

# ***A Review of the Impact of Online Live Streaming on Adolescents' Career Values***

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**Abstract.** In the digital era, online live streaming platforms permeate adolescents' lives, merging entertainment, social interaction, and economics. These platforms not only provide instant access to diverse content but also create new spaces for identity expression and peer influence. At the same time, adolescents are increasingly involved in interactive consumption practices, such as sending virtual gifts or following influencers, which blur the boundaries between play and commerce. Consequently, live streaming has become a significant force shaping both their cultural participation and economic behavior. For youth forming career values, internet celebrities glamorized, rapid success distorts perceptions—overvaluing streaming careers while undervaluing traditional ones. Unlike historical shaping by family, schools, or institutions, current influences are fragmented and algorithm-driven, creating challenges. This study reviews live streaming's impact on adolescents' career values via analyzing Chinese and international literature, comparing methods, findings, and limitations. It found that: live streaming significantly affects career preferences, ethics, and success definitions. Insights for research and policy are offered, emphasizing mitigating distortions and balancing new media with comprehensive career education.

**Keywords:** Online Live Streaming, Adolescents' Career Values, Internet

## **1. Introduction**

In the digital age, online live streaming profoundly shapes young people's lives and perceptions, integrating entertainment, information, social interaction, and economics.

Platforms like Tiktok, Bilibili, and Rednote influence not just lifestyles but also adolescents' career aspirations, as internet celebrities' rapid wealth and fame redefine Adolescents' views of success. Adolescents, in a critical phase of value formation, are particularly susceptible to live streaming's portrayal of careers, which can distort perceptions of meaningful work—glamorizing streamers' lives while undervaluing traditional professions. Historically, career values were shaped by family, school, and institutions; now, new media shifts this to fragmented, algorithm-driven influences. This paper reviews Chinese and international literature to analyze how live streaming affects adolescents' career perceptions, preferences, and ethics. By comparing studies' methods, results, and limitations, it identifies patterns and offers insights for research and policy.

## 2. Key concepts

### 2.1. Professional values

According to Liu Xinyu and Zhang Ling Professional values are persistent beliefs, preferences, and evaluative standards that are relevant when decision-makers select the career course for themselves [1]. Values are identifiable across four dimensions: Material (the degree of income or job security related to a profession); Social (the degree of status or recognition related to a profession); Personal (the development of skills or level of autonomy related to a profession); Altruistic (the contribution society, or assist to others in relation to a profession).

From a live streaming perspective, professional values will not only stem from explicit discussions of careers but implicitly also through the content in a viewer's feed. For example, streamers that emphasise making high incomes, or "quick success" implicit messages are created that materialism is a core value. On the other hand, educational streamers that emphasise the acquisition of skill, or social contribution may reinforce values based on personal growth, and altruism. Thus professional values are an important conceptual lens to explore the influence or impacts of live streaming on adolescent continued career orientations.

### 2.2. Live streaming

Online live streaming is the real-time video transmission of generally independently produced content over the internet, where content creators (streamers) are enabled to create bidirectional streams of engagement to audiences through live chat, virtual gifts, and real-time comments [2]. Live streams differ from media in general like television or pre-recorded video because they are time-based from both an immediacy and authenticity context, and interactive where participants can text directly with their selected streamer making it more personal and loose from a "live" standpoint [2]. In China, growing live-streaming platforms provide replicated samples of various types of content for consumers to choose from, like gaming, beauty tutorials, e-commerce sales, and educational lectures. Streamers may use several monetizing opportunities from live streaming content, such as viewer donations, recruited sponsorships, and product sales thus if successful many streamers demonstrate a wealth and fame suggestive tone for these audiences [3].

The three notable features that stand out as impactful on perceptions and values the most for teenagers are: perceived authenticity (because the real-time, unedited, and impromptu appearances appear as more transparent or less scripted than other formats of media), interactivity (because it enables the audience to communicate with the streamer directly), and social success (because the display of achievements or scopes of progress normalizes the work environment may not be it all as a viable full-time career [4]. All identified and noted, the combination of these unique traits makes live streaming particularly beneficial in functioning as an agent [4].

## 3. Chinese research review

Chinese research has shed significant light on how live streaming has impacted teenagers' professional values. Research has documented how live streaming has transformed teenagers' professional orientation and values. Liu Xinyu and Zhang Ling conducted a study in 2024 [1]. They surveyed 1,500 middle and high school students. Frequent live streaming was defined in the study as habitually streaming more than three hours per day. They found a correlation. The correlation was between frequent live streaming and a significant change in the students. The change was in the

students supporting "visibility" as part of their professional orientation. The change also involved the students supporting "instant financial benefits" as part of their professional orientation. Traditional considerations like job stability or longevity; developing skills; and/or social contributions ranked lower, regardless of the students' background.

Yang Xuewen et al. explored these themes with a mixed-method research(Analysis of data and literature) study of 800 urban and rural adolescents [5]. They showed that 62% of respondents considered popular streamers "successful role models" in their lives because of their perceived creative freedom("they work for themselves 46 and their financial returns they make money easily") This image was accompanied by a declining interest 46 in professions that take time to train; like education, healthcare and engineering professions were included as "too hard" or "nothing simply was not worth pursuing".

Zhu Yongle viewed these trends with vulnerable groups, which was to compare the perceptions of vocational students and rural adolescents; both groups with urban backgrounds [2]. In the study, 58% of vocational students and 63% of rural teenagers would have liked to become streamers full-time, regarding streaming as a "low-barrier to limited opportunities in the traditional career world".... This pattern was linked to a perception of weaker role models in traditional careers and higher employment pressures.

Wang Shuo conducted a study in 2024. He studied a broader cultural conflict related to value formation [6]. As part of his findings, he suggested a connection between value formation and live streaming. Live streaming signals personal fame and personal benefits. These signals are in constant contradiction to the values of many collective-oriented forms of learning and value development. This contradiction puzzled 45% of the sampled teenagers. The sampled teenagers expressed that they were experiencing an internal conflict. The conflict was about wanting to aspire to show prominence through streaming. But they were still doing what was expected of them. This situation created barriers to the so-called "professional" opportunities.

Hu Haojuan tracked DSSC's(Digital Social Science Center)influence on teenagers' perceptions of work effort and the expectations of work outcomes; specifically, that below 70% of teenagers sampled understood the importance of skills, consistency, labor, or competition 48, and associated success with the "person of fortune" theme: a chance adapted to their role [7]. Yang Xiaomei specifically studied the perceptions of middle-school students(Focus on junior and senior high school students aged 12 to 15). She held 73% of respondents in consideration of an experts classification of 53% of respondents regarding "having a group of acquaintances' or 'friends' the streamers subject to opportunities were relatable" [8]. However this group failed to focus of the impact of professional or academic skills or values, where they openly communicated they had avoided doing their homework to watch a live stream.

These studies were limited from a single time data analysis (meaning causation of value formation cannot be potentially confirmed), and live streaming studies have only been likely produced urban subjects. In addition, the research did not distinguish the characteristics of different media platforms and study the differences in their influences. However it is clear what these studies suggest: a palpable shift away from collective/social and material value formation, to autonomic, instant forms of consumption among teenagers. Low socio-economic or economic/background identity groups are of biggest concern [1-8].

#### 4. International research review

International studies have confirmed that the impact of live streaming on teenagers' professional values is not unique to China, though cultural nuances exist. Smith & Taylor conducted a landmark

survey (It pioneered digital career research with large samples, mixed methods, early revealing live streaming's impact on teens' career views.) of 800 teenagers in the United Kingdom, focusing on emerging career aspirations in the digital age [9]. Their findings showed that over one-third (35%) ranked “YouTuber” or “live streamer” among their top three career choices, often surpassing traditional professions like doctor, teacher, or engineer. Qualitative follow-up interviews revealed three primary appeals: the promise of high visibility and public recognition, the perceived freedom to create content without hierarchical constraints, and the belief that streaming offered a “low-effort path to financial stability.” Notably, younger adolescents (13–15 years) have higher expectations for the income potential and job security of streaming careers than older teens, reflecting a naivety about the industry’s realities.

Ito et al. extended this research through a longitudinal study of 200 U.S. adolescents engaged with platforms like Twitch and YouTube [10]. Their work, commissioned by the Connected Learning Alliance, explored how live streaming shapes occupational identity formation. The study found that teenagers actively used these platforms to experiment with professional roles: gaming streamers framed themselves as “entertainers,” while educational content creators identified as “digital tutors.” However, a critical concern emerged: 68% of participants conflated visibility—measured by views, likes, or followers—with genuine professional success, equating popularity with career fulfillment regardless of financial stability or long-term prospects. This trend was particularly strong among teens from low-income backgrounds, possibly due to limited exposure to alternative career pathways, who saw streaming as a “fast track” to upward mobility.

Abidin focused on Southeast Asian and Australian youth, introducing the concept of “aspirational labor” (Work driven by hopes for recognition, achievement, or idealized career goals.) to describe their relationship with influencer culture [11]. Through interviews with 150 adolescents, she found that they often viewed streamers and social media influencers as paragons of desirable careers, fixating on their glamorous public personas—luxury lifestyles, brand collaborations, and adoring fans—while overlooking the precarious realities behind the scenes. These included inconsistent income dependent on algorithm changes, intense competition (with millions vying for limited visibility), and pressure to maintain a constant online presence. Abidin emphasized that platform economies actively exploit these aspirational narratives, marketing streaming as an accessible “dream job” while providing minimal labor protections or support for sustainable careers.

International studies reveal cross-cultural parallels. Teenagers globally are drawn to streaming’s promise of fame, autonomy, and creative control. However, they also share a tendency to develop unrealistic expectations about the effort, skills, and risks involved. Unlike Chinese studies, which emphasize economic motivations and vulnerability among disadvantaged groups, international research highlights individualism-driven desires for creative freedom, reflecting cultural differences in how professional success is defined [11].

## 5. Discussion and suggestions

### 5.1. Overall conclusion

The reviewed literatures collectively underscores a distinct transformation in adolescents’ career values, driven by the pervasive influence of digital culture and live-streaming platforms. These platforms, while unlocking new avenues for creative expression and economic participation—such as enabling young content creators to monetize niche skills or build global communities—simultaneously propagate skewed perceptions of work, success, and the effort required to achieve them. For instance, the curated “overnight success” narratives of popular streamers often obscure the

years of consistent labor, strategic content planning, and adaptability to platform algorithms that underpin their achievements, creating a misleading blueprint for young audiences. It has changed the career views and even career choices of teenagers.

Several consistent patterns emerge across studies. First, adolescents increasingly prioritize careers promising fame, rapid monetization, and autonomy, often sidelining traditional markers of professional achievement like long-term stability or skill mastery. This shift is evident in their ranking of "streamer" or "influencer" above professions requiring extensive education, such as medicine or engineering. Second, there is a notable distortion in their understanding of career preparation: many underestimate the technical expertise (e.g., video editing, analytics), emotional labor (e.g., audience engagement), and financial risk inherent in streaming, naively viewing it as a low-barrier path to success. Third, the influence is amplified among youth with limited support systems—such as those from rural areas, vocational schools, or families with minimal career guidance—who may perceive streaming as an accessible alternative to constrained traditional opportunities, increased the awareness of occupational inequality

## 5.2. Suggestions

To deal with these challenges, targeted recommendations are needed:

Digital career literacy should be embedded into school curricula to help young people build capacity for critically assessing streaming careers—their entailments versus traditional ones, required skills, income variation (e.g., ad revenue or sponsorship), and longevity.

Increase media literacy education to deconstruct glamorized presentations of typical streamers' lifestyles. Through case studies that showcases the work of the career (e.g., competition - millions of users competing for attention), and the precarity of the career (e.g., a brief reference to the ways users' algorithmically shaped engagement determines if an audience sees content).

Realistic career models should be introduced through informal educational opportunities and community initiatives. Mid-level streamers might share unglamorized daily realities, or youth could connect with professionals balancing traditional careers and streaming.

Platform owners should be required by legislation to disclose more information, such as average/median/top earnings, work hours, and income-success links to counter misinformation.

Families should be included in career conversations with healthy digital career role modelling, alongside consideration of diverse opportunities like traditional work's purpose and societal contribution pride.

## 5.3. Future research directions

Future research should focus on two critical areas: longitudinal studies tracking the long-term outcomes of adolescents who pursue streaming careers, including both breakthroughs and setbacks (e.g., burnout, financial instability); and investigations into psychological traits—such as resilience, self-regulation, or critical thinking—that may mediate digital influence on career value formation. Such efforts will enhance people understanding of how to support youth in navigating an increasingly digital career landscape with balanced, informed perspectives.

## 6. Conclusion

Online live streaming has emerged as a powerful cultural and technological force, significantly reshaping adolescents' career values in both Chinese and international contexts. As young

individuals navigate a rapidly evolving digital environment, their perceptions of success, work, and personal development are increasingly influenced by the visible and often idealized lifestyles of streamers and internet celebrities.

This paper examined the core concepts of career values and live streaming, and reviewed empirical research from both China and other nations. The findings reveal a consistent pattern: adolescents are shifting their career preferences toward roles that emphasize visibility, autonomy, and fast returns, often at the expense of traditional values such as stability, social contribution, and long-term growth.

The review highlighted both universal patterns and culturally specific dynamics. Adolescents' career values are not being formed in isolation, but are increasingly shaped by algorithm-driven content, peer influence, and the commercial logic of platform economies.

Based on this review, several practical recommendations were proposed, including integrating digital career literacy into education, strengthening media education, diversifying career narratives, enhancing platform regulation, and supporting parental engagement. These strategies aim to create a healthier, more realistic framework for adolescents to understand and navigate their career choices.

Ultimately, the significance of this research lies in recognizing that online streaming is not merely a form of entertainment—it is a new arena for value transmission and identity construction. Helping adolescents build balanced, grounded, and adaptive career values in this environment is a pressing task for educators, policymakers, and families alike.

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