

A longitudinal study on the relationship between screen time and alcohol-related social normative perceptions in adolescence.



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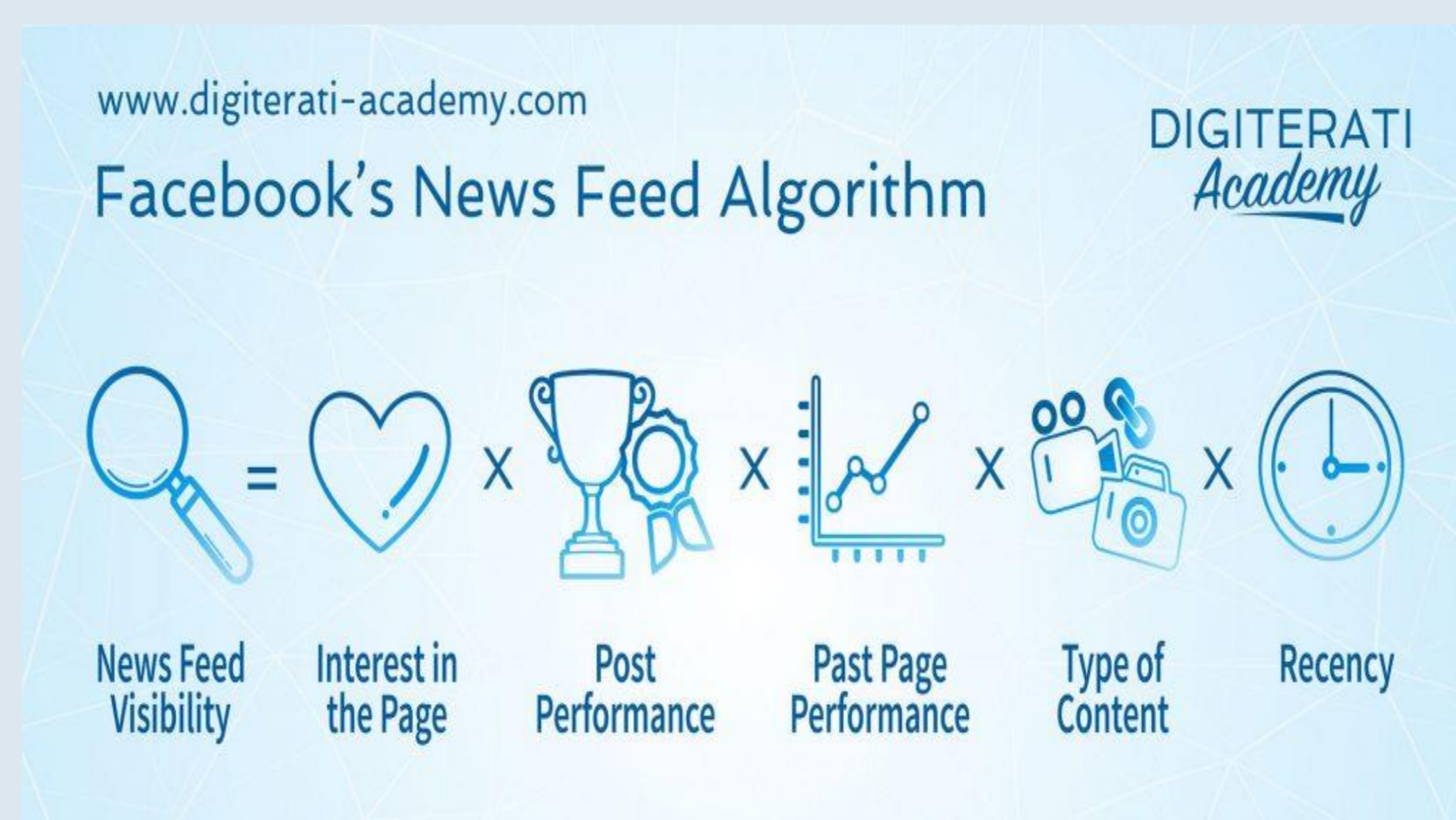
Université
de Montréal

Elroy Boers PhD., Mohammad Afzali PhD, Patricia Conrod PhD

CHU Sainte-Justine Research Centre, Department of Psychiatry, Université de Montréal, 3175 Chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine, Montreal, Quebec, H3T 1C5, Canada

INTRODUCTION

- Screen time is associated with alcohol use in adolescence.
- It has been proposed that alcohol-related social norms have been shown to mediate this association.
- Two gaps in previous literature needed to be addressed:
 1. What type(s) of screen time promote the most positive alcohol-related social norms and, in turn, alcohol use.
 2. What type(s) of screen time have long-lasting effects on adolescents' alcohol use through the promotion of alcohol-related social norms.



OBJECTIVES

Examine the association of screen time and alcohol use and the mediating role of social norms by means of a repeated measures design distinguishing between the time-varying factors; between-person effects and within-person effects.

METHODS

- 3612 adolescents ($M_{age} = 12.7$ years, $SD = 0.5$ years), which were recruited from 31 schools in the Greater Montreal area.
- A web-based survey was distributed annually.
- We estimated the association between social media use, television viewing, video gaming, alcohol-related social norms, and alcohol use.
- Multilevel models distinguishing between two time-varying factors: between-person effects and within-effects.
- Between-person effects represent 'standard' correlations, whereas within-person effects represent year-to-year changes between variables.



RESULTS

- At the within-person level, social media use ($\beta = 0.06$, 95% CI = 0.04, 0.08, $p = 0.000$) and television viewing ($\beta = 0.02$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.04, $p = 0.012$), and not video gaming, were associated with alcohol use in adolescence.
- At the within-person level, social media use ($\beta = 0.05$, 95% CI = 0.03, 0.07, $p = 0.000$) and television viewing ($\beta = 0.02$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.04, $p = 0.047$), and not video gaming, were associated with alcohol-related social norms.
- At the within-person level, the association between social media use and alcohol use was mediated by positive alcohol-related social norms ($\beta = 0.02$, 95% CI = 0.01, 0.03, $p = 0.000$).
- At the within-person level, the association between television viewing and alcohol use was mediated by positive alcohol-related social norms ($\beta = 0.01$, 95% CI = 0.004, 0.01, $p = 0.000$).
- No such associations were found for video gaming.

CONCLUSIONS

- Social media use and television viewing, but not video gaming, were shown to affect adolescents' alcohol-related social norms and, in turn, their alcohol use.
- We argue that social media and television contain actual, mostly positive, depictions of real peers engaging in alcohol use.
- We also argue that social media and television, nowadays, are driven by advanced algorithms that remember one's search and selection behaviour of content and, in turn, provide similar content, creating a feedback loop or reinforcing spiral.
- Video games do not contain actual depictions of real peers nor are they driven by the same algorithms as social media and television.

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