

The Influence of TikTok on the Establishment of Adolescent Self-esteem

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Abstract. Nowadays, TikTok is getting popular over the world. By June 2021, China has 1.164 billion Internet users. Mobile video users in China are as high as 97.7%. In these people, teenagers are the primary users. This article explained the relationships between TikTok and the establishment of adolescent self-esteem through prior research papers in this field. This article can supplement the research on teenagers' mentality. This article finds that TikTok has a negative on the establishment of adolescent self-esteem, which influences their growth and health. Besides, this article predicts the future tendency of this relationship. The author suggests that society and parents should focus more on teenage users in TikTok, helping teenagers to build a healthy mentality.

Keywords: Teenagers, TikTok, self-esteem, short videos.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the world, the use of the Internet is becoming more and more popular. People can use the Internet everywhere in their life, such as using mobile phones and computers and so on. By using these electronic devices, the possibility of people exposing to society increases a lot. Since the appearance of TikTok in 2017, it had become the most popular short video platform. It advertises itself with the sentence, TikTok, sharing beautiful life. Tiktok's user base is growing rapidly, reaching 680 million users in China by 2021 [1]. By prior research, TikTok's use times were more than Google's [2]. It is a remarkable achievement for a new company like ByteDance. In today's society, there are multiple news concerned TikTok. Most of them correspond to the effect of TikTok with social heat events, such as the war between Russia and Ukraine, which spread during TikTok rapidly. Its page view gets to millions sometimes, which arouses people's intense discussion. From February to November, with the war continuing, people gave their points of view and debated with each other's on TikTok. Through this period of time, the author found that TikTok has become a powerful platform. The author also found that the main crowd in this debate is teenagers. They gave their opinions from a different perspective, this helped TikTok to become more diversified. Their comments also present to the people who do not talk but care about the news with their different views. With this crowd of teenagers, TikTok is generally becoming a huge platform like Twitter and Instagram. TikTok is even huger than them now. On TikTok, 75.5% of the users are under 2 years old 75.5% [3]. Besides, TikTok influences teenagers a lot, some videos help teenagers to get positive emotions, and some cause teenagers to become negative. Hence, TikTok's influence on teenagers should not be ignored. This influence should be well regarded and get enough attention.

Self-esteem is a critical element in research on teenagers. Everyone has self-esteem, they need this to be a better person who cares about themselves and others. Knowing about the system of self-esteem in teenagers can help to promote teenagers' mental health. By using the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale proposed by Rosenberg, the author can find how self-esteem is built in people [4]. Putting this system on the teenagers, the author can know how teenagers build their own self-esteem which is different from the other phases' people. According to the prior survey on adolescent self-esteem, Wei Yuan Huang indicated that self-esteem is a reflection of the individual's need for respect, and the level of self-esteem dictates how they recognize themselves [5]. Also, in Liang Ji Xue's opinion, teenagers can develop their self-esteem well by themselves [6]. In the research on children during the pandemic period, researchers found that 59.0% of teenagers reduced self-esteem during that period [7]. Most of the research in this field discusses the importance of self-esteem in teenagers. The research in the

article Impact of Social Media on Self-Esteem tells us that, spending on Facebook daily may lead to a 5.574 decline in teenagers' self-esteem [8]. Above their opinions, the author indicates that teenagers' self-esteem can determine a part of their personality and develop their mental health. Based on prior people's ideas, this article will try to conclude how teenagers build their self-esteem systems, how TikTok influences it, the suggestions on teenagers using TikTok, and similar applicants.

2. Teenagers' construction of self-esteem

2.1 The constitution of teenagers' self-esteem

Self-esteem is part of a person's mental health. There are many definitions of self-esteem. Applying this to teenagers, in the author's opinion, the self-esteem of teenagers is composed of two points. The first one is that teenagers need self-respect and self-love. They are not provided by any person like their friends or family members, but all on their own. Teenagers need to answer the question that 'who am I' during puberty. Teenagers can be respected by others only when they respect themselves first. The second one is that teenagers need to compare themselves with others to get self-esteem. That is because they need to know what status they have in this society. It can be applied to their grades in some examinations and rankings in the game. If teenagers do well in these activities, they can be satisfied with themselves. Then they will use this satisfaction to build part of their self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem means that people can recognize themselves, and unhealthy self-esteem has the meaning of 'forcing approval'.

2.2 The process of self-esteem

The progress of teenagers' self-esteem development is gradual and takes years to form. Self-esteem in puberty is very unstable. Some kinds of teenagers have more chances to communicate with others, so they construct their self-esteem at an early time. However, the rest of the teenagers have fewer times to get access to others, so they need to build their esteem after they become adults. Teenagers are all in puberty which period they develop their foundation of self-esteem. As they grow up and get access to more people in life, they have more chances to compare themselves with their friends and classmates. During this process, they will find that they have a huge or small wealth gap with others, then they can know what status they have in this society. Eventually, they build their various systems of self-esteem. Besides, if teenagers build their self-esteem on mature self-awareness, they probably cannot develop self-esteem after puberty [9]. That is because that these teenagers already have stronger psychological enduring capacity than their peers. When they unintentionally compare themselves with others, they rebuild their self-esteem rapidly instead of being affected for periods. Since it is a long for teenagers to develop their self-esteem, it is easy to be affected by some factors. The social platform is a crucial factor in this process. They give teenagers more chances to contrast themselves with others on the Internet instead of simple communication, which is of the time.

3. TikTok's effect on teenagers' self-esteem construction

3.1 The use of TikTok

According to the Use and Gratifications Approach, teenagers have some motivations to push them to use TikTok. They need to satisfy their needs for social status, emotion, confidence, and escaping attention. Due to the rapid development of society and the economy, teenagers are under huge pressure from assignments and adding to the noise of cities. They need to divert their negative emotion to something else [10]. Due to the strategy of TikTok, people can get some short videos that they have interested in and are professional at. Besides, TikTok will provide them with these kinds of videos for periods. Hence, they can all see their favorite kinds of videos instead of some irrelevant videos. They will be addicted to this model for a period and get lost in reality. Teenagers lack self-control ability. They can use TikTok to watch their interesting videos forever if they can. Since

teenagers do not be restricted to traditional videos anymore, most of them are immersed in TikTok at an early time [10]. In this way, teenagers or students use TikTok for information, communication, and maintaining relationships.

3.2 How TikTok affect teenagers 'self-esteem

When they use TikTok, they can see as many videos that they have never seen before, which refreshes their sense of values and horizons. This kind of sense should be continuous before the appearance of TikTok, but the short video platform interrupts this long-term process, affecting the continuity and consistency of self-recognize [11]. Causes the self-esteem of teenagers is not stable. One way they build their self-esteem is by showing themselves. Every individual can show themselves in this society, teenagers can show various personalities on TikTok [11]. By picturing their outlooks, and stories, they can get others 'attention and comments. The optimistic and positive one can bring enjoyment and satisfaction to teenagers, helping them to build strong self-esteem, which reflects how they feel well about themselves. On the other hand, the negative and aggressive one can bring depression and hurt teenagers, causing them to have depressive symptoms. For the latter one, it is difficult for teenagers to recover from social attacks because they have not developed entirely minds. In some cases, the cyberbully can change one person's behaviors and even make them think of death. According to the Blue Book of Society, there are almost 28.89% of teenagers have experienced cyberbullying [12]. People cannot ignore this effect on teenagers.

Another way they build their self-esteem is by watching videos from others. By moving their fingers easily, teenagers can get access to various videos. Different videos have a different effect on teenagers. The negative effect, here are two kinds. Firstly, some videos may be because teenagers change their values. When teenagers use TikTok, they can see many videos which are flaunting their considerable wealth, such as huge cottages, expensive clothes, rare foods, and so on. Teenagers will find their gaps with others. This gap sometimes can give them a sense of superiority if they are rich enough. However, to most teenagers, this gap makes them envy others and become jealous. The showing of material wealth is simple in the virtual world, the gap between it and life, in reality, may promote teenagers to have negative self-evaluation [5]. This can cause them to have a sense of comparing mentality, which leads them difficult to adapt to society. Besides, teenagers' old self-esteem is destroyed by these videos, they will cultivate hedonism and money worship in their minds unconsciously [13].

Secondly, some videos may be because teenagers have a sense of anxiety about appearance. There are plenty of videos showing their perfect outlooks and appearance. Since teenagers are busy with studying, they have no time to dress up themselves, and the big gap between them and bloggers make them feel self-abased. This kind of anxiety can affect their normal life. Teenagers 'minds are full of information that how to become beautiful or handsome. In addition to that, since the videos have high hits, teenagers easily follow them for high attention [8]. This misleads them in how they define and think of success, which may have an influence on their life decisions.

Thirdly, some videos may lead teenagers to have entirely different self-esteem than theirs before. There are many deformed aesthetic culture videos that crush teenagers 'traditional values and self-esteem [12]. During the pandemic period, teenagers need a platform to release their pressure. At the same time, the ugliness culture thrived. Many teenagers watch this kind of video just for fun, but this leads them to develop deformed values. They unconsciously hurt and even destroy others 'self-esteem for building their self-esteem. It not only give teenagers false self-esteem but also affect others 'normal life, which is not moral behavior. All in all, due to these effects on teenagers, the negative effect is more notable than the positive effect on teenagers.

4. The suggestions for teenagers to use TikTok

4.1 The parental intervention

Parents are crucial in teenagers' self-esteem. Teenagers spend their childhood and most of the juvenile period with their parents. Their early values and self-esteem is built by their parents. Home is the usual place that teenagers use TikTok [4]. To the prior people's findings, the parents' teaching ways have relevant relationships with teenagers' self-esteem. The high-esteem teenagers' parents will ask them to get their expectations and follow their strict discipline. The most important is that they give teenagers chances to speak out their own ideas with them. In this way, teenagers can build their individual opinions about different situations.

As mentioned before, teenagers need to compare themselves with others to get self-esteem. During the juvenile period, the people they get accustomed to are their parents. They prefer to get positive comments and helpful suggestions from parents. Hence, parents' words and sentences bring something to their children more than they thought.

Parents must intervene in the construction of teenagers' self-esteem by controlling the using time and communication with teenagers. With parents' intervention, teenagers can feel that their parents are caring about their mental health, resulting in high self-esteem [5].

Hence, parents should put more effort into building teenagers' self-esteem. Parents can help teenagers to decrease their depressed emotions and effectively adjust their self-esteem. What's more, parents should restrict children in a soft way. Sometimes the uncompromising way may cause the opposite effect on self-esteem [14]. They should communicate with their children more and participate in the process of making videos, and responding comments to from others. For the violent and unsuitable for children videos, parents should forbid in time, telling their children the reasons placidly. Besides, parent participants mean that they can support teenagers in their social problems, promoting teenagers to use TikTok correctly.

4.2 The rule of the TikTok

To promote children's growth in a healthy way, TikTok published the teenager model in July in 2018. It is a progressive way for the platform to improve the situation, and help teenagers to grow in a healthy way. This model can restrict the using time and prevent teenagers from paying money for bloggers. Effectively, helping parents to monitor teenagers for irrational consuming behavior. The content of videos is chosen by the platform, which can avoid teenagers to be exposed to unhealthy videos. However, the criticisms of this model are more than positive opinions.

According to the reflection of teenagers, there are some weaknesses of this model. First and foremost, the content provided by this model is too childish for some teenagers who already have entered high school. They think that some cartoons and knowledge are too simple for them [15]. Secondly, teenagers have many methods to break down this model, they can simply pass through the wall and use the normal TikTok [10, 15]. The teenager model still needs to be modified until it has a true effect on teenagers, even if it may cause a loss to TikTok. TikTok should choose from profits or teenagers' mental health, which is a difficult decision. Above all, parents and platforms should work together to guarantee teenagers grow healthily. Either of them cannot be ignored during teenagers' use of TikTok. TikTok should try to find more ways to cooperate with parents efficiently.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, as the symbol of the short video platform, TikTok shows various videos and information for people. TikTok provides enjoyment and relaxation for teenagers after classes. Since the Internet is so convenient for people, teenagers have more chances to use TikTok. Besides, teenagers are experiencing a period that develops their self-esteem. TikTok has had a huge influence on this period. As the platforms develop rapidly, more and more teenagers are affected by them. The

growing number of teenage users means that TikTok's influence on teenagers should not be ignored. This article sums up the prior research and gives the conclusion here.

Teenagers are the dominating part of TikTok. Their use times are far away from the adults and children. Hence, sometimes they decide on the hitting topics on TikTok instead of others. However, this means that they have more possibility to be affected by TikTok. To their self-esteem construction, TikTok affects them through their values, anxiety about appearance, and social problems. This negative effect on teenagers is bigger than the positive effect, causing teenagers' self-esteem to a different way. Some teenagers are disturbed by this sense for a long period. Their experience warns many people that we should focus more on teenagers' mental abilities relating to TikTok. Cultivating a good Internet atmosphere needs a lot of effort in a different way. The parents and TikTok should work together, finding a way to promote teenagers to grow up. They can begin by using time and the content of videos, which are basic for teenagers to accept. For future research on teenagers' self-esteem, the author suggests that people can focus more on how teenagers affect other teenagers' self-esteem. And how teenagers use TikTok as a social media to spread their feelings and thoughts which can affect not only teenagers but also the whole of society.

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