



Importance of Role Models in the Social Development of Teens

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Abstract:

Introduction:

As humans, it is in our nature to influence and be influenced by others in society. According to social learning theory, we learn and imitate through observations of others and our surrounding influences, thus making role models vital for confident social skills and resiliency as we mature. However, the influence of inadequate or poor role models on teenagers and teen perspective is studied less frequently than the impact of positive role models.

Objective:

- Reveal a different perspective on this interconnection, offering insight into the lesser-known variable of inadequate role models.
- Give deeper understanding of teen's perception towards negative influences and their involvement in risk behaviors.

Methods:

A survey was given to high school students aged 15 to 18. Asking participants to identify an inadequate role model in their life, analyze their risk behaviors, and analyze their participation in risk behaviors while scaling the role model they identified from least to most important on a 5-point Likert scale.

Analysis:

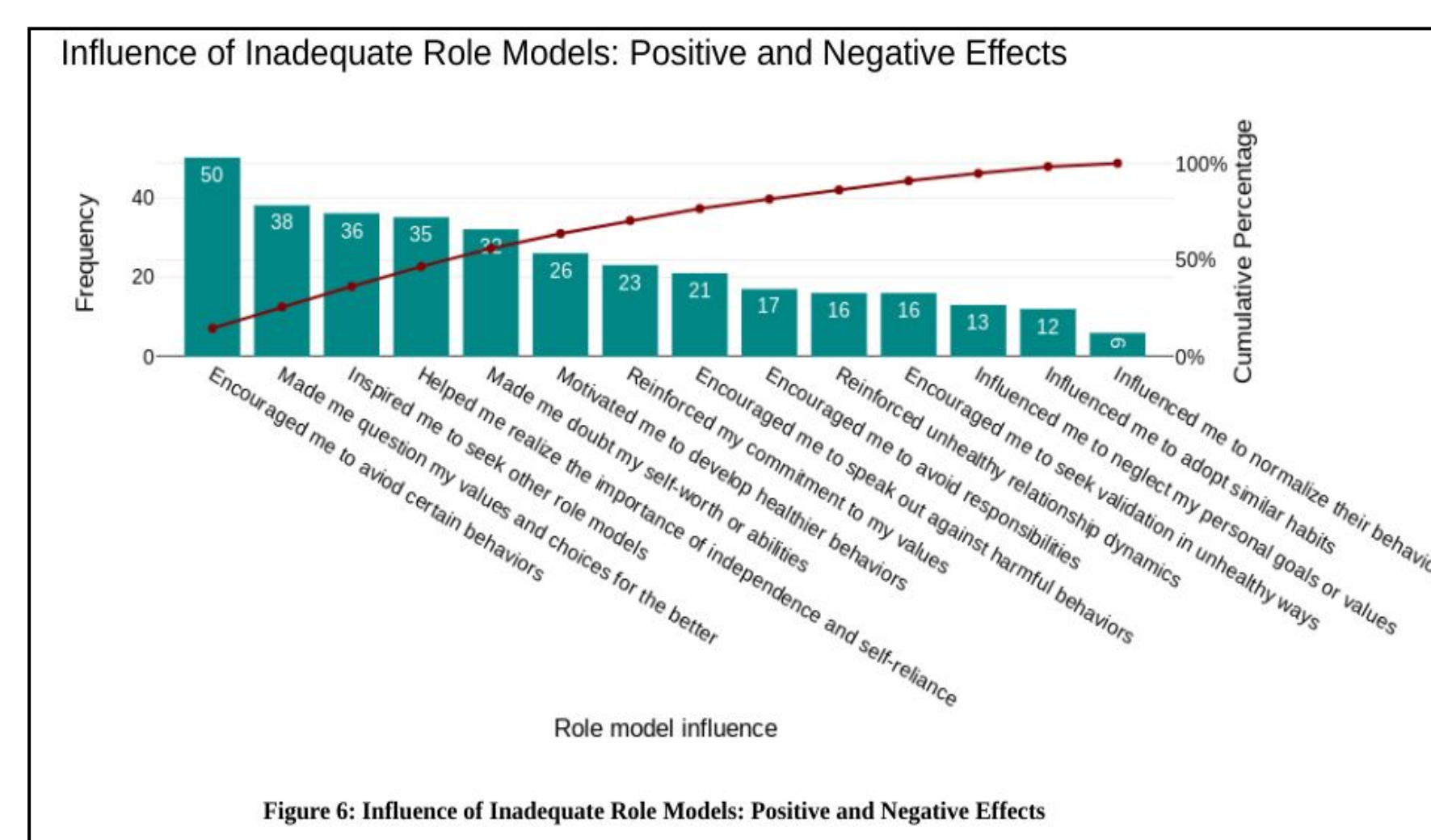


Figure 6: Influence of Inadequate Role Models: Positive and Negative Effects

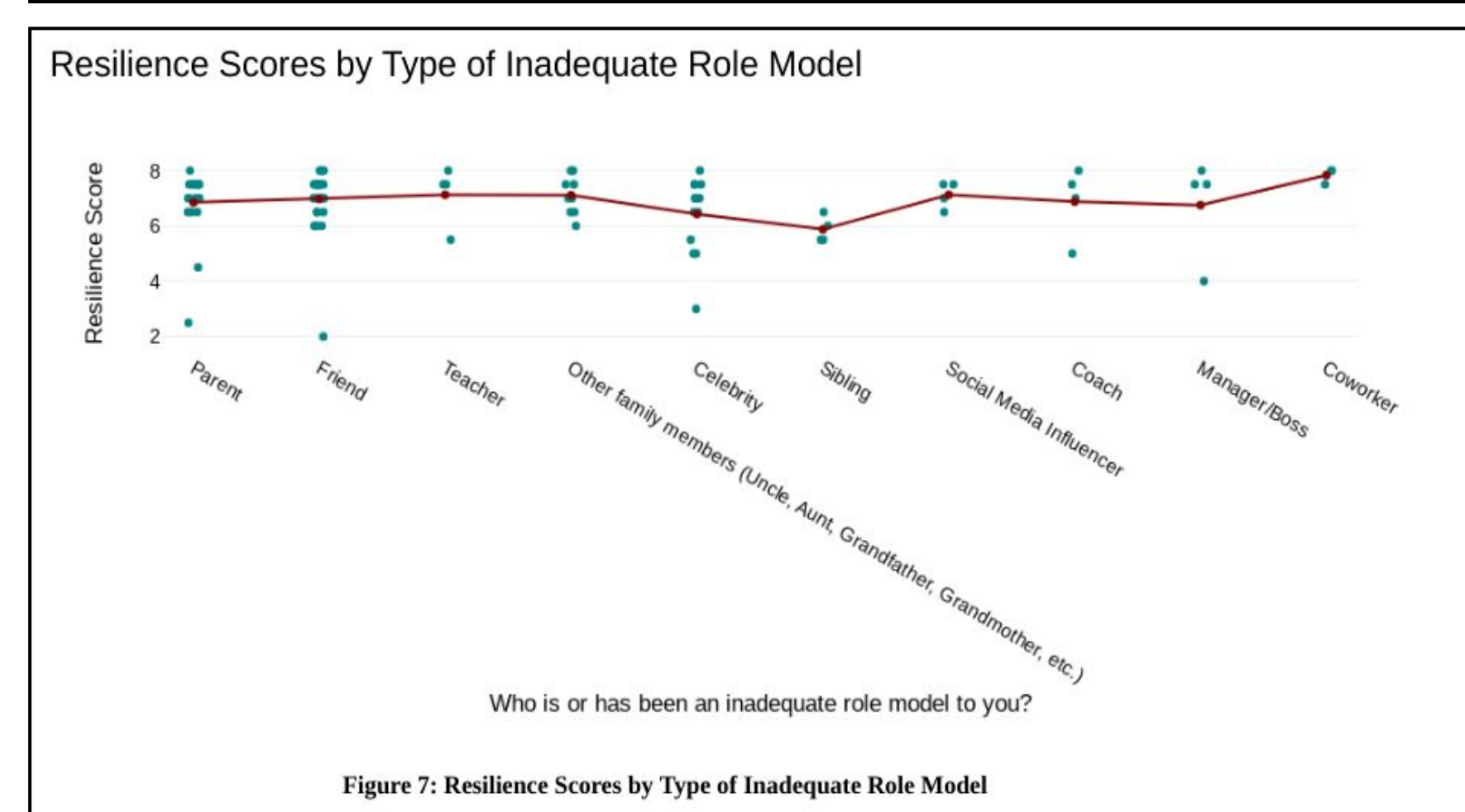


Figure 7: Resilience Scores by Type of Inadequate Role Model

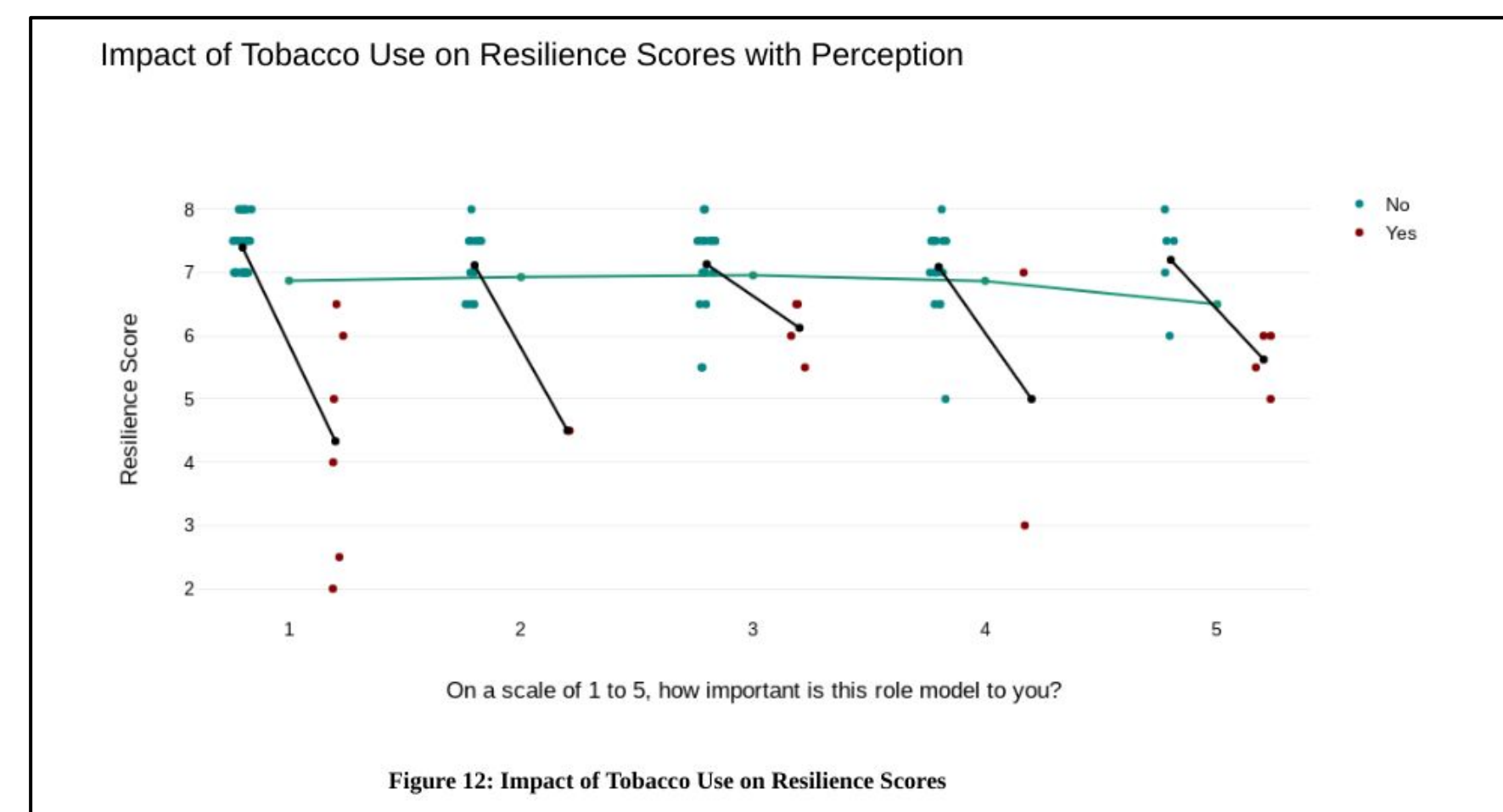


Figure 12: Impact of Tobacco Use on Resilience Scores

Results/Discussion:

Individuals with higher resilience scores were less likely to engage in negative behaviors such as academic dishonesty, poor dietary decisions, and substance use. In contrast, those who admitted to these behaviors exhibited noticeably lower resilience scores. Age in this study showed little to no data significance, thus the focus shifted to gender.

Results/Discussion Cont.

Noticeably, females showed a wider distribution of resilience scores, including a greater presence in the lower resilience range. While, males exhibited more stable resilience levels. This is possible due to the closeness and self-regulation between each participant and their inadequate role model. The data also suggests that teens who rated their poor role figure on the higher scale (4-5), had lower resilience, however other variables (involvement in risk behaviors) weakened their resilience more significantly. Demonstrating that perception is still a active determinate in resilience. Overall, these results illustrate the influence of inadequate role models on teen resilience, emphasizing that those who lack strong, positive role models may struggle with decision-making and personal development. Although survey integrity and lack of diversity could have potentially altered the results, the outcomes will also allow individuals to procure methods to improve relationships between teens and role models, as well as increase the importance of prosocial behavior among people of any age.

Conclusion:

These findings address that multiple factors, not just perception, determines resilience of teens, showcasing the nuance of resilience and cognitive reappraisal of teens. Although, future research should explore intervention strategies to strengthen resilience in adolescents facing negative role model influences.