Education’s role in physiological, psychological, and sociological influences on adolescents

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Education’s role in physiological, psychological, and sociological influences on adolescents
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ABSTRACT
This article sets out to explore the impact of physiological, psychological and sociological factors upon the period of adolescence. It begins by analysing the relation between adolescence and education and training, exploring the NEET agenda and policies developed to address this. The article makes use of Hall’s theory of storm and stress to inform an analysis of factors that impact upon adolescence, and the relationship between adolescence and education and training. Lastly, the influence of social media is analysed in order to further explore factors that impact upon adolescence self-esteem, overall education and mental health within the 21st Century.

KEYWORDS: Adolescence, NEET, Education and Training, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION
This essay analyses and discusses demographic changes surrounding the shift of the nature of the role of education from past to present. Additionally, examines the impacts of social media upon adolescent’s psychological, physiological and sociological factors. Moreover, this essay evaluates the historical aspects of adolescent’s school leaving age with comparison to 21st century norms. Lastly, it goes on to summarise education, training and learning conjoined to social media and the psychological, physiological and sociological factors impacting upon individual’s self-esteem, puberty and neurological changes within the brain, thus interlinking theory throughout.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION
Historically, young children and adolescents were completing adult chores and tasks to earn for their family due to the lack of income and the family being unable to pay for schooling and education (Price, 2018). However, in the 21st Century, this is not the case, children and adolescents are expected to attend full time education until the age of 18. However, adolescents were given the option to work from the age of 16. (Lipsit, 2018; Price, 2018).

According to Price (2018), there has been a sociological shift relating to children and adolescents attending school and education. In 1880 the Education Act was introduced, enforcing compulsory education until the age of 10. Additionally, the upper age regularly rose until 2015, when it reached 18 (Price, 2018). (Lipsett, 2018).

The Elementary Education Act 1870 acknowledged a framework of education for children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 13 improving the overall standards of education (Gillard, 2011). The evolution

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of this was to improve the skills of the British workforce, and the need to prepare children and adolescents for their voting rights (Gillard, 2011; Price, 2018).

The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which adolescents in England can leave education (HM Government, 2008). This act required adolescents to continue in education or training until the age of 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015. Additionally, the act allowed for young people to have the option to either stay in full-time education, undertake an apprenticeship or part-time learning if they are employed or self-employed (Price, 2018; Taylor, 2015). Furthermore, Nick Clegg proposed a new scheme intended to improve the lives of around 55,000 adolescents through education, training and employment and to improve their overall way of life (Eccles, 1999).

It is suggested that adolescents who are considered as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) have benefited from the age rising from 16 to 18, as it is now compulsory to attended either one of those sectors (Chandler, 2016). NEET statistics indicate the number of young people not in education, employment or training decreased within the range of 16-24. (Chandler, 2016). However, for a subset of this age group, the 16-18 years olds, the number of NEETS actually increased, leaving a question as to what was going wrong (Chandler, 2016; Taylor, 2018).

According to Paton (2009), children find themselves uncertain as to which route to take after education due to a lack of choice of education courses within their personal interest, which impacts upon the outcomes and choices for their future learning. Furthermore, Paton (2009) suggests there is a lack of resources being made available to young people and adolescents, consequently creating a negative impact upon their personal education and learning. Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools 2006 – 2009, began a development to undertake changes in education involving the voices of adolescents and young people being heard, thus engaging them in education, training and learning (Paton, 2009). Additionally, a diploma was launched which included practical experiences for adolescents to attend to prepare them for future work or learning (Paton, 2009). In addition, the age for leaving education increased to 18 and was proposed as a last resort and effort to engage adolescents in their education and training, and to support and prepare them for future work (Sheldon, 2018). Taylor (2018) believes allowing opinions, facts and voices to be heard may shape future learning and lead to progression. Moreover, allowing individuals to fulfil their personal wishes and progress in areas they would like, increasing the likelihood of further education and improving overall NEET statistics (Chandler, 2016).

In summary, the role of education upon adolescents, it is evident programmes designed to address the number of NEETs are improving circumstances for 16-24 year olds. However, it is projected the circumstances for the age range 16-18 are not improving, which is causing controversy. Evidence suggests young people like to be heard and have a voice whilst deciding their future regarding employment, education and training, opening opportunities and allowing choices, which could be looked upon as future learning. However, education, training and employment may be impacted by certain other factors, such as, puberty, stress, social media and relationships (Lipsett, 2018).
PHYSIOLOGICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ON ADOLESCENTS

Hall (1931) carried out observational research regarding adolescents experiencing conflict with authoritative individuals within their life. Hall found when conflict was seen the adolescents suffered mood disruption, higher emotional sensitivity and higher levels of engagement with hazardous behaviours, he termed this ‘storm and stress’.

Steirberg and Silk (2002) propose storm consists of adolescents having decreased self-control, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict with authoritative individuals such as teachers and parents, and additionally impacting upon the young person’s learning, self-identity and self-esteem.

Agreeing with Hall, Steirberg and Silk (2002) propose young individuals may distance themselves from authoritative individuals such as parents, as a result of adolescents believing parent and adolescent relationships entail both storm and stress factors. However, Bandura (1964) critiqued Hall’s ideas, and suggested adolescents develop at various stages within their life, contesting Hall’s beliefs.

Moreover, Hollenstein and Lougheed (2013) expand Hall’s ideas surrounding storm and stress, whilst addressing Bandura’s ideas. Hollenstein and Lougheed (2013) propose adolescents will undergo physiological changes, including neurochemical changes due to testosterone and oestradiol changes within their body, as occur during puberty. According to Revilla (2014) puberty can impact upon a young person holistically, including upon physiological, psychological and sociological factors. Moreover, Taylor (2015) proposes the norm of young individuals experiencing puberty is in the region of 11-12 years of age.

However, Eccles (1990) contests this and goes on to suggest this may differ, as it is understood many young individuals can undergo puberty at both later and earlier years of age. However, according to Delvin (2006) if society projected information upon individuals developing at various stages within their life, agreeing with Bandura (1964), the likelihood of stigma or stereotyping is less likely to occur. For example, if an adolescent does not experience puberty between the age 11-15, parents or guardians are less likely to become concerned and suspect there may be something wrong.

According to Revilla (2014) adolescents may experience psychological changes because of puberty, such as low-self-esteem, body dissatisfaction and mood swings. Additional research suggests psychological experiences may also include aggression (Nall, 2018). Furthermore, this includes physiological changes such as the maturing of reproductive hormonal activity triggered by the central nervous system (Maslin 2007). Finally, when a child undergoes puberty, it is suggested that this constitutes the difference between a child and an adolescent within society (Martin, 1996). Debatably, the period from adolescence to adulthood now inhabits a superior portion of young people’s life compared to previously. Social forces, including social media, are suggested to be affecting health and wellbeing of young people and adolescents (Sawyer, 2018). According to Sawyer (2018) it is suggested a broader and holistic definition of adolescence is needed to conjoin laws, and social policies. The definition of 10–24
years resembles more closely adolescent growth and understanding (Price, 2018).

According to Hollenstein and Lougheed (2013) behavioural outputs are not predetermined by the biology of adolescents. However, they can be influenced by the levels of hormones within their body, which interlinks with puberty, thus agreeing with Revilla (2014). Indeed, Nall (2018) reports that testosterone levels in males can increase aggression and impact upon behaviour agreeing with Revilla (2014). Furthermore, Hollenstein and Lougheed (2013) suggest environment also contributes to an adolescent’s social development and go on to suggest adolescents can regulate personal, emotional feelings through experiences and the biological mechanisms within their brain.

Evaluating Hall’s (1931) storm and stress ideas and Hollenstein and Lougheed (2013) from a modern perspective, individuals are looked upon as unique. Both nature and nurture are suggested to influence young people, and thus impact upon an adolescent’s stress indicators and storm factors (Lightfoot et al., 2013). Moreover, all adolescents and young people are unique, learning through both nature and nurture, environment and experiences, suggesting physiological connections with the environment impacts upon an individual’s overall behavioural output (Hollenstein and Lougheed, 2013).

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

According to Wiederhold (2010), social media can affect an adolescent’s psychological and physiological health and cause profound changes upon the way they communicate and interact. Their personal behaviour, including increases in aggression and violence, are all impacted, thus increasing the likelihood of psychiatric disorders, as previously mentioned.

Furthermore, social media sites such as Facebook are suggested to be connected to vast numbers of signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem (Wiederhold, 2010). Similarly, according to research by Strickland (2014), there is a conjoining of social media usage and declining mental health within adolescents and young people, further increasing violence and addictive behaviour. Stickland (2014) proposes adolescents and young adults are the highest social media users, and as a result of this have a higher risk of developing mental health issues. This then suggests social media may impact upon an adolescent’s education and learning. Gaetano Rappo (2014) suggests adolescents and young people who project low self-esteem and depression have an increased risk of low academic grades, education attendance and future unemployment.

Additionally, Wiederhold (2010) suggests social media may have a diverse affect upon the sociological and physiological factors of adolescents and young people, such as, personal opinions and beliefs, mental health including suicidal thoughts through depression and social engagement with society. Additionally, suggesting their addiction affects communication across all areas of society interlinking education and personal skills. Many social networks are suggested to be coming under scrutiny about their impact upon society and how they are destroying the way in which society works (Price, 2018). It is suggested that this has an impact upon adolescents isolating themselves, not interacting with society and again, negatively impacting upon education and academic levels (Wiederhold, 2010; Priest, 2018; Taylor, 2011).
CONCLUSION
In conclusion, there is strong evidence to suggest social media has a profound impact on an adolescent’s education, learning and training, and furthermore has implications for their personal physiological, psychological and sociological factors. Moreover, the age increase for adolescents leaving school generates opinions, as suggested benefits of this are controversial (Gaetano Rappo, 2014). However, it is additionally suggested to positively impact upon all young people to have the right to education and training, thus positively impacting upon their life as a whole (Chandler, 2016). However, statistics suggest there are still improvements needed within the 16-18 age range. Moreover, critiques have increased, suggesting more choice is needed whilst choosing education and learning programmes for adolescents to meet personal requirements, which may also improve the levels of adolescents overall attending higher education, training and learning.

REFERENCES


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