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ONLINE LEARNING AND ITS IMPACT ON HEALTH : A SOCIOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Technology has many benefits during recent period of COVID-19 but there are also risks for their continuous users especially for youth and children. Excessive technology use can negatively affect human beings, especially on youth at different levels such as physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. This can result in pathological behaviour's such as technology and internet addiction. This paper will attempt the harmful effect of technology use by youth in the global incidence as available and applicable. The attempt is to increase awareness of issues that present with excess use of technology in children and teens, youth, and low-income households

Keywords: *Addiction, technology, health risk, physical health, social health, emotional health, etc.*

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Introduction

Technology has been integrated into every aspect of the modern life of children and youth. It is not possible in all but the most remote cultures to not be exposed to some sort of technology on a daily basis. Technology allows humans to connect without the limitations of geography, it makes processes more efficient and it supplements the intellect and effectiveness of the human brain. Although it has a very significant number of very positive attributes, the populace as a whole often does not consider it also has negative attributes as well. Children and Youth are particularly susceptible to these potentially negative effects.

Today, technology has progressed to microchips and wearable technology such as the Apple Watch. Peter Bleed, an anthropologist, noted even though different types of technologies are studied, these studies occurred in isolation. He noted a behavioral definition of technology remains "poorly understood and incompletely defined".

Technology Facts and Figures

We will develop traces of western countries, so there are some data that show the technological situation of these countries. According to a study by Lenhart of the Pew Research Center, in 2015, 92% of American teens ages 13-17 reported daily Internet use. 24% of all teens reported using the Internet almost constantly. The ethnic distribution of online teens was 34% African American, 32% Hispanic, and 19% White teens. In this Pew Internet Research Project study, 56% of teens said they surf the Internet several times a day and only 8% said they surf the Internet less than once a week. The above data show that teenagers use the Internet a lot.

About 75% of teens also found that they have a smartphone. only 12% of teens did not have a cell phone at all. African-American teens reported the highest percentage of cell phone owners at 85%. Only 71% of white and Hispanic teens reported owning a cell phone. More than 88% of teens have access to cell phones, and many teens sleep with their phones on, Pew said in 2012, according to the Pew Research Center.

Teens are major users of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, Vine, and Tumblr. Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform of teens reporting they use it. In addition, Lenhart reports 71% of teens to use more than one social media site. Males are more likely to visit social

media sites often (45% compared to 36% of girls).

According to the National Consumers League, 56% of children ages 8-12 had a cell phone; all but 4% were smartphones. In addition, 72% of children eight or under have used a mobile device for a media activity such as viewing videos, playing a game, etc. Over 38% of children under the age of two years had used a mobile device. The Council on Communication and Media (CCM), in the American Academy of Paediatricians Pediatrics journal, noted 90% of parents reported their children age two and younger used electronic media. In addition, children in low-income households spent more time with media overall. Children less than five who engage in excess media use spend less time in creative play; this can negatively affect reading skills. CCM also notes media use can be associated with "obesity, sleep issues, aggressive behavior, and attention issues" in preschool and school-aged children".

Overall, Youth spend an average of 7.5 hours a day on entertainment technologies which include TV, playing games, using mobile devices, and using the internet. This is a significant amount of time and the amount of time spent has been increasing every year.

Technology Uses

Smartphones for low-income families increased rapidly in recent times. There are no ethnic disparities in smartphone or cell phone ownership. In addition, African American youth are more likely to go online with a mobile device than white or Hispanic youth. African American youth are also "substantially more likely". In all cases, teens who come from families with higher incomes are more likely to have a smartphone versus a basic phone and a home computer. Teens had access to three or more devices (cell phone, tablet, home computer, game console, etc.)Those belong to the higher income group.

Negative Technology and Internet Interactions

Teenagers often post inappropriate photos and personal information. Technology has transcended the usual sexual boundaries of youth. Young people have received unwanted sexual harassment on the Internet. this was what happened in the conversation. One in 25 young people received an unwanted sexual offer, during which they were encouraged to meet in person. Most young people voluntarily met the predator and 93% ended up having sex with the person who stimulated them on the Internet. Mention that this includes things like requesting photos of naked

young people or other inappropriate images, providing sexually explicit information, submitting specific sexual information, and other violations. Men are more prone to sexual harassment online than women A friend or acquaintance has followed most foreign surveys found on the Internet. Most incidents occur only once. However, some cases continued for a long time.

Cyberbully is bullying through electronic means. This includes text messaging, email, online websites, and social media. Cyberbullying takes the following forms—

- ❖ Flaming; angry messages
- ❖ Harassment: threats
- ❖ Cyberstalking: intimidation or threats
- ❖ Masquerading: pretending to be someone else
- ❖ Outing: sharing personal information told in confidence with others
- ❖ Exclusion; deliberately leaving someone out of a group (p. 1)

Bullying, including cyberbullying, can have a negative impact on physical and mental health. This includes depression, loneliness, anxiety, and other changes in behavior such as a lack of interest in activities the youth used to enjoy. This can progress to lack of sleep, changes in eating patterns, and other physical health complaints. There is often a major negative impact on academic performance. Health risks such as emotional and physical damage including decreased self-esteem, increased incidence of alcohol and drug abuse, increased headaches, phobias, etc.

The way to deter cyberbullying is through prevention, which includes school safety policies that specifically address technology and internet interactions. Education of youth on how to deal with negative interactions in the virtual environment is critical to decreasing the incidence of negative interactions such as cyberbullying, seating, and dealing with unwanted sexual solicitations.

Positive Technology and Internet Interactions

The news about youth, technology, and the internet is not all bad. The internet has many positive attributes as well. The first one is online learning which has opened up numerous opportunities for youth. This includes the ability to take classes on the Internet for fun and for high school and college credit. Although online learning has proliferated higher education with many million students taking online courses.

Online learning gives students living in rural and other disadvantaged areas the opportunity to participate in a more diverse educational process. In addition, with

the advent of the Internet, information has become widely available to today's young people with just a few clicks. Online learning can contribute to goal setting and self-discipline, as it takes to succeed in this environment.

Several positive effects of technology and the internet. This includes improved academic performance and an increased sense of social connection, which improves well-being when technology is used to connect with friends and relatives (but not with strangers). Teaching at a young age can have a positive effect if they are truly educational and require immediate involvement.

Impact on Mental, Social Health, and Emotional Health

Perhaps the most significant impact of technology use is the impact on their mental, social and emotional health. Numerous studies have found negative impacts in these areas of health. Some of these effects are given below.

Impact on Cognition

Much of the research on widely used consumer technologies in youth is on television viewing and children since the television has been readily available since the 1950s. Negative effects have been observed with excess use.

Enterprise skills are key skills children need in life such as motivation, initiative, creativity, individuality, the ability to get along with others, and strategic thinking. Lilliard and Peterson found just nine minutes of viewing caused immediate negative effects on these enterprise skills in pre-schoolers. A control group and an experimental group of four-year-olds were used in this study. The control group was asked to draw pictures while the experimental group watched a fast-paced cartoon. Both groups then watched an educational video. Both groups were then tasked to build a tower of pegs and disks and then perform some simple physical tasks (like touching their toes).

The experimental group participants were instructed if they waited for the researcher to return, they could eat 10 pieces of their choice. A bell was also placed next to the treats and the children were told if they rang the bell, the researcher would return and they could only have two treats. Times were recorded. Last students engaged in a creativity task that was video recorded and reviewed. Children who watched the fast-paced cartoon scored much worse than the combined score for all of the assessed tasks although there were no differences for television usually watched between the two groups and no difference in attention problems.

Several researchers have noted that overuse of technology can result in mental overload and disconnect people from nature, play and people. A child who spends too much time in virtual worlds is less likely to have effective social skills to interact in the real world simply from lack of practice.

Other Issues

The child development should not be artificially rushed. Young brains are malleable and so much is yet to be determined on children who begin significant technology use in infancy.

Media use is associated with "sleep issues, aggressive behavior, and attention issues in preschool and school-age children". Excessive gaming causes aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Changes arousal levels and mood. Excessive media and technology use leads to isolation. Isolation can lead to depression. Technology overuse can cause aggressive attitudes and behaviors. It can also lead to dissociative symptoms. Several researchers have reported mental overload. Excessive technology use can affect youth's sense of identity as well since they can no longer separate the real world from the make-believe world. Excessive technology use can have negative behavioral and psychological impacts.

Impact on Physical Health

The use of technologies, including video games and computers, is one of the factors contributing to overweight and obesity. They researched the effects of technology on a population of adolescents and found a statistically significant difference in the rate of obesity and overweight in those who spent more with technology; however, the time playing games was not statistically significant in the population as a whole. In addition, sleep deprivation found with excessive technology use can increase obesity as well. Technology in a child or adolescent's bedroom increased overweight.

Technology Addiction

Internet and technology addiction is multi-faceted and truly has no standard definition because of the diverse types of technologies available. However, in its most simplistic form, technology addiction is the overuse of technology to the point of where it interferes in daily activities, school, and relationships with family and friends.

They note internet activities activate the pleasure pathway of the brain which causes a release of dopamine similar to opiate ingestion. Over time, more stimulation

is needed to provide this pleasure stimulation. Activities such as social media and internet gaming are specifically designed to provide rewards that increase addictive behaviors. For these reasons, internet addiction is most often compared to the phenomenon of gambling addiction.

Misra and Stokols performed a study of 484 students in their late teens; 82% of the population was Asian which has been found to have a predisposition to technology addictions. High self-reported levels of cyber-based overload predicted a poorer health status as measured by injuries, frequent of health problems, and visits to the doctor. The most common physical symptoms were sleep problems, depression, headaches, loss of appetite, and stomach complaints.

Misra and Stokils also noted those with a high level of cyber activity decreased concentration and self-reflection. Lee discussed the effects of social networking fatigue which they defined as a "self-evaluated feeling of tiredness caused by an obsession with social media and the need to respond immediately. They noted this leads to both physical and psychological strain. Young reported there is a paucity of literature on Internet and technology addition in Europe and additional study is needed. Technology addiction is a growing health risk in the child and adolescent population.

Conclusion

Caution must be used in technology use in both children and adolescents. It is important to balance technology use with other activities that promote relationships, creativity, and development. Excessive use can negatively affect the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of youth. More health education interventions are needed in the United States and other countries to increase awareness of this potential issue.

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