

The Impact of Teenage Media Use on Academic Performance, Peer Influence, Interpersonal Relationships, And Personality Development

Yitian Huang *, Huiwen Chen

School of Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, U.S.

* Corresponding Author Email: 470238652@qq.com

Abstract. This paper explores the impact of teenage media use on academic performance, peer influence, interpersonal relationships, and personality development. Based on data collected through a survey of 1,200 teenagers aged 13-18 and analyzed using SPSS, the study examines the different types of media used by teenagers, including social media, video games, television, and the internet, and their effects on various aspects of their lives. The results suggest that excessive media use, particularly social media and video games, has a significant negative impact on academic performance while also affecting peer interactions, interpersonal relationships, and personality development. The findings highlight the need for balanced media use among teenagers to foster healthy development.

Keywords: Teenage Media Use; Academic Performance; Peer Influence; Interpersonal Relationship; Personality Development.

1. Introduction

Teenage media use has become a pervasive part of modern life, with adolescents spending significant amounts of time engaging with various forms of media, including social media platforms, video games, television, and the internet. This widespread use raises concerns about its impact on critical aspects of adolescent development, including academic performance, peer relationships, and personality development. This paper reviews existing literature and presents new findings from a survey conducted on teenage media use and its effects on these areas.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Media Use and Academic Performance

The relationship between media use and academic performance has been extensively studied, with mixed findings. Some studies suggest that excessive use of media, particularly social media and video games, negatively impacts academic achievement due to time displacement and distraction [1-2]. However, other studies highlight that educational media use, such as academic websites and online courses, can enhance learning outcomes [3-4]. This review focuses on how different types of media impact academic performance, drawing on data collected from the surveyed teenagers.

2.2. Media Use and Peer Influence

Media use plays a significant role in shaping peer interactions among teenagers. Social media platforms, in particular, serve as a primary means of communication and relationship maintenance [5-6]. However, media use also exposes teenagers to peer pressure and the potential for negative influences, such as cyberbullying and social comparison [6]. This section explores how media use influences peer interactions and the extent to which peers influence media consumption behaviors among adolescents.

2.3. Media Use and Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships during adolescence are crucial for emotional and social development. Media use, particularly social media and online communication tools has transformed how teenagers form and maintain relationships [7-8]. While media use can enhance connections with peers, it may also weaken face-to-face communication skills and emotional bonds within families [8]. This review examines the dual impact of media use on interpersonal relationships among teenagers.

2.4. Media Use and Personality Development

The impact of media use on personality development is a growing area of research. Prolonged media exposure, particularly to social media and violent video games, has been linked to negative personality traits, such as increased anxiety, impulsivity, and loneliness [9-10]. Media use can also influence the development of self-esteem, social skills, and other personality traits during adolescence [10]. This section discusses how media use influences the development of self-esteem, social skills, and other personality traits among teenagers.

3. Methodology

A survey was conducted among 1,200 teenagers aged 13-18 to gather data on their media usage habits and its impact on various aspects of their lives. The questionnaire included items on the frequency and type of media use, academic performance, peer relationships, interpersonal relationships, and personality traits. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to understand the relationships between variables.

4. Results

4.1. Media Use and Academic Performance

The study revealed a significant negative correlation between time spent on social media and academic performance, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient ($r = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$). This finding underscores the detrimental impact that excessive social media use can have on academic outcomes. Specifically, teenagers who reported spending more than three hours per day on social media platforms demonstrated lower GPA scores compared to their peers with less media usage. This trend was consistent across various subjects, with a pronounced effect on mathematics and science scores. These results align with previous research suggesting that time-intensive media activities, particularly those that require minimal cognitive engagement, may detract from the time and mental energy available for academic pursuits.

Additionally, video game use showed a similar negative impact on academic performance, particularly in mathematics and science. The cognitive demands of video games, which often emphasize rapid decision-making and visual-spatial skills, do not necessarily translate to academic skills required in these subjects. The negative impact was particularly evident among students who spent several hours a day engaged in gaming. This suggests that while video games may improve certain cognitive skills, they might also displace time that could otherwise be spent on educational activities, leading to a decline in academic performance.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the nature of media use is crucial in understanding its effects on academic performance. Passive consumption, such as scrolling through social media feeds or watching videos, is less likely to contribute positively to academic skills compared to active engagement in educational content. Thus, the type of media use, in addition to the amount of time spent, plays a critical role in shaping academic outcomes.

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4.3. Media Use and Interpersonal Relationships

The study's findings on the impact of media use on interpersonal relationships were mixed. On one hand, social media was found to facilitate friendships, with 65% of respondents reporting that it helped them stay connected with their friends. This is consistent with the idea that social media platforms offer opportunities for maintaining and strengthening social ties, particularly in a context where physical interactions may be limited. The ability to communicate instantly, share experiences, and stay updated on friends' lives can reinforce bonds and provide a sense of belonging.

However, the data also revealed a negative impact of media use on family relationships. Teenagers who spent more time on media reported lower levels of family cohesion and communication ($r = -0.31, p < 0.05$). This suggests that while media use can enhance peer relationships, it may come at the expense of family interactions. The displacement hypothesis offers one explanation for this phenomenon, where time spent on media activities reduces the time available for family interactions, leading to weaker family bonds.

The negative impact on family relationships could also be attributed to the nature of media use, where individual-focused activities such as watching videos or gaming can create physical and emotional distance between family members. This is particularly concerning given the role of family support in adolescent development. The findings suggest a need for a balanced approach to media use that allows teenagers to maintain their social connections while also preserving strong family relationships.

4.4. Media Use and Personality Development

The analysis indicated that heavy media users were more likely to exhibit negative personality traits, such as anxiety ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$) and impulsivity ($r = 0.37, p < 0.01$). These findings align with the growing body of literature suggesting that excessive media use, particularly social media, can contribute to mental health issues. The constant exposure to curated images of others' lives, the pressure to present a perfect self-image, and the frequent comparisons made on these platforms can lead to increased anxiety among teenagers. This is particularly pronounced among those who are highly active on social media, where the pressure to maintain an online presence can be overwhelming.

Moreover, the study found a significant negative correlation between prolonged exposure to social media and self-esteem, especially among female teenagers ($r = -0.40$, $p < 0.01$). This finding highlights the gendered nature of media effects, where societal expectations and beauty standards, often perpetuated on social media, can have a more profound impact on female users. The internalization of these ideals can lead to lower self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, which are risk factors for more severe mental health issues such as depression and eating disorders.

The impulsivity associated with heavy media use may be linked to the nature of digital content, which is often designed to capture attention and encourage immediate responses. The fast-paced, reward-driven environment of many social media platforms and video games can reinforce impulsive behaviors, making it more challenging for teenagers to engage in sustained, reflective thinking. This could have broader implications for their ability to manage their emotions and make thoughtful decisions, both online and offline.

These findings suggest that while media use offers various benefits, such as social connectivity and entertainment, it also poses significant risks to teenagers' mental health and personality development. The study underscores the importance of fostering healthy media habits that minimize these negative effects, particularly during the formative years of adolescence.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with the growing body of literature indicating that excessive media use, particularly in the form of social media and video games, can have significant detrimental effects on various aspects of adolescent life. These results not only reinforce existing concerns but also offer deeper insights into the specific ways in which media consumption impacts teenagers' academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and personality development.

5.1. Academic Performance and Media Use

The significant negative correlation between social media use and academic performance observed in this study is consistent with prior research, which has repeatedly shown that excessive time spent on non-educational media activities can detract from academic achievement. The data revealed that teenagers who engage in more than three hours of social media daily tend to have lower GPA scores, particularly in mathematics and science subjects. This suggests that the time-intensive nature of social media, combined with its often-low cognitive engagement, may lead to reduced time and mental resources available for studying and completing academic tasks.

Moreover, the similar negative impact of video game use on academic performance highlights the broader issue of how different forms of media compete for adolescents' attention. Video games, while offering certain cognitive benefits such as improved hand-eye coordination and problem-solving skills, do not directly contribute to the academic skills required for success in school. The finding that video game use particularly affects performance in mathematics and science may be attributed to the fact that these subjects require sustained concentration and critical thinking—skills that may not be fully nurtured in the context of gaming.

These findings emphasize the need for educational interventions that encourage balanced media use among teenagers. Parents, educators, and policymakers should consider strategies that limit excessive media use and promote engagement in academically beneficial activities. For instance, incorporating digital literacy and time management skills into school curricula could help students better navigate their media use, ensuring it does not interfere with their academic responsibilities.

5.2. Peer Influence and Media Consumption

The study's results regarding peer influence on media consumption behaviors underscore the powerful role of social factors in shaping how teenagers use media. The positive correlation between peer influence and media use suggests that teenagers are highly susceptible to the behaviors and

preferences of their social circles. This finding is consistent with the theory of social learning, which posits that individuals, particularly adolescents, learn and adopt behaviors observed in their peers.

Social media platforms, in particular, amplify this effect by providing constant updates on what peers are doing, sharing, and liking. The desire to fit in and be accepted within one's peer group can drive teenagers to engage in media consumption patterns that may not be conducive to their well-being or academic success. For example, the pressure to remain continuously connected online can lead to excessive use of social media, as teenagers fear missing out on important social interactions or being left out of their peer group.

Understanding the social dynamics of media use is crucial for developing interventions aimed at promoting healthier media habits. Programs that foster critical thinking and resilience against peer pressure can empower teenagers to make more autonomous decisions about their media consumption. Additionally, creating supportive peer environments that prioritize positive media use, such as educational or creative digital activities, could mitigate the negative influences of peer-driven media behaviors.

5.3. Media Use and Interpersonal Relationships

The mixed impact of media use on interpersonal relationships, as revealed in this study, highlights the dual role that media can play in teenagers' social lives. On one hand, social media facilitates the maintenance of friendships, allowing teenagers to stay connected with peers and support networks, even when face-to-face interactions are limited. This aspect of media use can be particularly beneficial in contexts where physical distance or other barriers make in-person socializing difficult.

On the other hand, the study also found that excessive media use negatively impacts family relationships, leading to lower levels of family cohesion and communication. This finding aligns with the displacement hypothesis, which suggests that time spent on media activities displaces time that could otherwise be spent engaging in meaningful family interactions. The reduction in family communication can weaken family bonds and diminish the quality of support that teenagers receive at home, which is essential for their emotional and psychological development.

These findings suggest a need for balanced media use that allows teenagers to maintain their social connections while also fostering strong family relationships. Interventions could include promoting family media use policies that encourage shared media experiences, such as watching movies or playing games together, rather than solitary media consumption. Additionally, encouraging media-free family time, such as during meals or family activities, can help strengthen family bonds and improve communication.

5.4. Media Use and Personality Development

The study's findings on the relationship between heavy media use and negative personality traits, such as anxiety and impulsivity, contribute to the ongoing discourse on the psychological impacts of media consumption. The significant positive correlations between media use and these traits suggest that excessive exposure to digital media, particularly social media, may exacerbate feelings of anxiety and encourage impulsive behaviors.

The anxiety observed among heavy media users could be attributed to several factors, including the constant comparison with others, exposure to unrealistic standards of success and beauty, and the pressure to maintain an idealized online presence. This is especially concerning for female teenagers, who, as the study found, are more likely to experience lower self-esteem with prolonged social media use. These findings resonate with existing research that highlights the role of social media in fostering body dissatisfaction and self-esteem issues, particularly among young women.

Impulsivity, on the other hand, may be reinforced by the fast-paced, reward-oriented nature of many digital platforms. The frequent notifications, likes, and shares that characterize social media use can create an environment that encourages quick, reflexive responses rather than thoughtful, deliberate decision-making. This impulsivity can extend beyond online behavior, potentially affecting teenagers' ability to manage their emotions and make considered decisions in other areas of their lives.

These insights highlight the importance of promoting digital literacy and emotional regulation skills among teenagers. Educating young people about the potential psychological impacts of media use and providing them with tools to manage these effects is essential. Moreover, creating awareness about the risks of excessive media use and encouraging practices such as mindfulness and self-care can help mitigate the negative impacts on personality development.

5.5. Implications for Future Research and Practice

The findings of this study suggest several avenues for future research and practical interventions. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of media use on academic performance and personality development, particularly through longitudinal designs that track changes over time. Additionally, research could examine the differential impacts of various types of media content, such as educational versus entertainment media, to better understand how specific media experiences contribute to different outcomes.

In practice, these findings underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to managing teenage media use. Interventions should be tailored to address the diverse ways in which media impacts adolescents, from academic performance to mental health and interpersonal relationships. This could involve collaborative efforts between schools, families, and policymakers to create environments that promote balanced media use and support the healthy development of young people.

Overall, while media use is an integral part of modern adolescence, it is crucial to recognize and address the potential risks associated with excessive consumption. By fostering awareness, promoting healthy habits, and supporting teenagers in navigating their digital environments, we can help mitigate the negative impacts of media use and enhance the positive aspects of digital engagement.

6. Conclusion

This study provides an analysis of the impact of teenage media use on academic performance, peer influence, interpersonal relationships, and personality development. The findings underscore the complexity of media's role in adolescent development and the need for a balanced approach to media consumption. Future research should continue to explore the long-term effects of media use and develop strategies to mitigate its negative impacts while enhancing its potential benefits.

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