

THE INFLUENCE OF BLOGGERS AND PUBLIC FIGURES ON THE THINKING OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

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Abstract: *In the digital era, bloggers and public figures wield significant influence over the thoughts, behaviors, and decisions of the younger generation. This study examines how their online content impacts youth, both positively and negatively. Utilizing surveys, content analysis, and psychological observations, the research reveals that while influencers can disseminate valuable knowledge and raise awareness, they also have the potential to spread misinformation and foster biased thinking. The findings underscore the necessity of media literacy education to equip young individuals with critical analysis skills for navigating online information and forming independent judgments.*

Key Words: *Bloggers, Public Figures, Youth, Social Media Influence, Critical Thinking, Misinformation, Media Literacy, Digital Communication, Cultural Impact, Online Persuasion.*

INTRODUCTION.

The advent of social media has immersed young people in a constant stream of opinions and ideas from bloggers and public figures. These influencers significantly shape youth perspectives on politics, culture, and lifestyle. While they have the capacity to promote positive messages and educate their audiences, there is also a risk of misleading youth through biased or inaccurate information. This paper delves into the impact of influencers' communication on young minds and emphasizes the importance of media literacy in combating misinformation.

METHODS.

To analyze the influence of bloggers and public figures on young people, this study applied several research methods.

First, surveys were conducted among 500 university students (ages 18-25) to assess their interaction with social media influencers. The survey explored their favorite influencers, trust in online content, and how social media shapes their opinions.

Second, content analysis was performed on 50 well-known bloggers from platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Their messages were examined to identify common themes, persuasion techniques, emotional appeals, and the use of factual versus biased information.

Third, psychological observations were carried out through interviews with students to determine how continuous exposure to influencers affects their thinking and decision-making. Case studies were analyzed to identify whether influencers contributed to personal growth or the spread of misinformation.

RESULTS.

The findings of this study reveal several key patterns in how bloggers and public figures influence young people's thinking.

One of the most significant findings is that a large number of young people are regularly exposed to influencer content. Specifically, 78% of participants stated that they follow social media influencers daily, indicating that these figures have a strong presence in their lives.

Another important result is that many young people experience changes in their beliefs due to online personalities. 62% of respondents admitted that their opinions had been influenced by the content they consumed from bloggers and public figures.

Misinformation is also a major concern. The study found that 41% of participants had unknowingly shared false information they had encountered on social media, demonstrating how easily misinformation spreads through digital platforms.

Additionally, the research showed a tendency for young people to engage mostly with content that aligns with their existing views. 68% of participants primarily interacted with content that reinforced their pre-existing beliefs, limiting their exposure to alternative perspectives and creating echo chambers.

On a more positive note, the study found that some young people developed stronger critical thinking skills due to online discussions. 57% of participants reported improved media awareness after engaging with influencer content, particularly when they actively participated in debates or fact-checking efforts.

DISCUSSION.

The findings of this study illuminate both the advantageous and detrimental effects of bloggers and public figures on the cognitive development of young people:

1. Positive Influences: Influencers have the potential to educate youth on pertinent social issues, motivating them to engage in societal initiatives. Many promote educational pursuits, such as reading and language acquisition, as well as cultural awareness, thereby contributing positively to intellectual and personal growth.

2. Negative Influences: The algorithms employed by social media platforms often curate content that aligns with users' pre-existing beliefs, fostering echo chambers and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints. Some influencers may disseminate biased or misleading information, which can distort young individuals' perceptions and impede critical thinking.

3. Cultural and Religious Impact: Influencers also play a role in shaping cultural and religious attitudes. Some advocate for modern lifestyles that may challenge traditional norms, while others may reinforce extreme ideologies, potentially leading to societal divisions.

CONCLUSION.

Bloggers and public figures exert a profound influence on the younger generation, with the capacity to both disseminate valuable knowledge and propagate misinformation. To diminish the negative impacts, the implementation of media literacy education is crucial. Future research should concentrate on developing effective strategies to incorporate media literacy into educational programs, thereby empowering young people to become discerning and autonomous thinkers.

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