



## Vitagen Technologies for the Developing Media Mentality of Youth

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the application of vitagen technologies in shaping the media mentality of youth in the digital age. Drawing on recent literature and empirical studies, it analyzes how digital tools influence cognitive, emotional, and social development among adolescents. The study emphasizes both the empowering potential of media engagement and the challenges posed by digital environments. By evaluating educational frameworks, media literacy initiatives, and social media behavior, the paper highlights strategies for integrating youth into digital culture responsibly. The research advocates for balanced, context-sensitive approaches to media education, fostering critical thinking and emotional resilience in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

**Keywords:** *Vitagen Technologies; Media Mentality; Digital Youth Culture; Media Literacy; Adolescent Development*

### **Introduction**

The integration of digital technologies in the lives of youth has become a prominent focus of academic inquiry, particularly as it pertains to the development of media mentality among young individuals. The literature reveals a multifaceted landscape where digital tools serve not only as communication mediums but also as platforms for creative expression, educational enhancement, and social interaction.

(Griffiths, 2007) highlights the role of cell phones as multimedia tools that empower South African youth to share their narratives. By employing Pavlik's Journalism Competencies, the article underscores the necessity for ethical and skilled reporting in the digital age, where youth can harness their creative energy to foster social responsibility and entrepreneurial spirit. This foundational work sets the stage for understanding how youth can actively engage with media and contribute to the discourse surrounding their own experiences.

Building on this, (L. Sr. Mitchell, 2012) explores the evolving landscape of new literacy and digital learning, emphasizing the need for multiple literacies beyond traditional print literacy. Their findings suggest that youth are inherently adapting to new literacy practices, particularly through video production, which serves as a vehicle for fostering creativity and engagement with digital content. This

perspective aligns with (Griffiths, 2007)'s assertion of youth empowerment through media, further illustrating the significance of digital tools in shaping youth culture.

In contrast, (Abdul Gani, 2017) presents a cautionary view regarding the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of digital natives. The article argues for the necessity of parental guidance to navigate the complexities of technology use, highlighting both the potential benefits and detrimental effects of ICT on youth. This critical evaluation of technology's dual impact underscores the importance of fostering a balanced approach to digital engagement.

(A. Riendeau, 2019) expands on the educational implications of digital media literacy, focusing on teacher collaboration to enhance high school students' skills in recognizing bias and reliability in media. This study raises pertinent questions about the effectiveness of current curricula in equipping students with essential media literacy skills, thereby addressing the challenges posed by the pervasive influence of social media on adolescent cognition.

(Pawluczuk et al., 2019) delve into the social impact of digital youth work, defining digital literacy as a process of accessing and creating content. Their research emphasizes the need for evaluations of digital youth projects to understand their social implications, thereby bridging the gap between youth engagement and the broader societal consequences of digital media consumption.

(Magis-Weinberg et al., 2021) shift the focus to the implications of digital media on the mental health of early adolescents in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). They advocate for a nuanced understanding of social media's effects, urging further research to identify both vulnerabilities and resilience among youth. This perspective is crucial for developing context-specific strategies to promote healthy digital engagement.

(E. Torres et al., 2021) provide a systematic review of the impact of physical-digital play technologies on child development, revealing mixed outcomes regarding interactivity and engagement. Their findings contribute to the ongoing discourse about the role of digital play in fostering developmental skills, further complicating the narrative around technology's influence on youth.

(Purington et al., 2022) introduce the Youth Social Media Literacy Inventory, aiming to assess young adolescents' competencies in navigating social media. This empirical validation of social media literacy underscores the importance of equipping youth with the necessary skills to mitigate risks associated with digital communication.

Finally, (Timotheou et al., 2022) examine the broader educational context of digital technology integration, revealing a complex interplay of factors that influence its impact on learning outcomes. Their literature review highlights the need for continued exploration of ICT's role in education, particularly concerning equity and inclusion.

Collectively, these articles illustrate the dynamic relationship between youth and digital technologies, emphasizing both the opportunities for empowerment and the challenges that accompany this digital engagement. The literature underscores the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of how these technologies shape the media mentality of youth, informing future research and educational practices.

## ***Literature Review***

In "Call on me: the cell phone: a multi-media tool of communication amongst South African youth and how it can be used to platform youth stories for media and advertising," (Griffiths, 2007)

explores the transformative potential of mobile technology in shaping the media landscape for South African youth. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of how cell phones can serve as powerful tools for storytelling and communication, particularly in the context of marginalized youth.

(Griffiths, 2007) employs Pavlik's Journalism Competencies in the Digital Age to frame her discussion, categorizing competencies into tools and context. The tools outlined—such as news gathering, editing, storytelling, and new media literacy—are particularly relevant in an era where digital engagement is paramount. The emphasis on these competencies highlights the necessity for young individuals to not only consume but also produce media content that reflects their realities and challenges. This approach encourages critical engagement with media, fostering skills that are essential for navigating the complex landscape of digital information.

The article also addresses the context of media judgment, ethics, and civic knowledge, underscoring the importance of maintaining high standards of truth and accuracy in journalism. (Griffiths, 2007) argues that as the credibility of traditional news sources wanes, the responsibility falls on new media creators—especially youth—to uphold ethical standards and contribute to a more trustworthy media environment. This call for ethical rigor is particularly salient given the pervasive misinformation in digital spaces, making the development of media literacy among youth a critical focus.

Moreover, (Griffiths, 2007) presents Project M as an initiative that leverages the capabilities of mobile technology to empower youth. By utilizing cell phones as platforms for storytelling, the project not only amplifies underrepresented voices but also cultivates a sense of social responsibility among participants. The initiative aims to create a youth news station that not only addresses pressing social issues but also fosters a community of future journalists who are equipped with the necessary skills and ethical frameworks to navigate the media landscape.

The article's positive outlook on the potential for mobile technology to enhance youth engagement with media is compelling. (Griffiths, 2007) posits that by harnessing the creative energy of young people and their access to information, Project M can facilitate freedom of expression and communication. This aligns with the broader goal of empowering youth to articulate their experiences and perspectives, thus contributing to a richer media narrative.

In "The effects new literacy and digital learning have on our youth," (L. Sr. Mitchell, 2012) delve into the transformative impact of new media on educational practices and youth culture. The authors draw upon a robust foundation of research, particularly from the Digital Media and Learning Research Hub, to explore the necessity of cultivating multiple literacies beyond traditional print literacy. This perspective is particularly relevant in today's high-tech and multicultural society, where the skills required for effective communication and learning are rapidly evolving.

The article identifies three distinct stages that characterize youth culture in the digital age, illustrating how students are engaging with new literacy practices often unconsciously. This observation is critical as it underscores the organic integration of digital media into the lives of youth, suggesting that educational approaches must adapt to these changing dynamics. The authors convincingly argue that recognizing and harnessing these new literacy practices can significantly enhance educational outcomes.

A notable contribution of the article is its advocacy for video production as a means to promote multiple literacies. By highlighting various digital media programs aimed at youth, the authors provide concrete examples of how digital creativity can be integrated into learning environments. This practical approach not only supports the theoretical framework established throughout the review but also offers actionable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance digital literacy among students.

However, while the article presents a compelling case for the importance of new literacy and digital learning, it could benefit from a more in-depth exploration of the potential challenges and barriers

to implementing these practices in diverse educational settings. For instance, issues related to access to technology, varying levels of digital literacy among educators, and the socio-economic factors influencing digital engagement among youth are critical considerations that warrant further discussion.

In the article "Parenting Digital Natives: Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Developmental Challenges," (Abdul Gani, 2017) provides a comprehensive examination of the implications of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on the development of digital natives. The author highlights the dual-edged nature of ICT, emphasizing both its potential benefits and its detrimental effects on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of youth.

(Abdul Gani, 2017) argues that while the proliferation of gadgets and the Internet has made information more accessible than ever, it has also introduced significant challenges. The article underscores that digital natives, who are inherently familiar with technology, face unique developmental hurdles that require careful navigation by parents and educators. The author points out that the routine use of social media can enhance communication and social connections among children and teens, fostering technical skills that are essential in the modern world. However, this constant connectivity also poses risks, including diminished face-to-face interactions and potential emotional distress stemming from social media dynamics.

A critical evaluation of (Abdul Gani, 2017) work reveals that the literature review is well-structured and covers a broad spectrum of issues related to ICT use among youth. The author effectively synthesizes existing research to illustrate the complexities of digital interactions. However, the article could benefit from more empirical data to substantiate some claims regarding the negative impacts of ICT on cognitive and emotional development. While the theoretical framework is strong, the reliance on literature review may limit the depth of insight into the specific mechanisms through which technology influences youth development.

Moreover, (Abdul Gani, 2017) call for proactive parenting and educational interventions is particularly noteworthy. The article emphasizes the necessity for parents to guide their children in using technology wisely, suggesting that education can serve as a tool to mitigate the adverse effects of ICT. This perspective aligns with contemporary discussions on digital literacy and the importance of teaching youth to navigate the digital landscape responsibly.

The article "Supporting Teacher Collaboration Aimed at Developing High School Students' Digital Media Literacy: A Participatory Action Research Study" by (A. Riendeau, 2019) provides a comprehensive examination of the evolving landscape of digital media literacy among high school students, particularly in the context of social media. (A. Riendeau, 2019)'s work is particularly significant in its exploration of how educators can effectively develop curricula that enhance students' ability to critically evaluate media sources and recognize bias.

The article begins by framing the historical context of media literacy education, which is crucial for understanding the contemporary challenges faced by students in navigating digital information. (A. Riendeau, 2019) emphasizes the necessity for educators to reflect on and utilize student-generated data to inform their teaching practices. This approach not only fosters a collaborative environment among teachers but also ensures that the curriculum is responsive to the needs of students, thereby enhancing its relevance and effectiveness.

One of the key insights from the article is the exploration of essential questions regarding the adequacy of current educational practices in preparing students for active citizenship. The author raises critical inquiries about whether existing curricular frameworks adequately equip students with the skills needed to discern bias and reliability in media. This introspection is vital, as it highlights the potential gaps in education that may hinder students' ability to engage with media critically.

(A. Riendeau, 2019) also delves into the impact of adolescent dependence on social media on students' cognitive abilities regarding media bias. This aspect is particularly relevant given the pervasive nature of social media in young people's lives. The article suggests that as students become more entrenched in social media, their capacity to critically assess information may be compromised, necessitating a more robust educational response.

Moreover, the literature review synthesizes various curricular approaches and critiques past methodologies, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of what has been effective in media literacy education. By evaluating both successes and failures in previous studies and curriculum samples, (A. Riendeau, 2019) offers a valuable framework for educators to consider when designing and implementing media literacy programs.

The guiding questions and key terminology outlined in the article serve as practical tools for educators seeking to enhance their curricula. These resources not only facilitate a deeper understanding of media literacy but also encourage a more structured approach to teaching these essential skills.

The article "The Social Impact of Digital Youth Work: What Are We Looking For?" by (Pawluczuk et al., 2019) provides a comprehensive examination of digital literacy within the context of youth work. It emphasizes the evolving nature of digital literacy as not merely a set of technical skills, but as a multifaceted process that encompasses the ability to access, navigate, evaluate, and create digital media. The authors delineate digital literacy into three core competencies: use, understand, and create, which collectively highlight the importance of equipping young people with the necessary skills to engage meaningfully with digital content.

The research presented in the article is grounded in qualitative data obtained from twenty interviews with digital youth workers in Scotland. This empirical approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how these practitioners perceive the social impact of their work and their attitudes towards evaluating that impact. The findings suggest that there is a significant gap in current evaluation practices, which often restrict the ability of youth workers to critically reflect on and assess the outcomes of digital youth projects. This limitation poses challenges for both the practitioners and the young people they serve, as it hinders the potential for informed improvements and adaptations in digital youth work.

Moreover, the article underscores the necessity for ongoing research into the social impact of digital youth work, advocating for more robust frameworks for evaluation that can capture the complexities of digital interactions among youth. The authors argue that understanding the social consequences of digital youth work is crucial for informing policy and practice, especially in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The article "Context, Development, and Digital Media: Implications for Very Young Adolescents in LMICs" by (Magis-Weinberg et al., 2021) provides a critical examination of the intersection between early adolescence and digital media, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The authors highlight that early adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage marked by the onset of mental health symptoms, with a noted increase in internalizing and externalizing problems. This period is crucial for understanding the implications of social media use, especially considering its predominance among youth in these contexts.

The authors argue that while the impact of social media on mental health has been extensively studied in higher-income countries, it remains underexplored in LMICs. This gap in research is significant, given the unique socio-cultural dynamics and developmental challenges faced by adolescents in these regions. The article emphasizes the urgent need for research that not only examines the relationship between social media use and adolescent well-being but also considers the diverse experiences of youth in varying contexts.

One of the key insights is the association between social media use and externalizing behaviors, including poor behavioral conduct and delinquency. This finding underscores the potential negative ramifications of social media interactions, particularly for vulnerable populations. The authors advocate for a nuanced approach to research that incorporates objective measures of media use, longitudinal designs, and an individual differences perspective to identify varying levels of vulnerability and resilience among youth.

Moreover, the article highlights the heterogeneous effects of social media on well-being, noting that positive online experiences can alleviate feelings of loneliness, while negative interactions may exacerbate depressive symptoms. This duality points to the complexity of social media's role in the lives of early adolescents, suggesting that their online experiences can significantly influence their mental health outcomes.

The authors call for a comprehensive understanding of the socio-emotional and identity development processes that are influenced by digital media use. They stress the importance of incorporating diverse and under-represented youth in research to better capture the varying impacts of digital media across different cultural contexts. This approach is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance digital literacy and adaptive skills among adolescents.

The article titled "A systematic review of physical-digital play technology and developmentally relevant child behaviour" by (E. Torres et al., 2021) provides a comprehensive examination of the impact of screen play technologies on child learning and development. The authors systematically review literature surrounding the interaction between physical-digital play technologies—referred to as "phygital" play—and the behaviors exhibited by children during these activities. A significant finding from this review is that interactivity serves as a crucial mechanism through which serious games foster learning experiences. This insight is particularly relevant in the context of developing media mentality among youth, as it underscores the importance of active engagement in the learning process.

The authors highlight the dichotomy in academic perspectives regarding the implications of phygital play. On one side, there is a belief that the skills acquired through engagement with these technologies are vital for future success, suggesting a positive trajectory for children who interact with such tools. Conversely, the review acknowledges concerns about potential negative consequences stemming from excessive or inappropriate use of these technologies. This ambivalence reflects a broader debate within the field about the role of digital media in child development, suggesting that while there are benefits to be gained, caution is warranted in how such technologies are integrated into children's lives.

Moreover, the article aims to establish a conceptual framework that elucidates the relationships between phygital play technologies and developmentally relevant child behavior. By identifying various behavioral partnerships, the authors contribute to a nuanced understanding of how these technologies can effectively support or hinder development. This framework is essential for educators and parents alike, as it provides guidance on optimizing the use of screen play technologies to enhance learning outcomes.

The article "The Youth Social Media Literacy Inventory: Development and Validation Using Item Response Theory" by (Purington et al., 2022) provides a comprehensive examination of the evolving landscape of youth communication through social media and the associated risks. The authors articulate the need for social media literacy as a critical tool for mitigating potential dangers such as exposure to harmful content and interactions with strangers. This article is particularly relevant in the context of developing a media mentality among youth, as it emphasizes the importance of equipping adolescents with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of social media.

The authors undertake a rigorous development process for the Youth Social Media Literacy Inventory (YSMLI), which aims to objectively assess young adolescents' knowledge and skills related to

social media use. They begin with an extensive literature review to identify core competencies and domains of social media literacy, ensuring that the inventory is grounded in existing research. This foundational step is crucial as it allows for the identification of relevant skills that youth must possess to engage safely and responsibly online.

The creation of a large item pool to assess these competencies across six domains demonstrates a thorough approach to inventory development. The authors' method of expert review and cognitive pretesting with youth adds a layer of validity to the inventory, as it incorporates direct feedback from the target demographic. This participatory approach not only enhances the relevance of the items but also ensures that the inventory resonates with the experiences and concerns of young users.

The empirical validation of the final item pool is a significant highlight of the article. The authors report that the final item bank is well-fitting, reliable, and valid, which is essential for any assessment tool. The provision of scales with varying lengths for different purposes, including domain-specific assessment and parallel testing, adds versatility to the YSMLI. This adaptability is particularly important for educators and practitioners who may seek to tailor assessments to specific contexts or needs.

The article "Impacts of digital technologies on education and factors influencing schools' digital capacity and transformation: A literature review" by (Timotheou et al., 2022) provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving role of digital technologies within educational settings. The authors systematically analyze how various digital tools and platforms have been integrated into schools over time, emphasizing that this integration is not a static process but rather one that adapts to the changing technological landscape.

One of the key insights from the article is the recognition that digital technologies encompass a wide range of tools—from traditional computers and interactive boards to more sophisticated applications like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI). This evolution highlights the necessity for ongoing research and adaptation as new technologies emerge. The authors note that while there is a growing body of literature focusing on the effects of these technologies on educational outcomes, the impact appears to be small to moderate, suggesting that technology alone does not guarantee improved learning.

The article also critically evaluates the factors that influence the successful integration of digital technologies in schools. It identifies several variables that play a crucial role, including teachers' instructional practices, their digital competencies, school leadership, infrastructure, and socio-economic factors. This multifaceted approach underscores that the effectiveness of digital technologies in education is contingent upon a complex interplay of these elements rather than the mere presence of technology itself.

Moreover, the authors highlight gaps in the existing literature, particularly concerning the impact of ICTs on various curriculum subjects and the broader implications for equality, inclusion, and social integration within the school environment. This observation calls for further research to explore how digital technologies can be leveraged to not only enhance academic outcomes but also to foster an inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

The qualitative insights provided by the authors add depth to the discussion, illustrating that while digital technologies can positively influence learning, their potential is significantly shaped by the context in which they are used. This perspective aligns with the notion that the development of digital competencies among students is both a result of and a catalyst for effective ICT use in educational settings.

## Conclusion

The literature on the integration of digital technologies in youth culture reveals a complex interplay between opportunities for empowerment and potential challenges associated with digital engagement. The foundational work by (Griffiths, 2007) emphasizes the role of cell phones as multimedia tools that enable South African youth to articulate their narratives and engage in ethical reporting. This advocacy for youth empowerment through media is echoed in the exploration of new literacy practices by (L. Sr. Mitchell, 2012), which highlights the necessity of adapting educational frameworks to encompass digital creativity and video production.

Conversely, (Abdul Gani, 2017) provides a critical perspective, cautioning against the cognitive and emotional challenges posed by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This duality is essential to understanding the nuanced impacts of technology on youth, as it necessitates a balanced approach to digital engagement that includes parental guidance and educational interventions.

The literature further delves into the educational implications of digital media literacy, with (A. Riendeau, 2019) advocating for teacher collaboration to enhance students' critical media skills. This aligns with the findings of (Pawluczuk et al., 2019), who stresses the need for evaluations of digital youth projects to understand their social implications.

Additionally, the mental health impacts of digital media on youth, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, are examined by (Magis-Weinberg et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of context-specific strategies for healthy digital engagement. The systematic review by (E. Torres et al., 2021) underscores the mixed outcomes of physical-digital play technologies on child development, adding to the ongoing debate regarding the role of digital media in fostering developmental skills.

The introduction of the Youth Social Media Literacy Inventory by (Purington et al., 2022) serves as a practical tool for assessing young adolescents' competencies in navigating social media, thereby addressing the need for robust educational frameworks. Finally, (Timotheou et al., 2022) emphasizes the multifaceted factors influencing the integration of digital technologies in education, advocating for ongoing research to foster equity and inclusion.

In conclusion, the literature collectively underscores the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between youth and digital technologies. The findings highlight both the potential for empowerment through media engagement and the critical challenges that necessitate informed educational practices and parental guidance. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions, ensuring that youth are equipped with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of their digital environments.

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