

Negative celebrity influence through media essay sample



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Media has played a major role in society's life, and its proliferation in the recent decades has proved that it is not only vital in information dissemination but also plays a huge role in the make-up of society as a whole. The dictionary defines media as a " means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, magazines" and the internet " that reach or influence people widely. " At the onset of technological advancements, certain features regarding what media is and what it can do has also escalated. The internet, being one of the biggest sources for information nowadays is a big player in the discussion of media related topics.

There are certain issues with regards to self-consumed media that evolve around the wide topic of mass media. To name a few, topics such as media violence, media stereotyping, information privacy, and media hate are relevant discussions materials. The most prominent though of all topics related to media is influence. A few decades ago, the people who had the power of influence upon society and adolescents in particular were usually " limited to relatives, peers, neighbors and teachers with parents occupying the primary position of authority".

With the media becoming more aggressive, statistics not only show that heavy influence of the media is seen on adolescents but the research behind it gives the evidence. In the UK alone, adolescents " watch an average of 2. 8 hours of television per day, 82% of adolescents use the internet daily and 77% of 16-24 year olds read a newspaper during the week". These statistics show that almost all members of society comprised by adolescents engage in media affairs on a day to day basis. These studies show a more apparent media problem in today's younger generation all over the world.

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Negative celebrity influence has been a major problem in all aspects of life. Since the media has enormous power to share information, it also molds today's youth. A study of admirer-celebrity relationships shows that " 75% of young adults had at some time in their lives had a strong attraction to a celebrity and 59% of the young people under study stated that their idols had influenced some aspect of their attitudes and beliefs This type of admirer-celebrity relationship can be labeled as " parasocial, defined as the seeming face-to-face relationship that develops between a viewer and a mediated personality".

The relationship is of course one-sided, but certain studies show that " a fan may feel that there is a level of intimacy between them and the celebrity, that the celebrity is more of a friend than an object of admiration or desire. " The paparazzi have made it easier for the public to dive into the very private lives of celebrities, exposing their everyday activities like shopping, partying and sometimes illegal destructive behaviors. Since these are celebrities, whatever they do has a sort of glamour accompanied to it.

Developments in media have " guaranteed that celebrities can be observed at length, in a ' no holds barred manner, creating an ' illusion of intimacy' ". Celebrities then have an important role in the development of the youth because they offer " a variety of possible selves that a young person might wish to try out and provide examples of how to think and feel in different circumstances". Adolescents having problems coping with their daily lives, backed up by possible family problems can turn to these celebrities for a sort of ' guidance. And these youth cannot be blamed since the celebrities influence is so massive it is sometimes ' comforting' in real life.

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People who have “ weak attachments to parents or peers” can have celebrity attachments in an almost “ surrogate role”. Use of narcotics among celebrities, though made glamorous is not of course the only reason why adolescents turn to drugs. “ Young people do not form their opinions on drugs and drug use solely from media personas” they being informed by other avenues such as “ drug education in schools, local and national drug prevention campaigns, peer interaction and personal experiences.

An essay argues that adolescents look up to their celebrity idols, and observe for example whether his drug use has led him to lead a better life. If the celebrity idol has been depicted more glamorously and is actually having more fun than usual, the adolescent usually copies the act. If in the event that the celebrity’s life was ruined because of drug use, the adolescent may consider not trying it for himself, if not discouraging himself from long term use. Today’s celebrities have attained a certain level of popularity and power and have a heavy influence on young people.

Developments in modern media and the changing lifestyle of celebrities have been a breakthrough in today’s society. It is certain that the “ increasingly intrusive and voyeuristic media has inevitably led a proliferation of images portraying celebrity drug use accessible by young people”. In Hollywood, excessive portrayals of the celebrity’s private lives (videos and pictures) have led to alarming results for the youth. The surge of Hollywood stars becoming excessively thin, partying dangerously and being caught for criminal offenses seen in magazines, television and the internet have been rampant and uncontrollable.

These issues have terribly worried the parents who have adolescents. In an ongoing research regarding the relationship of Hollywood actresses becoming stick thin to the youth states that “ 80% of ten year olds are afraid of becoming fat and many of them are getting ‘ thinspiration’ from the growing list of Hollywood celebrities who seem anorexic. Moreover, research shows that boys as well as girls can be affected by this celebrity issue. Now, “ more than half of teenage girls and nearly one-third of teenage boys adopt unhealthy weight control behaviors such as skipping meals, fasting, and smoking cigarettes, vomiting and taking laxatives.

Aside from drug use and excessive weight loss among the celebrities today, the issue of smoking also comes into play. Cases like Mary-Kate Olsen at a young age appearing in various magazines while she was smoking are a cause of alarm for most parents. Many other celebrities have been seen this way, most especially with the “ proliferation of celebrity magazines and the competition for candid pictures, more shots of celebrities smoking are being published”. A more alarming issue to think about with regards to media is the prevalence of suicide.

Hollywood actors who have committed suicide had a massive effect on the society where they lived. Suicide attempts among society’s inhabitants are “ much more likely when a celebrity has taken his own life”. The media is a key factor in this societal suicide, where even “ fictional reports of a suicide actually have an effect”. Statistics show that in the “ month that Marilyn Monroe killed herself, the national suicide rate went up by 12%”.

Studies also show that after a “ national coverage of a suicide, 2. % of the suicide rate goes up”. It is evident that the media has a major effect in proliferating the suicide rate, but the question is, what really makes these people who are exposed to media commit these acts? The answer lies in their idolism of the celebrity. For the normal folk, if the celebrity cannot take living, what chance do they even have in life? With almost all aspects dived upon, it is true that celebrities have a huge effect on society, and the next question is, what is there to do about it?

References

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