

The Impact of the Social Media Platform “Group Live Streaming” on Teenagers’ Values

Yang Zheng

*Department of Ethnic Musical Instruments, Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Shenyang, China
Alisa229521@outlook.com*

Abstract. This study focuses on the era where social media deeply permeates the daily lives of teenagers, taking the rise of the “Group Live Streaming” on the Douyin platform—a new form of collaborative live streaming with multiple hosts—as the research subject. The study primarily examines its impact on teenagers who are at a critical period of forming their values. It focuses on the specific effects of Group Live Streaming on various value dimensions, including self-awareness, interpersonal concepts, and social judgment, using methods such as literature review, content analysis, and case study to systematically analyze its influence mechanism. The research finds that although Group Live Streaming, to some extent, provides teenagers with a sense of community belonging and alleviates their feelings of loneliness through multi-person interaction and emotional connection, its negative impacts are more significant and widespread. These impacts mainly manifest in promoting materialism and irrational consumption views, advocating “quick success” and “shortcut” thinking, leading to the simplification of aesthetics and the objectification of interpersonal relationships. The conclusion of the study suggests that Group Live Streaming essentially carries the core of consumerism and utilitarianism, with prominent potential risks. A collaborative governance system combining platform regulation, legal frameworks, school education, family guidance, and individual literacy enhancement should be established to guide its development in a direction that benefits the healthy growth of teenagers.

Keywords: Teenagers, Internet, live streaming.

1. Introduction

Social media has become an inseparable part of the daily lives of contemporary teenagers, deeply infiltrating various aspects of their learning, socializing, and entertainment. Against this backdrop, the “Group Live Streaming” format launched on the Douyin platform—where multiple hosts collaborate to stream live—has quickly emerged and spread widely, becoming a new form of entertainment that is easy to imitate. Teenagers are at a critical stage in the formation of their values, and their cognitive patterns, social judgments, and identity formation are highly malleable and susceptible, making them particularly vulnerable to external influences, especially media content.

This study focuses on the popularity and impact of the emerging social media format “Group Live Streaming” among teenagers. This exploration is important for understanding how media shapes teenagers’ values and guides their healthy development. The study primarily analyzes the

effects of Group Live Streaming on various dimensions of teenagers' values, including self-awareness, interpersonal concepts, and social judgment. The research employs a literature review to systematically organize relevant theories and existing findings. The advantage of this method is its ability to establish a solid theoretical foundation and identify research gaps. Additionally, content analysis is used to code and interpret typical Group Live Streaming content in order to reveal the value tendencies it conveys. Case study methodology is also employed to deeply analyze representative Group Live Streaming events and their influence mechanisms, enabling a multi-dimensional and multi-level analysis. The ultimate goal of this research is to comprehensively identify both the positive effects and negative risks brought by Group Live Streaming, and to propose scientifically effective guidance and response strategies. To achieve this, the study will rely on the aforementioned multi-method approach for systematic demonstration and in-depth exploration.

2. Literature analysis

Group Live Streaming, a new form of live streaming that relies on multiple hosts collaborating and interacting to create diverse audio-visual scenes, has rapidly emerged on platforms such as Douyin. Its content characteristics, communication models, and social impacts not only reflect the new developments in digital entertainment forms but also deeply relate to important issues such as youth cultural construction, changes in consumer behavior, and value guidance.

In the article *Exploring the Impact of Online Live Streaming on the Shaping of Teenagers' Values and Governance Strategies* by Zhu Yongle, the positive and negative impacts of online live streaming on teenagers' values are systematically analyzed. The study highlights areas such as enhancing political identity and cultural confidence, and provides recommendations for industry governance. However, the research primarily focuses on online live streaming as a whole, without delving into the specific subtype of "Group Live Streaming," which is highly organized and emotionally interactive. The study does not address its communication mechanisms and psychological effects, such as emotional economy, peer pressure, and the construction of pseudo-environments. It also lacks a specific analysis of issues like youth career awareness, the transformation of entertainment consumption, and the amplification of group pressure.

This study, based on existing research, will focus on the content production and emotional mobilization mechanisms of Group Live Streaming, the potential influence of group interaction on teenagers' values, and the psychological effects of the pseudo-environments it creates on youth career decisions. The research will examine the consumption guidance under the "emotional economy," the amplification of peer pressure on short-video platforms, and the potential reshaping of teenagers' career views and labor values. This will fill the gap in the current lack of systematic research on Group Live Streaming and provide theoretical foundations and strategic recommendations for online live streaming governance and youth media literacy education.

2.1. Content forms, emotional interaction, and community building in group live streaming

Group Live Streaming typically involves multi-person collaboration, encompassing various forms of entertainment such as dance performances, costume shows, scripted interactions, and variety challenges. These types of content not only have a strong visual impact but also create high-intensity 'emotional scenes' through scenario settings, dialogue design, and performance chemistry, which immerse the audience in the experience [1]. In this process, users are not passive recipients of information; instead, they actively participate in real-time interactions through behaviors such as

barrage comments, virtual gift tipping, and liking or sharing. This participation allows them to gain higher “emotional value.” This interaction mechanism reflects an important shift in contemporary digital entertainment consumption: from material consumption to emotional experience consumption [1]. The motivations behind audience payments are increasingly driven by emotional resonance or community identity, rather than simply the utilitarian value of the content itself.

At the same time, Group Live Streaming leverages its multi-person collaborative structure to enhance content control and performance tension. The complementary roles and on-site interactions between hosts not only improve the professionalism and watchability of the show but also reduce the performance pressure and risk of mistakes typically found in solo live streams. This professionalized content production model further increases user stickiness, particularly attracting young people seeking a sense of belonging and identity within virtual communities. However, this highly emotional and commercialized interaction also carries risks, especially for teenagers whose judgment is still maturing, making them more susceptible to irrational consumption behaviors.

2.2. Professionalization of entertainment narratives and their potential impact on teenagers' values

In recent years, the “career transformation narrative” frequently appearing in Group Live Streaming content—such as topics like “from civil servant to full-time live streamer” and “giving up a stable job to pursue a dream in live streaming”—has been widely spread on platforms like Douyin, attracting significant attention. These narratives often use personal success stories as a shell, packaging complex career choices and real-life dilemmas into light-hearted and entertaining content, making them easier for teenagers to accept and even emulate. While these stories convey positive signals such as “pursuing freedom” and “bravely chasing dreams,” they inevitably obscure the structural risks and uncertainties in the real job market, potentially misleading teenagers in their judgment of the employment landscape and personal development paths.

This phenomenon aligns with the ‘Amusing Ourselves to Death’ argument proposed by communication scholar Neil Postman, which suggests that serious public issues are gradually diluted in the wave of media entertainment, ultimately leading to a decline in rational thinking and critical consciousness [2]. Teenagers are in a crucial phase of forming their values and career concepts, and frequent exposure to these highly romanticized career narratives may cause them to underestimate the value of traditional career paths and even foster “shortcut thinking” and a speculative mindset. Therefore, the career concepts conveyed in Group Live Streaming must receive the attention of educators and families, supplemented by appropriate media literacy education, to help teenagers form a comprehensive and rational understanding of careers.

2.3. The dual impact mechanism of group live streaming on teenagers' values

As an emerging media form, Group Live Streaming has a significant dual impact on teenagers' values. On the positive side, Group Live Streaming, through multi-person collaboration, cultural display, and collective interaction, strengthens teenagers' sense of community belonging and cultural identity to some extent. For example, some Group Live Streaming programs that focus on traditional Chinese themes or positive content subtly enhance teenagers' recognition of traditional culture and political values [3]. At the same time, participating in group live streams helps some teenage viewers improve their communication skills, teamwork awareness, and even self-confidence, especially for those with limited social resources in real life. The Group Live Streaming community may become an important source of emotional support for these young people.

However, Group Live Streaming also contains a significant amount of content reflecting consumerism and materialism, such as frequent displays of luxury goods, promoting “tipping rankings,” and emphasizing external appearances and instant gratification. Such information can easily lead teenagers to form value orientations centered around material possession and external evaluations. Multiple studies have shown that long-term exposure to such content can weaken teenagers’ recognition of the value of labor and long-term effort, while fostering a sense of comparison and anxiety [3]. Particularly noteworthy is that the “virtual intimacy” created in Group Live Streaming can provide temporary emotional comfort, but it may also cause teenagers to become overly dependent on virtual recognition, neglecting deeper social connections and a sense of responsibility in real life. Therefore, when evaluating the impact of Group Live Streaming, it is essential to approach it from both its positive and negative sides, acknowledging its cultural and social value while being cautious of the potential risks of value deviation it may bring.

3. Case analysis

Specific analysis of typical Group Live Streaming cases: Examples include the SK Girl Group, SLAY D Girl Group on Douyin, and the idol group SNH48 and “Chuang 2021.”.

3.1. Technological empowerment and scene reconstruction

SK Girl Group deployed 12 professional cameras at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center, achieving cinematic-level camera movements and multi-camera switching, creating a 'pseudo-live' experience [4]. This technical configuration not only enhances the visual experience but also breaks the single perspective of traditional live streaming. As Innis pointed out, the strengths of new media will give rise to new forms of civilization.

SLAY D Girl Group, through high-density dance choreography and precise timing, creates a visual climax every 30 seconds, successfully increasing the average user viewing time to over 10 minutes [4]. This content strategy is not accidental but is a deep adaptation to the platform’s algorithm rules.

3.2. The dual relationship between hosts and fans

Group Live Streaming not only represents innovation in terms of technology but also brings significant changes in the emotional economy. Top Group Live Streaming hosts usually need to fulfill 'private domain operation KPIs,' which include daily 3-hour targeted private chats, 'morning greetings,' and 'emotional guidance.' [5]. This behavior aligns with what Hochschild defined as “emotional labor,” which is the process of individuals managing, masking, or performing their emotions to meet organizational demands.

For example, hosts must maintain emotional connections with the “number one” user through carefully designed interaction scripts and emotional expressions, thereby increasing tipping conversion rates and user stickiness. However, this emotional labor is becoming alienated. The host’s performance is broken down into indicators such as 'gift conversion rate,' 'barrage density,' and 'viewing duration,' creating a closed-loop mechanism of 'data monitoring—emotional performance—capital extraction.' [5]. The host is both the subject of the performance and the alienated object, while fans unconsciously participate in this emotional exploitation by playing the role of “savior.”

3.3. The transformation of the idol economy and the evolution of guild roles

The rise of Group Live Streaming is profoundly impacting and even reshaping the operational logic and value realization path of the traditional idol industry. A significant change is reflected in the transformation of the idol training cycle and commercial value assessment system. Traditional idol industries typically rely on 3 to 5 years of systematic training and exposure accumulation, gradually realizing commercial returns through traditional channels such as albums, performances, and fan meetings. However, Group Live Streaming has greatly shortened this cycle and restructured the economic connection between idols and fans. “For example, former SNH48 member Li Hui, after transitioning to Group Live Streaming, earned more than 1.2 million RMB in a single live stream, an increase of more than 20 times compared to her previous stage performances [6]. Similarly, the fan support model for Chuang 2021 contestant Wu Hai shifted from the traditional “voting to debut” to “tipping to unlock exclusive talent stages” [7]. These cases not only reflect the shift from traditional idol industry revenue models, such as box office and copyright income, to tipping economies, but also signify the formation of a new “real-time idol-fan” relationship. In this model, the commercial value of idols no longer solely relies on long-term accumulated works and public image but can quickly be monetized through high-frequency, emotionally invested live streaming interactions. During this transformation, the role of the guild (talent agency) has also undergone a fundamental evolution, transitioning from a supportive service provider to the leader in content production and operations. “Currently, over 150 professional cultural and artistic troupes have entered platforms like Douyin as talent agencies, driving the ‘guildification’ of art troupes.” [7]. With their professional performance resources, actor training systems, and stage production capabilities, they have significantly improved the quality and artistic level of Group Live Streaming content. The involvement of these professional institutions not only promotes the development of live stream content in a more high-quality and professional direction but also redefines the public’s aesthetic standards and content expectations for live streaming.

4. Discussion

This study, through a systematic analysis of the Group Live Streaming phenomenon, reveals the “double-edged sword” effect of cultural products in the intelligent media era on teenagers’ values. Overall, its positive impacts are limited and highly conditional, while the negative impacts are more widespread, profound, and subtle. This conclusion requires a multi-dimensional dialectical examination.

The positive impact of Group Live Streaming on teenagers’ values is primarily reflected in its ability to foster strong emotional connections and a sense of belonging. The collaboration and interaction of multiple hosts can create a richer social environment, allowing teenagers to find like-minded communities and, to some extent, alleviate loneliness in real life. However, this positive impact is highly dependent on the quality and direction of the content. Statistical analysis indicates that such high-quality content is not mainstream and is easily drowned out by the overwhelming amount of entertainment-oriented information.

The potential negative impact of Group Live Streaming on teenagers’ values is mainly reflected in three areas: materialistic consumption views, success and knowledge orientation, and aesthetics and interpersonal relationships.

Firstly, in terms of materialism and consumption concepts, Group Live Streaming deeply embeds live streaming tipping mechanisms, and its content often deliberately emphasizes ‘conspicuous consumption’ and ‘symbolic consumption [8].’ For example, through “gift competitions” and other

means, it stimulates viewers' comparative psychology and tipping behavior. This mechanism can lead teenagers to mistakenly associate material possession with social status and personal happiness, thereby inducing irrational consumption behaviors and distorting their still-developing consumption values.

Secondly, the frequent presentation of "transformation narratives" and "overnight fame" cases in Group Live Streaming essentially promotes a success view driven by fame and wealth, while neglecting the process and advocating for rapid success in the pursuit of knowledge [9]. Such content leads some teenagers to underestimate the value of long-term effort and knowledge accumulation, turning instead to a belief in "shortcuts" and even considering abandoning their studies or traditional career paths. This tendency significantly impacts the core values of modern society, such as hard work and perseverance.

Furthermore, Group Live Streaming also presents potential risks of alienation in terms of aesthetics and interpersonal relationships. To attract traffic, some content deliberately seeks sensory stimulation, promoting a singular, stereotyped "internet celebrity" aesthetic, and even engaging in "ugly-for-beauty" sensationalism. This could lead to the distortion of teenagers' aesthetic judgment. What is even more concerning is that the interaction between hosts and viewers is essentially a form of quantified and commodified 'emotional labor,' where emotions are alienated into measurable, exchangeable commodities [10]. This mechanism subtly objectifies teenagers' understanding of interpersonal relationships, making them mistakenly believe that emotional connections can be bought and maintained through consumption.

In conclusion, Group Live Streaming wraps a core value of consumerism and utilitarianism in its entertainment facade. For teenagers, who are at a critical stage in forming their values, its potential negative effects far outweigh the positive benefits. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a collaborative governance system, composed of platform regulation, legal frameworks, school education, family guidance, and individual literacy improvement, to curb its negative effects and guide its development in a direction that benefits the healthy growth of teenagers.

5. Conclusion

This study, through a multi-dimensional analysis of the Group Live Streaming phenomenon, reveals its profound and complex dual impact on the shaping of teenagers' values as an emerging cultural form in the contemporary era. The main findings of the research show that the positive influence of Group Live Streaming on teenagers' values is primarily reflected in its ability to provide emotional comfort for some teenagers through multi-person collaboration and high interactivity. However, its negative impacts are more widespread. Group Live Streaming content is often deeply tied to consumerism, inducing irrational consumption views; it attempts to conceal the hard work required for success by glorifying "overnight fame"; and it alienates genuine emotional interactions into measurable "emotional labor," objectifying teenagers' views on interpersonal relationships. This impact is not solely the result of individual factors but is a consequence of the combined influence of teenagers, families, and platforms. The interaction between these three determines its ultimate direction.

However, this study also has several limitations. First, the representativeness of the sample may be limited, making it difficult to comprehensively cover teenagers from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds. Second, the study is primarily based on cross-sectional data and analysis, which makes it difficult to infer causal relationships and prevent definitive conclusions about Group Live Streaming being the sole cause of value changes. Third, the measurement of values is complex, and their formation is a long-term and implicit process, meaning that short-term observations cannot

fully capture these changes. Finally, the rapid evolution of internet platform dynamics poses a challenge to the timeliness of the conclusions, and the findings today may need to be revised in the future.

Future research on Group Live Streaming and its impact on teenagers' values can be further deepened and expanded in multiple directions. First, it is necessary to conduct long-term tracking studies by continuously observing and measuring a fixed group of teenagers, which will more accurately reveal the dynamic changes and long-term effects of Group Live Streaming exposure on their values. Second, efforts should be made to analyze the differentiated impact mechanisms of different types of Group Live Streaming content (e.g., talent shows, narrative interactions, gaming competitions) on various value dimensions, in order to avoid generalized conclusions and improve the precision and practical guidance of research. Additionally, in terms of governance and guidance, future work could focus on developing systematic intervention models, such as designing media literacy education courses for teenagers and family communication guidance strategies. At the same time, exploring effective governance solutions from the platform and content supply side to reduce the spread of harmful content is essential. Lastly, special attention should be paid to the potential impact of Group Live Streaming on vulnerable youth groups (such as left-behind children and teenagers from low socio-economic families). It is important to study whether this phenomenon exacerbates existing educational and social inequalities and, based on these findings, develop more targeted protection and support strategies to reflect the social care and policy value of the research.

In conclusion, the Group Live Streaming phenomenon is an important window through which we can observe the changing values of teenagers in the digital age. Only by acknowledging its double-edged sword effect, recognizing its limitations, and through continuous in-depth research by scholars, social responsibility from platforms, active guidance from families, and agile governance from policies, can we collectively embrace this new media form and ultimately guide it to serve the grand goal of promoting teenagers' healthy development.

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