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Youtubers Influence of Young People

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## Introduction

Social media is our new form of entertainment and communication that has taken over our society. The majority of young individuals that use social media daily are seen to benefit their lives by developing a voice, creating or being exposed to social movements, a continuous accessible entertainment, and so on. Although social media is good for personal and business purposes, young people have been experiencing mental health problems because of the amount of usage and type of content on social media.

Within the last five years, there have been many studies that show how mental health problems amongst young generations are a prevalent issue due to social media. Specifically, an associated reasoning for young people's behavioral change is due to the amount of consumption and the type of content of Youtube videos.

On February 14, 2005, Youtube, a platform that provides unlimited opportunities for individuals to upload videos and watch unlimited content 24/7, launched and began a new form of entertainment that has changed the way our society consumes entertainment. Within the last five years, Youtube's main audience has been mostly teenagers, ranging from ages 13-17 years old, and many adults are unaware of their child's excessive amount of time spent on Youtube or how easy behaviors from Youtube videos can be reflected on their child's behaviors and actions.

Although Youtube has been popular for over a decade, a large amount of teenagers just recently increased their consumption of Youtube videos because of Youtube Influencers, the new form of fame, in which many of them are making a living and gaining fame by getting millions of views from their Youtube videos. In an article, "Social media celebrity and the institutionalization of YouTube", by Mingyi, it argues how there is a new strategy and platform

to become a celebrity, in which Youtube is seen to produce many celebrities by allowing a platform that encourages people to use their content for entertainment purposes.

These Youtube Influencers, also known as Youtubers, have to follow Youtube guideline restrictions that prevents them to produce inappropriate videos. However, Youtubes restrictions are not as strict as television restrictions, and sometimes Youtube deletes inappropriate videos after being posted for days, and many times Youtube videos that should be consumed by older audiences based on their specific content, can easily be viewed by younger audiences. With this being said, young people's consumption of soon deleted videos or these videos that can remain on the platform, are consumed and can negatively affecting behaviors and actions of young individuals.

Given that Youtube cannot control young people to limit what they choose to watch, many young viewers follow Youtubers who have good influence in the public eye. Youtubers like James Charles and The Ace Family who have relations with the celebrities we see on Tv, good behavior and intentions are recognized and can be seen to overpower the negativity that occurs in the Youtube Influencer community. This new form of fame of being a Youtuber is becoming very successful, where Youtubers are seen on award shows on Tv and even given out award, alongside huge artists. According to "The YouTubers phenomenon: What makes YouTube stars so popular for young people?" by Moura, P, it argues that Youtubers slang and body language can persuade subscribers to keep following them.

This new form of fame uses their individuality as their brand, similar and in relation to tv reality stars. However, Youtube is more accessible than TV, which is a reason why the platform is so popular. In addition, Youtubers are known to create an approximate ten minute videos. According to "I Want To Be a YouTuber", by Maddalena, Aran, and Jaume, it argues that

tweens are using Youtube to view funny reaction vlogs. More tweens traditionally absorb the entertainment than commenting and interacting in the comment sections. It also states how now tweens want to become Youtubers because the people they follow are financially stable and look like they are having fun.

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Youtube influencers are a brand new form of fame that usually starts with them showcasing their creativity and talent and then posting it on Youtube. Many Youtube influencers have become financially successful, that a handful have even become millionaires. In further detail, the majority of Youtubers who have 300k+ subscribers solely rely on their videos 'views' in order to be financially stable. A significant percentage of these Youtubers who financially rely on views and subscribers are known as Vloggers, and they showcase their daily lives in an approximate 10 minute video that consistently keeps millions of young people to click on these videos daily. Given the accessibility between viewing Tv shows and Youtuber's content, Youtube is more accessible than Tv, which makes Youtubers gain a bigger influence. This includes Youtubers showcasing their personal lives on screen, which produces a personal connection with their viewers. This contains a negative aspect of this influence, which are vlogs that contain outrageous behavior that is made to produce a reaction for their viewers can cause young individuals to have bad behavior and actions. Many Youtubers who solely rely on finances from their Youtube channel are not guaranteed to be in the spotlight or to continue to

make the same profit. Due to this unsettling career path of being a Youtuber, many Youtubers will post outrageous videos in order to get more views and subscribers. Reaction type videos is an example of a strategy that some Youtubers use to gain views, fame, and money. However, these reaction videos can psychologically affect young people, in a way where the Youtuber's behavior and actions can transfer to how teenagers' behaviors and actions.

To support the active influence Youtubers have over their young, is that viewers often participate in active and live chats with other fans on each video's comment section. Many Youtubers read their comment section and get the automatic response of whether the majority of their subscribers liked or disliked a video. With this being said, many Youtubers who have posted a controversial video have instantly posted an apology video a couple or a few days after based on their subscribers feedback. Therefore, teens know that their voices are being heard, making Youtube influencers more connected and relatable than huge celebrities that we see on Tv. However, these controversial videos have already been consumed by the viewers, and behavior and actions could have already been reflected before the apology video. Despite Youtubers being famous online, they are seen to live normal lives and could possibly be seen casually in the grocery store or in the neighborhood. Since many Youtubers depend on the number of views they get on their video for relevance and payment purposes, some of these Youtubers will do whatever it takes to be on the "trending chart" and have the highest amount of views as possible, and a strategy to have this goal met is by creating reaction videos.

Based on Youtube's growing popularity amongst young people and how Youtubers create a community and a personal connection with their subscribers, young viewers are vulnerable and are heavily influenced by these Youtubers. In an article, 'I Guess A Lot of People See Me as a Big Sister or a Friend': the role of intimacy in the celebrification of beauty vloggers,

by Rachel Berryman and Misha Kavka, it mentions that Zoe 'Zoella' Sugg has a Youtube Channel with approximately 11 million subscribers. The article argues that because of Zoe portraying intimacy of verbally telling her viewers that she is their 'big sister' and showcasing her personal life, her audience, majority are younger people, are drawn to her vlogs. Given this community that many Youtubers created, people who produce reaction videos can negatively affect their young viewers behaviors and actions, but also create a community for their viewers. Reaction videos are a type of strategy that Youtubers use to maintain and gain their following. Youtubers like Logan and Jake Paul use this strategy to gain fame and money. They are seen to be on the center of news and Hollywood sources, but normally on a controversial light. However, this kind of relevance only makes them more popular and grow their income. The negative side of their reaction based behavior in their videos are that these actions are being transferred and reflected on their viewers. Their viewers range from 13 to 17 years old, which makes the influence psychologically stronger and more effective amongst adolescents. In this paper, I will argue that the amount of consumption of Youtube videos determines how reflective actions and behaviors from Youtubers transfers to young viewers behaviors. In addition, I will discuss how important it is for parents to become aware of this issue and how we can decrease this psychological effect.

### Background

Youtubers have a lot of influence on teenagers and many Youtubers are very unaware of it. Technology keeps rapidly increasing and forming new forms of entertainment. With this said, popularity of Youtube will only expand and there needs to be more awareness of Youtube's influence so that we can cut down the amount of time teenagers spend on Youtube in order for bad behavior of Youtubers to not be passed down to their viewers. An article called, "The dark

Psychology Behind YouTube's success", by Stokel Walker, argues an extreme case of bad behavior of young people who become fans of Youtubers and eventually become addicted to these Youtubers. Youtuber's give out a lot of personal information which has led to bad consequences of young people becoming stalkers. Nowadays, many Youtubers have become more conscious, but many do not realize that their behavior on screen can be transferred to their young viewers. Another argument mentioned in Walker's article is the unsettling feeling of Youtubers fear of not staying relevant. This argument supports why Youtubers produce reaction videos. Youtubers like Logan and Jake Paul recognize that unrealistic and outrageous behavior gets millions of views. However, many Youtubers do not realize the amount of affect and influence their behavior and actions reflect on teenagers.

Teens can unfortunately become addicted to social media if they have access to it at all times. Teens who use social media excessively, have the highest risk of becoming addicted. Considering that Youtube is one of the many social media platforms that teenagers use daily, we must recognize that some teenagers spend a lot of their time viewing Youtube content. An article called, Compulsive YouTube usage, by Klobas, argues that young people would rather use Youtube for entertainment purposes, rather than academic purposes, and given that there is a recommended list of videos on the right side of the Youtube screen when viewing a video, that influences viewers to spend an excessive amount of time viewing videos from that easy accessibility and convenience to be easily entertained. An article called, "Is There A Correlation Between Organizational Features and Digital Communication Usage?", by Tamara Veselinovic, states that the design of Youtube's platform persuades people to keep watching more and more Youtube videos. In addition, Youtubes accessibility of 24/7 and unlimited entertainment attracts



young people to spend an excessive amount of time on the platform, and many parents are unaware of their child's amount of consumption on Youtube.

Given that young people are spending so much of their time on Youtube and on other platforms, other influences on other social media platforms have been proven to produce mental health consequences for teens, and parents are getting more concerned with the excessive amount of time their child spends on social media. However, parents are nowhere near aware of Youtube's specific influence, since the popularity of youtube amongst young generations started just a few years ago. A 2015 edition of the Journal Cyberpsychology Behavior and Social Networking, by Marry Ann Liebert, stated that teens who use social media for more than 2 hours per day were at high risk of psychological problems, high rates of mental health problems, and suicide ideation. Given this statistic, mental health problems are prevalent within the young generations because of social media. Therefore, given that Youtube is the second most used platform, right after Snapchat, Youtube's content is involved with mental health problems that are existent today.

According to A Systems View of Creativity in a YouTube World, by Mishra, P., & Henriksen, it stated that Youtube influencers affect viewers attitudes and behavior based on the influencers actions and behavior, and their overall mental health. Specifically, Vloggers on Youtube who do outrageous actions to get views, such as producing and posting reaction videos, can influence that behavior shown in the videos to teenagers' behaviors. Deviant behavior and dropping out of school has been seen to remain active due to the consumption of these videos. Further, the more videos that they watch of this kind of content can negatively affect them psychologically.

Argument

Individuals who are known to post reactions videos are Logan and Jake Paul. Logan and Jake Paul are brothers who have started produces short clips on an app called Vine. When Vine got deleted in 2016, the Paul brothers started Youtube channels separately, continued producing high energy and attracting videos to young audiences, and both of their following spiked in popularity. After three years of being active Youtubers, the Paul brothers have over 19 million subscribers each. Both of their relevance and popularity is significantly based on their successful strategy, which is producing clickbait attached with their reaction videos. Cioban, S., & Hatos, A. (2019). In the article, "The Analysis of Teenagers' Vlogging", by Cioban and Hatos, it explains how Youtube Influencers have different strategies in gaining followers, and reaction videos are one of the most used within young Youtubers.

The Paul brothers separately have at least 4-5 million views per video. However, the Paul brothers will never stop reaching for higher views, and they have been posting influential videos, such as diss tracks, having fake relationships, and having the juiciest clickbait that will get even more views.

Jake Paul's most viewed video was a diss track called "It's Everyday Bro", that was about his ex youtuber girlfriend, Alissa Violet. The 3:41 minute video gained over 250million views, with 4.4 million dislikes, and 2.8 million likes. This video was after a series of videos that he posted that dissed his ex girlfriend and dramatized their breakup, since the relationship was public to begin with. These videos accumulated double the amount of views than his average number of views, but his diss track gained the highest and he kept his audience talking about the drama for weeks, or even longer if he chose to post another video about it. Not to mention, he created merchandise that had the lyrics of the songs. These merchandise sold out instantly, even

though there were more visible dislikes than likes of the video. The “It’s Everyday Bro” video was posted two years ago and viewers are still commenting on the video to this day. Jake rented a mansion in Los Angeles and ferraris for his diss track setting. Jake, as well as the Team 10 team who are influencers and a vlogging ground signed by Jake Paul, were part of the diss track. Jake Paul’s ex girlfriend, Alissa Violet, was a part of the Team 10 Team but kicked out after the breakup. The majority of the videos dislikes were from Alissa Violet fans, and other viewers who reacted poorly of Team 10’s lyrics. For example, Jake Paul’s portion of his diss track was, “You know I kick them out when they ain’t with the crew. Yeah I’m talking about you, you begging for attention talking shit on Twitter too, but you still hit my phone last night, it was 4:52 and I got the text to prove...” After a few other lyrics, he went further to threaten his ex by saying, “Don’t make me tell em the truth.” Many viewers who disliked the diss track wrote a comment that said “Team Violet”. Although, Alissa Violet produced a diss track that had the same amount of verbal threats to Jake Paul in her video. The breakup was ugly, but a financial and fame success that led many viewers to get excited for the next breakup controversial video.

Logan and Jake got into a feud that caused Logan to negatively react by producing a bigger reaction video than the breakup diss tracks that Jake and Alissa created for each other. Logan took his anger of his brother into an opportunity to further his relevance in the spotlight and grow his net worth. Logan’s most viewed video is a diss track called, “The Fall of Jake Paul” and the video has gained over 235 million views on a diss track for his brother, Jake. The video has 3.4 million likes and 465k dislikes. The video was set in the same mansion and had the same cars as Jake’s diss track, “It’s Everyday Bro” to diss his brother. On top of that, towards the end of the video, he presents Alissa Violet in the video, which he knew would break the internet. The video ended with Logan and Alissa kissing. In the beginning of the diss track, Logan says, “You

ain't thankful for you fans , it's kinda funny. Do your investors know Team 10 isn't making any money? See it starts with the talent but it's hard when you have none... If there's one thing you should know, you dont f\*\*k with the logang.” This was a not so bad diss to a catchy song that Logan created. However, towards the end of the song, he says, “Now I got to put you in the dirt.” Then he brings in Alissa Violet, and this broke the internet. He furthers his diss by saying, “That's Alissa Violet used to be your chick. Now she in the Logang and you know she on my...team. Logang is the term he uses for his fan base, and he insinuated that they are hooking up, which then a year later, Alissa admitted to hooking up with Logan while she was in a relationship with Jake. Although all of this information is out there on the internet, many young viewers still listen to this diss track. In August, young viewers were still commenting on the video, even though it was posted two years ago. A lot of these comments mention how this song was the only song they would listen to, “Why am I still watching this when it's 2019”, “this is better than Its Everyday Bro”, and “I kinda miss the Logan Paul and Jake Paul beef bc all we have today is tati and James Charles”. Given that these comments were especially repetitive last month, young audiences like the drama on Youtube. However, we must acknowledge that the disrespect that Logan and Jake had for each other can transfer similar behavior to their young audiences.

These questionable actions that they all played a part in have more influence on teens than what they recognize. Many comments view these distracks as a form of bullying, but they keep teens interested and actively talking about these videos in the comment sections and other social media platforms. These conversations only keep these youtubers relevant. According to “Teen Videos on YouTube: Features and Digital Vulnerabilities”, by ManuelGarcía-Jiménez, and Juan, it argues how teens vulnerabilities can be easily influenced, and specifically Youtube content can influence young people's attitudes and behaviors. The most consumed videos that young people watch surround topics like sex, bullying, pregnancy and drugs. However, we have

seen controversies from what some youtubers post. Logan Paul posted the most controversial video, where he videotapped a dead body in Japans Suicide forest. His reaction videos got completely out of hand and this video backfired. Although Logan Paul was cut off by Youtube and Google ads and other partnerships, he maintained and grew his fame from his podcast and activity on his social media platforms.

These YouTube celebrities have become increasingly popular and are gaining the attention of young people all over the world. This is not to say that Youtubers are bad for our community. James Charles, a beauty Youtuber, was the first male to be featured on a Cover Girl cover, and have over 16 million Youtube subscribers. He promotes his support of the LGBT community and many young people look up to him. However, there are thousands of people who actively try to be a Youtube Influencer and Youtube cannot control the amount of time young people spend on the platform. We need to monitor the amount of time spent on Youtube to ensure there is a limited amount of influence, because some of these influencers mostly think about “what’s going to get me the most amount of views?” The impact of the Youtube’s influence on teenagers are only beginning to be socially noticed, most adults do not even know how often their child goes on Youtube and how much influence YouTubers have on teenagers' behaviors and actions. Although Youtube is becoming more strict on what people post, especially after the Logan Paul incident, it is impossible to control what every youtuber says or posts about, but it is possible for parents to control the amount of time spent on Youtube in order to lower the influence. Youtubers are even unaware of the influence they have over their followers, and it has negatively affected some teens behavior and actions. In the article, Compulsive YouTube usage, their argument surrounds the topic of Youtube’s influence among young generations and how teenagers are spending an excessive amount of time on Youtube. It

mentions the higher motive to use Youtube for entertainment purposes and how there is a lower motive to use Youtube for educational purposes. Overall, managing time on social media has to be taken more seriously, as we see many individuals spending hours in front of a screen per day.

### Conclusion

Reaction videos that Youtuber's post are known to really interest teenagers. Technology is rapidly increasing and not only do we need to accept it, we need to recognize how social media platforms are attracting young people. These platforms are providing online communities and different forms of entertainment that are endless. Knowing this, Youtuber's influence is so high that it has caused bad behavior and attitudes of some teenagers. Reaction videos are a reason why teenagers spend hours a day on Youtube. There needs to be awareness for everyone, especially parents, on limiting the amount of time on youtube if their child is using it excessively. Youtubers also have to be aware of what they are posting and the age group of their subscribers. I think Youtube is a great platform for being creative and for job opportunities if people want to pursue a career in the spotlight. Jake and Logan are controversial, but millions of young people are fans of their content, and their following is only growing. They are talented and know their audience well in order to give them what they want. More attention of the amount of influence that Youtubers have needs to become aware of the viewer and the producer. Reaction videos are influencing bad behavior among adolescents, as well as the amount of consumption of these videos. Adults need to become more aware of the type of content presented on Youtube and the amount of time that their children are spending on the platform to reduce influence that causes bad behavior and actions of young people.

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