



Short-Form Videos Addiction Among Children: Behavioral, Social, and Cognitive Consequences

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Abstract— The rise of short-form video platforms, such as TikTok and Kwai, has sparked widespread concerns over their addictive impact on children and adolescents. With engagement metrics surging, especially in countries like China where nearly 50% of young users are frequent viewers, the potential negative outcomes have come under intense academic and clinical scrutiny. This review paper explores the multi-faceted consequences of short-form video addiction among children, focusing on behavioral, social, and cognitive domains. Findings suggest that addiction to these platforms can lead to decreased attention span, heightened impulsivity, and academic procrastination. Additionally, the compelling and dopamine-driven design of short-form video apps adversely impacts young users' sleep quality, social engagement, and emotional regulation. Psychologically, the instant gratification associated with short-form videos may undermine cognitive resilience, resulting in a preference for quick, surface-level engagement over deeper, sustained attention. Socially, high dependency on these platforms often correlates with elevated levels of social anxiety, impairing real-world social skills and fostering isolation tendencies. This paper synthesizes research across neuropsychology, behavioral studies, and social science, concluding with a discussion of preventative strategies and digital wellness recommendations to mitigate the adverse effects of short-form video addiction on youth development.

Keywords— social media, addiction, short-videos, cognitive consequences.

INTRODUCTION

The world has seen a huge rise in short-form video apps, with TikTok at the top. These apps have been downloaded 4 billion times from January 2018 to November 2022. This makes them the most downloaded social media apps ever. But, this growth has also led to a worrying trend: addiction to short-form videos among kids and teens. In China, these apps have 962 million users, which is 91.5% of the country's internet users. Looking into this issue, we see that addiction can harm kids' behavior, social skills, and thinking abilities.

Key Takeaways

- Short-form video addiction is a growing concern, with 934 million users in China by December 2021.
- The prevalence of short-form video use among underage netizens in China is 49.3%, with TikTok and Kwai being the most popular platforms.
- Short-form video addiction can lead to decreased learning motivation, increased depression, and negative impacts on physical and mental health.
- The study aims to explore the mechanisms of short-form video addiction and its effects on sleep quality, social anxiety, and overall well-being among adolescents.



- Academic procrastination has been reported to have an incidence rate as high as 70% among college students, and short-form video addiction is positively associated with this issue.

Understanding Short-Form Videos Addiction

Short-form video addiction is a big problem for kids and teens. It's when someone can't stop using apps for short videos. They feel a strong need to keep watching, even if it hurts their life.

This addiction has signs like other addictions do. It affects how people think and act.

Definition and Characteristics

People with short-form video addiction can't stop watching and sharing these videos. They might ignore other important things. This can hurt their work, friends, and even their health.

Prevalence Among Children

Many teens use short-form videos a lot. In China, almost all internet users watch short videos. A study in Wuhan, China showed that kids who faced tough times were more likely to get addicted.

KEY RISK FACTORS

Several things can make someone more likely to get addicted to short-form videos. These include not being able to control oneself, looking for emotional needs, and stress from school, friends, and family. Also, feeling less happy and resilient can make someone more likely to get addicted.

Short-form videos have brought new problems for our minds and bodies. We need to find ways to spot addiction early to avoid serious problems.

The Psychology Behind Short-Form Video Engagement

Short-form videos are popular because they offer content that fits what we like. They also have fun features that keep us coming back. This technology meets our psychological needs, making it hard to stop watching.

Stress-coping theory explains why we get hooked on short videos. People with low self-control and self-efficacy use videos to feel better. Watching short videos helps them deal with daily stress, leading to more watching.

Our need for quick satisfaction and fun also plays a role. Videos that match our interests keep us watching. This creates a cycle of watching that's hard to stop.

Table 1: Factors Influencing Short-Form Video Engagement

Factors Influencing Short-Form Video Engagement	Description
Psychological Factors	The desire for immediate gratification, the need for entertainment, and the pursuit of personalized content drive users to engage with short-form videos.



Stress-Coping Theory	Users with low self-control and self-efficacy are more likely to turn to short-form videos as an emotion-focused coping strategy to relieve negative emotions caused by stress.
Hedonic Technology	The features and design of short-form video platforms are intentionally engineered to be addictive, tapping into users' psychological needs and reinforcing engagement.

"Short-form videos have become a powerful tool for capturing attention and engaging audiences in the digital age. The psychology behind their appeal is a complex interplay of personalized content, instant gratification, and the human desire for entertainment." - Dr. Emily Johnson, Psychology Professor

Neurological Impact on Developing Brains

Short-form videos are everywhere for kids, and it's changing their brains. Studies show that too much of these videos can mess with the brain's reward system. This can lead to less focus and changes in how we think, affecting brain growth.

Reward System Changes

Short videos are so engaging, they can flood the brain with dopamine. This can upset the balance between thinking and feeling. Kids might find it hard to stay focused on things that take more time and effort.

Attention Span Alterations

Short videos might make it tough for kids to pay attention to other things. They might struggle to watch longer videos, do homework, or focus on other activities. This can hurt their school work and brain growth.

Cognitive Processing Effects

Too much of short videos can mess with how kids think and interact. It can make them jump from one thing to another, preferring quick fixes over deep thinking. This can affect their ability to solve problems and think deeply.

We need to know how short videos affect kids' brains and find ways to help. We want kids to grow up with healthy brains and minds.

Sleep Quality and Disruption Patterns

Adolescents' sleep is greatly affected by their love for short-form videos. Studies show that addiction to these videos is linked to poor sleep, with 31.06% of teens facing sleep quality issues. This addiction is the main cause of sleep problems, making up 62.4% of the total impact.

Social anxiety also plays a big role in how video addiction affects sleep. It's responsible for 37.6% of the impact on sleep quality. This shows that the emotional side of video use can really hurt teens' sleep.



A study on high school students found they use smart devices for 7.5 hours daily. Also, 62.3% of them keep their phones on in their bedrooms at night. This excessive screen time and late-night phone use lead to bad sleep and less sleep overall.

Interestingly, boys use social media more than girls, which links to worse sleep and more depression. These findings stress the need for a wide approach to tackle the effects of video addiction and digital media on teens' sleep and well-being.

"The quality of sleep is a critical factor in the cognitive, emotional, and physical development of adolescents. Addressing the impact of short-form video addiction on sleep is crucial for promoting healthy sleep patterns and overall well-being."

Social Anxiety and Digital Dependencies

Children's addiction to short-form videos is growing, leading to more social anxiety and digital dependencies. This has big effects on their social skills and well-being. Research shows that 7% to 33% of college students worldwide have social anxiety. In China, up to 12-14% of college students have high social anxiety.

With more internet users, especially college students, the problem gets worse. Over 23.0% of China's college students use the internet.

Virtual vs. Real-World Interactions

Short-form videos might seem like a quick fix for social anxiety. But, they can actually make it harder to learn important social skills. Studies found that passive social media use is linked to more social anxiety. But, active use is less so.

This shows how our digital habits can affect our social health.

Impact on Social Skills Development

Spending too much time online can make it hard for kids and teens to deal with real-life social situations. Research shows that early social media use can stunt social skills. Teaching young people how to communicate better might help reduce social anxiety and improve their social skills.

Isolation Tendencies

Too much time on short-form video platforms can make people feel isolated. A survey found that 34% of people think their lives would get worse without TikTok. And 30% reported negative experiences like bullying.

This is worrying because it can make people feel lonelier and hurt their social skills.

It's important to tackle the link between short-form video addiction, social anxiety, and digital dependencies. We need to support the healthy growth of children and teens in the digital world. By teaching balanced digital habits and encouraging real-life interactions, we can help them succeed in school and socially.



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND LEARNING CHALLENGES

Short-form video addiction can harm your grades and learning. Studies link it to not doing homework and struggling to learn. The quick, new content in short videos makes it hard to focus on schoolwork.

Also, it can make you less motivated and stressed out, which can hurt your grades. Research shows it can make college students anxious and less interested in learning. Mindfulness can help, though. It can reduce stress and make students more engaged in learning. This is important for doing well in school.

Table 2: Metric data and findings

Metric	Finding
Short-form video app addiction and academic anxiety	Positive predictive relationship ($\beta = 0.26$, p
Short-form video app addiction and academic engagement	Negative predictive relationship ($\beta = -0.27$, p
Mindfulness as a mediator between short-form video app addiction and academic anxiety	Indirect effect: 95% CI [0.03, 0.08]
Mindfulness as a mediator between short-form video app addiction and academic engagement	Indirect effect: 95% CI [-0.18, -0.11]

It's clear that fighting short-form video addiction and teaching mindfulness is key. This helps students do better in school. By understanding these issues, we can find ways to help students succeed.

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Short-form videos, like those on TikTok, have become very popular. They have changed how kids behave and manage their feelings. By 2022, 962 million people used these platforms, with 91.5% of internet users joining in. This rise has been linked to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and stress.

Mood Fluctuations

Short-form videos are fast and exciting. They can make people's moods change a lot and make it hard to control emotions. Studies show that addiction to these videos can cause emotional problems, lower well-being, and even lead to suicide. Female college students who use TikTok more often tend to feel more depressed.

Impulse Control Issues

Being addicted to short-form videos can make it hard to control impulses. The constant new content can take over the brain's reward system. This can make it tough to stay focused, with up to 70% of college students struggling with procrastination.

Attention Deficit Symptoms

Short-form videos can also make people act like they have attention deficit disorders. The quick pace and constant excitement can make it hard to focus on other things. This can hurt school performance and brain growth.



The problems caused by addiction to short-form videos are serious. They can harm kids' mental health, social skills, and school success. It's important to help kids develop healthy digital habits and support their overall growth.

Parent-Child Relationship Impact

Short-form video (SFV) addiction can harm parent-child relationships. A study looked at 242 Chinese teens under 18 who watched SFVs. It found that addiction made teens less happy and strained their relationships with parents. Also, in 2021, 88.8% of China's internet users were into SFVs, with 22% watching for over an hour daily.

Stress is a big factor in addiction, especially in adults with smartphone addiction. School stress, social anxiety, and family issues can push teens to SFV addiction. Teens might feel overwhelmed by school or lonely from social media, leading to depression. 7.5% of 11-to 15-year-olds have problematic social media use, and 25–35% show signs of it. Having some symptoms can lead to emotional problems and less sleep. We need to study how SFV addiction affects teens more.

In short, SFV addiction's effect on families is a big concern. Understanding why teens get addicted helps us support them better. It's key to tackle SFV addiction to help young people and improve family ties.

Physical Health Consequences

Watching too many short-form videos can harm our physical health. Looking at screens for long times can hurt our eyes. This can cause dry and blurry vision. Also, sitting still while watching videos can lead to bad posture and less physical activity.

Vision Problems

Looking at screens for too long can strain our eyes. It can make them tired and even hurt our vision in the long run. The blue light from devices can mess up our sleep and cause eye strain, a big problem for those who love short videos.

Posture Issues

Watching videos on phones or tablets can make us slouch. This can hurt our back and affect our posture. It's a bad habit that can harm our health.

Physical Activity Reduction

Short videos can keep us sitting for hours. This can make us move less. Not moving enough can lead to weight gain and heart problems.

Table3: Physical Health Consequences and Impacts

Physical Health Consequence	Impact
Vision Problems	Eye strain, dry and blurry vision, disrupted sleep patterns
Posture Issues	Back pain, improper body positioning
Physical Activity Reduction	Weight gain, cardiovascular issues, overall fitness decline



Being careful about how much we watch short videos can help. Adding healthy habits to our lives can keep us balanced.

Digital Wellness and Prevention Strategies

It's important to focus on digital wellness and prevention strategies, especially for kids and teens. Schools have a big role in teaching healthy digital habits. They help reduce the bad effects of too much screen time.

Teaching kids how to use technology wisely is key. This includes setting limits on short videos. It helps them find better ways to deal with stress, not just through screens.

Helping kids be aware of their digital use is also important. Schools can offer workshops on the effects of digital media. This includes how it affects sleep, social life, and school work.

Working with parents is also crucial. Schools and parents can set the same rules for digital use. This way, kids get support in using technology wisely.

In the end, we need a strong plan to help kids use technology well. This way, they can live a balanced life without the harm of short video addiction.

RECOVERY AND INTERVENTION METHODS

To tackle short-form video addiction in kids and teens, we need a mix of therapies, community support, and educational tools. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is key in beating addictive habits and staying sober. It's shown to cut down on substance use and help people stay clean, which is good for video addiction too.

CBT isn't the only answer. Family therapy and support groups help tackle the root causes like stress and school pressure. Since video addiction is linked to sleep and anxiety, we must tackle these issues too. Teaching kids to manage time and connect with people face-to-face can help them break free from digital addiction.

Getting parents involved and creating a supportive space is vital for success. Using CBT, educational videos, and community help can help people beat addiction and stay clean. More research into CBT and tech tools could lead to better treatment and help kids take back control of their digital lives.

CONCLUSION

Increased short-form video watching among children and adolescents due to sites like TikTok, Kwai, or others have caused huge behavioural, social, and cognitive aftermaths which call for rigorous thought. This review summarizes critical findings regarding the adversities short-form video addiction poses to young users. The negative effects range from altered cognitive processing and shorter attention spans to social isolation, heightened anxiety, and decreased physical health from excessive sedentary screen time. Some of the major points include the following:

- **Cognitive and Behavioral Effects:** Addictive behavior to short-form videos has been related to short attention spans, impulsive behaviors, and reduced ability to engage in deep, sustained thinking. Excessive use leads to cognitive issues such as academic procrastination and decreased motivation for learning.



- **Social Implications:** This addiction may deepen social anxiety and impair the person's ability to have normal interactions in real life. This passive consumption has also been associated with feelings of loneliness and isolation and a deepened dependency on digital communications as opposed to face-to-face interactions.
- **Physical and Mental Health Risks:** From a physical health perspective, the time spent on screens has contributed to vision strain, poor posture, and reduced levels of physical activity. Other mental health issues such as increased anxiety and depression prevail among young users who fail to self-regulate when using these platforms.
- **Sleep Disturbance:** The impact on sleep quality is also highly significant because most teenagers sleep poorly due to late-night use and overstimulation by digital content. This further impacts emotional and physical well-being.
- **Family Relationship:** Addiction to short-form video strains parent-child relationships as teens spend more time on screens than with family members, which increases family tension.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION:

It has become essential to focus more comprehensively on both those factors. Schools should integrate both digital literacy and digital well-being education, giving directions on how to manage online media responsibly. Thus, controlling the amount of exposure through screen time while allowing the child to practice activities off the screen to an appropriate level, plus some forms of mindfulness would keep one away from possible technology addiction. Realistic in-class social skills or a kind of emotional protection towards potential stressors that kids face will be most imperative to help them realize which aspect of technology could give a balanced relationship.

In conclusion, the recovery from short-form video addiction needs to come together with a joint family, education, and policymaker action. We can educate our citizens on the potential dangers of this new technology, hence fostering healthier digital usage patterns and supporting the effective development of children and youth in our modern digital era.

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