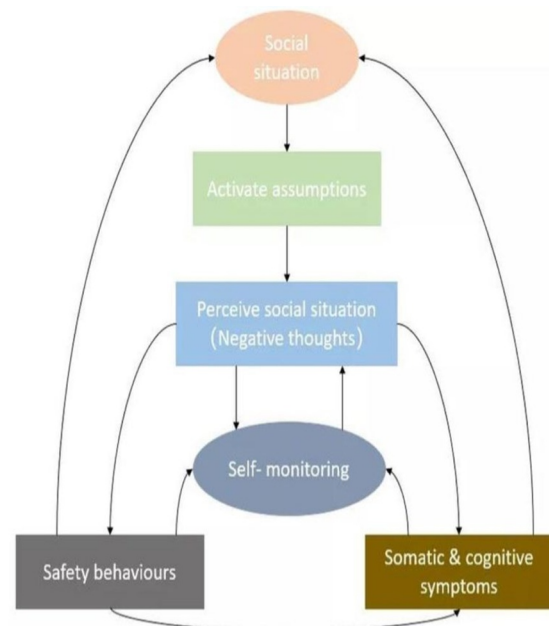
In the study, the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety is explained through individual self-consciousness, (It refers to the human body's cognition of its own psychological state and interpersonal relations) and it is concluded that individuals with high self-consciousness they tend to be more concerned about their public image, and they are more likely to have negative effects of self-esteem after being rejected, and they are also more likely to evolve into anxious behaviors [3]. In this study, a random sample of adolescents (the sample size is one class of students in the same school) is Participants are required to answer questions from self-esteem scale, self-consciousness scale and social anxiety [3]. It is concluded that the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety can be regulated by self-consciousness, which can help adolescents with low self-esteem reduce social anxiety. This experiment may be influenced by social approval, and the sample data is only conducted in one city, and the data may vary from region to region. But there are specific instructions to help regulate the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety but overall, the experimental studies are credible.

Prior study regard self-esteem as a healthy psychological state that adolescents should have, an evaluation and view of themselves and their feelings about their own values, as well as an external evaluation of themselves, which is usually recognized by the outside world through social activities [2]. In this study, the fear management theory, it believes that self-esteem is the evaluation and feeling of the value of lifeproposes and have two hypotheses propose that self-esteem can effectively relieve anxiety [4]. Studies suggest that self-esteem can be used as an adjustable mechanism to effectively help adolescents reduce social anxiety, because it has the elastic space provided by an elastic

mechanism. When adolescents have higher self-esteem, the self-regulation mechanism can be more fully exerted, thus making them more positive in social situations and more peaceful in the process of interacting with others.

In this study, self-esteem has a negative predictive effect on social anxiety [5]. This study adopts the method of interview, taking the influencing factors and aspects of self-esteem, the degree of social anxiety's influence on self-esteem and the basic situation of its formation as the outline, and uses Nvivo12.0 to make a basic analysis of the interview materials. It is concluded that adolescents' self-esteem is relatively stable, but after being judged by others and compared with peers, greater academic pressure will produce negative effects on their self-esteem in stages. Most adolescents say that they will have social avoidance behaviors after experiencing negative effects on self-esteem. In this experiment, it is found that men's self-esteem is stronger than women's. Women are also more sensitive to information, which will also lead to unstable self-esteem, resulting in social anxiety. Compared with other experiments, this experiment shows that experimental individuals are more homogenous than others, and there is a lack of causal proof. Multiple experiments can be conducted in a variety of combinations to improve authenticity.

Studies have shown that self-esteem plays a role in interpersonal trust relationships, which in turn affects adolescents' social anxiety [6]. The more adolescents with poor interpersonal trust relationships are reluctant to socialize, the more anxious they will be in the future and unwilling to try to socialize in the long run, leading to more negative results [6]. The results of this study were obtained through questionnaire survey of students in unified schools.



**Figure 1.** Social Anxiety Model [7].

As for the social anxiety model, social anxiety may be caused by some early unpleasant experiences and low self-esteem (see Figure 1) [7]. In some social occasions, socializer will automatically generate some negative

thoughts, and these negative thoughts will lead them to shift their attention to themselves and use their internal conditions to simulate others' evaluation of them, which will also lead to distorted evaluation. Produce a series of social anxiety reactions such as nervous avoidance chat. The study concluded that the lower the level of self-esteem, the lower the value of self-identity, which is a negative social attitude, and this kind of anxiety is the most dangerous, and this will also lead to adolescents more sensitive to future social interaction.

This study mainly introduces the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem caused by the left-behind phenomenon, because left-behind children have less interaction with their parents and are easy to have psychological problems [8]. This study also aims to explore self-esteem and social anxiety by taking advantage of the left-behind phenomenon. In this study, parent-child relationship and social anxiety scales were used to track the experimental subjects (middle school students) for one year. The data were analyzed and processed by cross-hysteresis and mediating effect. The results show that the self-esteem of left-behind children is lower than that of normal children, and the social anxiety is more serious. It is also analyzed that the self-esteem level is affected by the gender main effect, and the self-esteem of boys is generally higher than that of girls. The conclusion is that the level of self-esteem is extremely easy to affect the prediction of social anxiety. This study is a longitudinal investigation and follow-up experiment, and the short time may have certain limitations for experimental research.

Research shows that self-esteem is a very important factor among the factors affecting Internet dependence, [9]. and it is found that there is a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and Internet dependence, that is, teenagers with Internet dependence have lower self-esteem than normal students, and they are more likely to choose online social networking in their departments. The study uses random sampling (at the same school to select local teenagers) for experiments. [10]. The data and mediating effect of variables such as self-control and Internet addiction are analyzed, and the results show that self-esteem, as an intermediary mechanism, can also be used to influence Internet dependence. The results of this experiment are of great significance to the researchers. the researchers can change the ideas and look at self-esteem and social anxiety from different angles. Due to the large sample size, self-report was used to collect data.

### **3 Relationship between network and self-esteem**

This study shows that although most studies introduce the relationship between network and self-esteem, they all have limitations, only one-way prediction cannot be carried out mutual prediction analysis, so it is assumed that self-esteem and network dependence present a positive prediction relationship [11]. This study adopts the convenient sampling method to conduct longitudinal tracking cross-lag research. By sampling adolescents

(the same school teenager, the proportion of male students is relatively high) in a unified school and using scales such as self-esteem and Internet dependence, the results show that autism has a negative predictive effect on self-esteem, and the existence of autism can easily make teenagers doubt their social ability and have a low evaluation of themselves. Finally, the conclusion is that self-esteem and Internet dependence are bidirectional, and low self-esteem will lead to students' dependence on the Internet [11]. Conversely, excessive dependence on the Internet will also lead to low self-esteem. Longitudinal research avoids the causal deficiency of cross-sectional research, The set of time points is relatively small and does not reflect the relationship between variables over a longer period. Future research can explore multiple time points.

### **4 Internet usage and social anxiety**

In the era of big data network, teenagers' frequent use of the Internet exacerbates the impact of social anxiety on their normal life. Due to the negative news on the Internet, teenagers are extremely easy to be influenced in the process of prestige, which leads to online social anxiety, and they are afraid of being evaluated and talked to by others. According to research, 87.8% of teenagers are more willing to make online friends in reality. This study explores the relationship between Internet and social anxiety by using rumination thinking (people passively think about the possible causes and consequences of their negative state after experiencing negative time) [12]. In this study, a cluster sampling method was used to investigate the adolescents in the unified province (with a large proportion of girls), and Amo24.0 was used to establish a model for analysis. The results are as follows: Since Internet dependence is not often closely related to oversocializing, teenagers are more willing to choose the Internet for social compensation after they are frustrated in reality, which results in them becoming worse and worse good at social interaction in reality, thus achieving a vicious circle in which ruminative thinking plays a mediating role. Due to the discrepancy in the ratio of men to women, (Men accounted for 73 percent and women only 27 percent) more detailed data cannot be obtained in this study. Future visits to different cities will be needed to reconcile the uneven gender ratios. This study is cross-sectional and cannot prove a causal relationship between the two variables.

Studies have shown that social anxiety is positively correlated with depression, Internet dependence and other issues. Since self-esteem is the key influencing factor of self-efficacy and social anxiety previous studies mostly focused on social anxiety and negative evaluation, and rarely started from self-efficacy [13]. This study is based on self-efficacy and social anxiety model. [14] Self-efficacy refers to an individual's self-cognition that they can achieve their goals, while social self-efficacy refers to an individual's evaluation of their social ability in social interaction. Studies have shown that it can also effectively affect self-esteem. The research model holds

that individuals give priority to evaluating whether they can achieve their social goals during social interaction, and if there is no way, they will avoid social interaction, resulting in social anxiety. Self-efficacy is highly correlated with self-esteem. Self-esteem can positively predict self-efficacy [14]. It has been proved that social self-efficacy and self-esteem have a chain mediating effect on social anxiety through research sample survey and testing procedures (some professionals use uniform terms to make tests). This study is still a cross-sectional study, which only analyzes the relationship between the two variables, without causation. In future experiments, longitudinal studies are needed to further prove it.

With the continuous development of society, external standards for appearance are getting higher and higher, especially in recent years, with the popularization of social technology, appearance anxiety is more and more likely to appear on women, and negative news on the Internet will also lead to self-esteem frustration and appearance anxiety will become more serious. Among them, self-esteem is considered to be a moderating factor between appearance anxiety and social media. It is concluded that women with high self-esteem hold a confident attitude towards external evaluation, thus effectively reducing social anxiety [15]. The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of self-esteem on appearance anxiety and verify the regulatory relationship among them. In this study, women over the age of 18 were investigated by using the face anxiety scale, self-esteem scale, ideal beauty internalization and other scales to conduct a questionnaire survey. The experimental data were obtained, and a structural equation model was established for analysis by SEM, and then further analyzed from age, occupation and other aspects. The study showed that self-esteem had a main effect on face anxiety, which verified the above hypothesis. The lower the level of self-esteem of women, the more likely the contact with social media will lead to appearance anxiety [16]. Secondly, this study also shows that the pressure of ideal beauty internalization and appearance anxiety at a high level of self-esteem are relatively weak, which suggests feasible methods for how to better reduce appearance anxiety in the future. This study was only conducted among Chinese women, and it is hoped that some foreign samples can be compared in the future. More factors like social comparative tendency and Personal psychological stress that can affect appearance anxiety can be explored to better help women eliminate appearance anxiety.

## 5 Conclusion

Research shows that: 1. Social anxiety is negatively correlated with self-esteem, while self-esteem is negatively correlated with Internet dependence, that is, when hearing some negative remarks in social situations, individuals will unconsciously associate with themselves, and this result is particularly obvious for teenagers with low self-esteem. 2. It is found in the study that the level of self-esteem varies according to different genders, and the level of self-esteem of men is generally higher than

that of women. 3. Self-esteem plays a regulating role in adolescents' social anxiety. Some researchers believe that self-esteem has elastic space, and the higher the level of self-esteem, the greater the role it can play. Therefore, it is suggested that teenagers can alleviate their symptoms by improving their self-esteem when they have social anxiety and Internet dependence. This study explores the relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety from both direct and indirect aspects, and verifies the idea that self-esteem can affect social anxiety, which is conducive to future research on social anxiety treatment. Current studies are mostly cross-sectional studies, lacking the discussion on causality in vertical studies, and future studies can focus on the study on causality between self-esteem and social anxiety. To deepen the relationship between the two.

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