Year: 2014

Title: How reading comics affect teenagers’ interpersonal relationship?
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out whether the habit of reading comics will lead to any positive or negative impact on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship. Data were collected from 60 respondents through online questionnaires and group interviews. This report may be helpful for teenagers or the public to know more about the habit of reading comics and help them to build up suitable attitude toward people who have this habit. And the research found that the habit of reading comics bring more benefits than harm on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship.

Introduction

Comic was first drawn in 16th century and after the World War II, the Japanese comics industry developed rapidly. During 1950s, Japanese comics gained widespread of popularity in Japan and even the whole Asia. Nowadays, different types of comics become the common readers to teenager in Hong Kong. Under the rapid development of the Internet, Hong Kong teenagers were given more chance to read comics easily which encourage them to develop the habit of reading comics.

Besides, the problem of social withdrawals becomes more serious in these few years. According to the survey\(^1\) conducted by Hong Kong Christian Service in September 2006 found that among the adolescents that aged 10-24 years old, 18,500 young people were in the "hidden" state, representing in total 2.1% of the youth population, when there was only 6,000 young people were in the "hidden" state in 2005. One of the reasons casing the appearance of social withdrawals was the poor interpersonal

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\(^1\) 《青年隱蔽現況》・Hong Kong Christian Service • 2006
relationship so the effects of reading comics on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship is a topic that should be considered.

Therefore, this study is going to examine whether the habit of reading comics will lead to any positive or negative impact on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship and whether it intensifies the problem.

Research objective and research questions

There are three objectives of this project which are to know about in what ways reading comics will affect teenagers’ interpersonal relationship, to know whether reading comics will affect teenagers’ behaviors and to know the feeling and image that other people have towards people like reading comics

Some examples of the specific questions for enquiry are: how do general public think about people who like to read comics? What will comic affect teenagers’ behaviors (such as Cosplay)? Will reading comics affect the interpersonal relationship (parent-child relationship, peer relationship)? How?
Hong Kong is a society with advanced information and communication technology. People can easily receive different information and cultures from other countries through Internet or mass media like television. Nowadays, there are many different forums about comics in the Internet. Also, there are many channels for people to read comics. Reading comics has become a common hobby among teenage group.

Comic was defined as “a way of creating a universe and populating it with characters using a secret code that works in the simplest and most direct way possible to enter the 'reader's' brain... series of little pictures and groups of words arranged in a rhythmic pattern to create and activate a world inside us” in the book written by James Kochalka.2 Among the comics from different countries, comics from Japanese are the most famous one. In a study3 by Su Heng in 1994, more than 91.3% of teenagers interview have read comics and 88.7% of them read Japanese comics.

Interpersonal relationship is the connection between individual (e.g. romantic or parent–child relationship) or relations with groups of people. (E.g. relation between a family). Interpersonal relationship is based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. It can be vary from family relations, friendship, marriage, relations with associates, work, clubs, and neighborhoods. One of the methods to measure interpersonal relationship is to apply the Sociometry4.

Sociometry is the measure method created by Jacob L. Moreno in 1934 to determine people’s relationship in a group of people. Jacob L. Moreno defined Sociometry as "the inquiry into the evolution and organization of groups and the position of individuals within them. " According to the article5, Sociometry is the method to analyze the interpersonal relationship by asking people among a group about criteria for them to choose friends and their relations can be shown by Sociograms(Figure 1), Sociomusical Theory(Figure 2), etc.

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2 《The Horrible Truth About Comics》 · James Kochalka · Alternative Comics(1999)
3 《青少年閱讀漫畫的動機與行為之研究》 · 蘇蘅 · 1994
http://nccuir.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/28054/1/48_05.pdf
4 Sociometry · Jacob L. Moreno · 1934
5 《Sociometry》 · Rory Remer
According to the study\textsuperscript{6} by Huang Liwen in 2006, the writer discovered that there is a relation between reading comic and interpersonal relationship. Shown in the study, there are positive effects on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship with brothers, friends and other people related to comic. And the hobby of reading comic encourages people actively joining comic related activities which improve the interpersonal relationship. However, there are idea about reading comics would affect teenagers’ interpersonal relationship as they may stay at home all the time.

Since reading comics is a hobby that many teenagers have, so the effects of reading comics on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship is a topic that should be consider.

\textsuperscript{7}Therefore, the study is going to find out the efforts of reading comics on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship and the feelings of others have towards people who read comics to let people understand the good or bad points of reading comics.

\begin{itemize}
\item Figure 1
\item Figure 2
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{6}《漫畫迷的休閒知覺自由之研究》‧黃麗文‧2006
http://ir.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/retrieve/46637/metadata_01_06_s_05_0034.pdf
\textsuperscript{7} Figure 1 and 2：《Sociometry》‧Rory Remer
Methodology

This study is trying to know about the impacts of the habit of reading comics on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship, so both online questionnaires and group interviews have been used to collect data that needed.

Online questionnaires were used as volunteers who belong to the target group can be found more easily on internet when they usually read comics on internet. The target group is mainly people who like or usually read comics in their spare time. Link of the questionnaires were posted in the Forum (e.g. Uwants). Also, friends and family of people who like or usually read comics in their spare time belong to the target group too. Questionnaires were posted on Facebook to know the ideas of these groups of people as most people have Facebook nowadays. 60 questionnaires have been collected at the end. And in the questionnaires, the focus is to ask about the interviewees’ normal lives and to find out whether there are any impacts led by. However, there are limitations in using questionnaires. First, error may exist in the design of questionnaires. Also, respondents may not give true answers or do the questionnaire sincerely. These may affect the result of the research. And questionnaires are quantitative research which may not give enough useful details.

In order to avoid error and to make the result more reliable, 2 groups interviews which include both people who read or don’t read comics were organized. Among the 60 respondents who did the online questionnaires, 16 of them are willing to accept a group interview. And 10 of them were invited to join the group interviews held on 5th May, 2013. 8 of them (included 5 female and 3 male) joined the group interviews. And they were divided into two groups so to compare and measure the interpersonal relationship of interviewees who read or don’t read comics by using the method of Sociometry. This ensures information which cannot be received through questionnaires or doing interviews can be collected so to have a more comprehensive and reliable result.
Results and Discussion

5.1 Profile of respondents
This survey had a total of 60 responses: 38% of those were male, 62% of those were female. 97% of the respondents were 14-18 years old. Among the respondents, 45% of those had the habit of reading comics and the other 55% of those did not have the habit of reading comics.

5.2 Impacts on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship
From the responds shown in the results of the online questionnaires and the group interviews, teenagers who have the habit of reading comics thought that the habit of reading comics have led to both positive and negative influence on their interpersonal relationship.

   Peer relationship
   81% of respondents thought the habit of reading comics led to positive impacts on their peer relationship. No one thought that there were negative impacts brought. Yet, 19% of respondents thought there will not be any impact led by their habit of reading comics on their peer relationship.

   The respondents thought that this habit help them to have more communication or activities with friends (40%) and make them more extroverted (7%) which benefit their peer relationship. Besides, 22% of respondents thought the habit of reading comics help them to make new friends. Shown in the results of the group interviews analyzed by the Sociometric Choice Matrix (Figure 3), teenagers who have the habits of reading comics are more willing to make friends or chat with others who also have the habits of reading comics which proved that the habit of reading comics can help teenagers’ interpersonal relationship. Also, teenagers could make online friends when the browse comic-related comic website.

   However, negative impacts may be brought and affected the peer relationship. For examples, respondents claimed that they faced difficulty in making new friends (3%) or the communication with friends was reduced (3%). Also they stayed at home for a long time to read comics (11%). These seriously affected their peer relationship. When teenagers use a lot of time to read comics, the time for them to communicate with friends may be reduced as reading comic is the
activity that do individually. In the long run, if teenagers spend most of their time on reading habit, their communication skill may be weakened and social circle may reduce. Their interpersonal relationship would be seriously affected.

Sociometric Choice Matrix of Group Interviews

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<td>+ Choices Received</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Figure 3

Parent-child relationship
Most respondents think their habit of reading comic will not lead to any impact on their relationship with their parents (59%). Yet, 22% of respondents and 19% of respondents think their habit will lead to negative impact and positive impact on their parent-child relationship respectively.

3% of respondents thought their relationship with parents were improved as the habit of reading comics brought them more topics to discuss with parents. Yet, 19% of them thought their relationship with parents were worsened when there are more conflicts between themselves and their parents.

Parents concerned about their children’s academic performance very much since they think it will affect their children future. When their children have the habit of reading comics, parents started to worry their children will spend too much time on reading habit and affected their academic performance. So some parents tried to stop their children reading comics. As mentioned in the study carried by Wong, some parents may even throw away their children’s comic books. Thus, conflicts between teenagers and their parents become unavoidable and the parent-child relationship was be worsened.

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8 《漫畫迷的休閒知覺自由之研究》・黃麗文 • 2006
http://ir.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/retrieve/46637/metadata_01_06_s_05_0034.pdf
Relationship with siblings
The habit of reading habit did not lead to any negative impact on the relationship on sibling and 52% (more than half) think there will be positive impact since they have more communication or activities with siblings.

Help to develop other hobbies
Most of the respondents who had the habit of reading comics like to participate in comic-related activities (89%). And 64% of those respondents will go out to join activities like ACGHK, Cosplay, CWHK and buy comic books and related products.

Teenagers’ interpersonal relationship can be improved when they were given chances to enlarge their social circle when they meet different people during participating in these comic-related activities. Participating different comic-related activities also help them to have more communication or activities with their friends, family, etc.

Besides, other hobbies, such as Cosplay, may be developed after teenagers read comics. As mentioned in the article of Ng, cosplay was first appear in HK in 1993, due to the support of comic readers, now many HK universities organize different cosplay-related activities and cosplay was reported by mass media. This shows the habit of reading comic help to develop other hobbies. Also, teenagers could learn different skills from these hobbies which these benefit teenagers’ future development and help teenagers to enlarge their social circle.

In most cases, if teenagers do not spend too much time on reading comics, their interpersonal relationship won’t be affected. So teenagers should control the amount of time they spend on reading comics in order to balance the time they spent on reading comics, studying and joining different social activities

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9 Animation-Comic-Game Hong Kong (ACGHK) is a material-entertainment fair and book fair focusing on animations, Chinese comics, and games based in Hong Kong. It is held annually at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre usually around August, exhibiting and selling comic books and comic-related, animation-related, game-related products.
10 Comic World Hong Kong is an anime-oriented festival that is held in Hong Kong. It provides exhibition booths, item lockers, and a dressing room for its attendees. It also allows visitors to participate in various activities such as illustration and cosplay contests, singing competitions, and chance to speak with one’s favorite comics artists.
11《日本漫畫對香港漫畫界及流行文化的影響》 ‧ 吳偉明 ‧ 2002
5.3 **General Public’s impression**
Among the 55% of those did not have the habit of reading comics, most of them (85%) said that they wouldn’t consider the factor of whether a person has the habit of reading comics before they make friend with him/her. And 12% of respondents like to make friends with people who love reading comic. But 3% of them said that they don’t like to make friends with people who love reading comic.

31% of respondents who belongs to the 55% of respondents that did not have the habit of reading comics think people who like reading comics are fanciful. 26% of them have good impression on people who like reading comics (e.g. more introverted, talkative or have a lot of friends). However, some respondents (15%) have negative impression on people who like reading comics (e.g. academic performance will be affected or have little friends). These impressions may affect people’s attitude towards people who like comics. And 28% of the respondents think that people who like reading comics have nothing special.

The negative impression towards teenagers who have the habit of reading comics may be plant in the public’s mind under the influence of mass media or movie like Densha Otoko. The negative impression that the public have towards teenagers who have the habit of reading comics may become an obstacle to teenagers since these negative impressions may create bias view.

5.4 **Error and limitation**
As most of the respondents are teenagers and only 60 people participated in the research process, opinion from other age groups cannot be collected, so the result may not show a comprehensive result. These may lower the accuracy and reliability of the results.

5.5 **Improvements**
The solution of the above error and limitation is to try to increase the number of channel on distributing questionnaires in order to receive responses from more people belong to different age group so to get a more comprehensive result to increase the accuracy and reliability of the results.

**Conclusion**

The result of this study is close to the expected one which shown the interpersonal
relationship of teenagers will be affected to different extent and they are similar to the result of a study\textsuperscript{12} found.

From the findings, teenagers’ peer relationship (with friends and online friend, etc) will not be affected by the habit and reading comics negatively. Yet, in the findings collected through the group interviews, teenagers who have the habits of reading comics are more willing to make friends or chat with others who also have the habits of reading comics, so the habit can benefit teenagers to enlarge their social cycle. Besides, in the findings, most of the relationship between teenagers who have the habits of reading comics and sibling will not be affected negatively.

However, in some cases, conflicts between teenagers who have the habits of reading comics and their parents or sibling may be created. Also, some of the interviewees said that the time that stay at home become longer because of the habit of reading comics which may become an obstacle to teenagers to make new friends or communicate with others.

Although many interviewees who don’t have the habits of reading comics claimed that they wouldn’t consider the factor of whether a person has the habit of reading comics before they make friend with him/her, some of the interviewees have some negative impression towards teenagers who have the habit of reading comics that may affect the relationship or association between people who don’t have the habits of reading comics and teenagers who have the habits of reading comics.

To conclude, for teenagers who have good interpersonal relationship before or good communication skills, having the habit of reading comics will not affect or just lightly affect their interpersonal relationship. This habit may even improve their interpersonal relationship when they joined different comics-related activities. However, as for teenagers who have poor interpersonal relationship before or poor communication skills, having the habit of reading comics may worsen the situation.

Reflection

In this study, I met many difficulties which made me feel down. Setting questions in questionnaire and for interviews is the biggest challenge that I

\textsuperscript{12}《漫畫迷的休閒知覺自由之研究》‧黃麗文‧2006
http://ir.lib.ntnu.edu.tw/retrieve/46637/metadata_01_06_s_05_0034.pdf
met as I had difficulties on setting questions that can provided me useful and representative data. Also, I need to set suitable interview question for me to analyze them by using method of Sociometry. So I had spent a lot of time to find more helpful and useful information are the skills of setting questions.

Fortunately, my teachers and my friends gave me a lot of suggestions to help me dealing with these difficulties so I can finish this report and also learning a lot of valuable and useful knowledge. In different process, I have learnt different things, such as the skills of collecting and selecting useful information in the Internet during the research process. Also, I have improved my time management skills.

Besides, I got many special experiences. I got a chance to interview some people that I have never meet which provide me a chance to make new friends and learn to be brave. These kinds of experiences will be helpful in the future.
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the following people since I cannot finish this project without their help.

Respondents of the Questionnaire: I would like to thank them for completing the questionnaires.

My Interviewees: I would like to thank them for their patience in completing the interviews.

My Teacher: I would like to thank him for his patience, and the useful suggestions given by him.
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   http://nccuir.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/28054/1/48_05.pdf
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4. “日本動漫為何吸引青少年 滿足心理需要虛實結合” 北京晚報, 08/09/2005
Appendix----Questionnaire

Research about How reading comics affect teenagers’ interpersonal relationship

Thank you for taking time to finish this questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the impacts of reading comics on teenagers’ interpersonal relationship. Your information given in this questionnaire is for academic references only, please completed this questionnaire with your actual opinions.

Part A

1. Sex:
   □ Male □ Female

2. Age:
   □ 13 or below □ 14-18 □ 19-23 □ 24-27 □ 28 or above

3. Do you have the habit of reading comics?
   □ Yes (only need to complete Part B and D) □ No (only need to complete Part C and D)

Part B. For those who have the habit of reading comics

4. How often do you read comics?
   □ Everyday □ Every other day □ Once or twice a week □ Once a few weeks □ Others: __________

5. How many hours you spend on reading comics? (each time)
   □ Less than 1 hour □ 1-2 hours □ 3-7 hours □ 8-10 hours □ 11-13 hours □ 14-16 hours □ More than 16 hours

6. Which type(s) of comics you like to read?
   (More than one answer can be chosen)
   □ Romance □ Action/adventure □ Crime/suspense □ Horror/supernatural □ Fiction □ Humor □ Fantasy □ Sports □ Gay/lesbian
   □ Workplace □ Epic/war □ Slice-of-life

7. Which of the following comic related activity(ies) you like to participate in?
   (More than one answer can be chosen)
   □ ACGHK □ Cosplay □ Buy comic books and related products □ CWHK □ Browse comic-related websites □ Others: __________ □ Don’t like

8. Do you think reading comics lead to any impacts on your relationship with the following people?

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<th></th>
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<th>Negative impacts</th>
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<tr>
<td>b. Parents</td>
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<td>□</td>
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<td>e. Others:</td>
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9. What are the positive impacts brought by the habit of reading comics?
   (More than one answer can be chosen)
   □ Have more communication or activities with friends □ Easy to make new friends □ Become extroverted □ Have more communication with parents
   □ Have more communication with siblings □ Not applicable □ Others: __________

10. What are the negative impacts brought by the habit of reading comics? (more than one answer can be chosen)
    □ Reduce communication with friends □ Difficult to make new friends □ More conflicts with parents □ More conflicts will siblings
     □ Stay at home for a long time □ Not applicable □ Others: __________

Part C. For those who do not have the habit of reading comics

11. Do you like to make friends with people who love reading comics?
    □ Like □ Dislike □ Not a factor to be considered

12. You think people who like reading comics are?
    (More than one answer can be chosen)
    □ More introverted □ More talkative □ More romantic □ More happy □ Academic performance will be affected □ Have a lot of friends
    □ Have no friends □ Nothing special □ Others: __________

Part D. Are you willing to accept a brief interview?

13. Are you willing to accept a brief interview?
    □ Yes □ No

14. If you are willing to accept an interview, please leave your contact e-mail

Thank You!
Appendix-----Interview transcripts

Date: 5th May, 2013
Time: 16:00-17:00

1st Group: 3 female and 1 male
Participants: A-Female, has the habit of reading comics
             B-Female, has the habit of reading comics
             C-Female, don’t have the habit of reading comics
             D-Male, has the habit of reading comics
             I=Interviewer

I: You have 15 minutes to talk with each other about anything you like or you want to talk about.

(15 minutes later)

I: Whom in this room would you choose to trust?

A: B.

B: A.

C: B.

D: B.

I: Whom in this room you think is the most introverted?

A: D.

B: D.

C: D.

D: C.
I: Whom in this room would you choose who gives recognition for a job well done?

A: C.

B: A.

C: A.

D: A.

I: Whom in this room would you choose to make friend with?

A: B.

B: A.

C: B.

D: B.

I: Whom in this room you would not choose to make friend with?

B: C.

D: C.

C: D.

A: D.

2nd Group: 2 female and 2 male
Participants: 
E-Female, has the habit of reading comics
F-Female, don’t have the habit of reading comics
G-Male, has the habit of reading comics
H-Male, don’t have the habit of reading comics
I=Interviewer

I: You have 15 minutes to talk with each other about anything you like or you want to talk about.

(15 minutes later)

I: Whom in this room would you choose to trust?

E: F.
F: E.
G: H.
H: G.

I: Whom in this room you think is the most introverted?

E: H.
F: H.
G: E.
H: E.

I: Whom in this room would you choose who gives recognition for a job well done?

E: G.
F: E.
G: H.
I: Whom in this room would you choose to make friend with?

E: G.

F: E.

G: H.

H: G.

I: Whom in this room you would not choose to make friend with?

E: H.

F: G.

G: E.

H: E.
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</table>
| EXEMPLAR 3 | How reading comics affect teenagers’ interpersonal relationship? | 6 | ● The enquiry question is too broad. The enquiry question should have been more focused. For example, it should specify which kind of interpersonal relationship and comics to be studied.  
● On-line questionnaires and group interviews were deployed to collect data. The method of sociometry was also used to analyse the interpersonal relationship of interviewees. However, the findings of the questionnaires and the interviews were not used for analysis in an integrated way.  
● The candidate showed a moderate level of competence in reflecting on the process of enquiry. |