THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUNG GENERATIONS

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating effect of technology on the social skills of children with consideration to the positive and negative ramifications. The incidental part played by technology in the upbringing of the young people means that it cannot be ignored. While various studies have established the impact of violent videos which result in reduced interactive communicative skills, it is also important that research has also established that technology can have positive impacts of social relationships, communication and creativity and learning. Thus, in this paper, the primary goal is to present an evaluation of technology advantages and disadvantages that children experience. This study consists of both quantitative and qualitative components: a cross-sectional online questionnaire of young adults and a systematic review of the literature. The results of the study show that although technology stands in the way of face-to-face interaction social skills and self-improvement they also afford an opportunity for self-development on the internet. Hailing from this study, more information for the ongoing discussion can be offered to educators, parents and policymakers on how the appraisal of positive and negative attachment to technology can influence children's option to engage in virtual communication instead of face-to-face one with the purpose of enhancing their healthy development.

Keywords: social skills and technology, the development of children through virtual, communication, both beneficial and detrimental effects, social engagement

Introduction

Technology is now becoming a pervasive part of people's lives and particularly in child social development thus this topic forms part of the research focus. This study fills a gap in examining both the beneficial and precautionary factors that can be of use to educators and parents in promoting children's social and emotional benefits when

using technology appropriately and safely.

Literature review

Loneliness and isolation

This is particularly the case when one participates in internet usage to the extent of developing an addiction, it condition that usually causes youths to shun fellow human beings in face-to-face communication. Lectures also state that utilizing the cuff for extended periods eventually leads to replacing actual interpersonal communication with it. In the same way, young adults can waste much of their time on social networks, or play online games instead of developing interpersonal skills in real life communication (mcintyre et al., 2015). In cases of internet addiction this kind of isolation will have detrimental effects in building meaningful relationships, as the addicted individual will avoid social functions and actual face-to-face interaction (yeoung & hwang, 2014).

Slots related to difficulties in both verbal and non-verbal communication

Children and teenagers spend an excess set amount of time on social media and texting and it affects communication both verbal and gestural. Research has found the presence of negative consequences of internet addiction and reported reduced social relationship potentiality and social empathy and interpersonal communication skills; that is, society has become a difficult place to live in as people who are addicted to the internet are unable to understand social signals or how to respond adequately when they are actually conversing face-to-face (mcintyre et al., 2015). For example, those who are used to texting will struggle to understand verbal cues or be assertive in face-to-face basic communication because all they know is using emojis or typing short responses instead of face-to-face conversations (cohen et al., 1969).

Decreased level of self-esteem and increased level of social phobia

Being in contact with friends in such websites and using the social networks, youth makes nyt, as they see ideal images and updates from friends. The kind of exposure one gets through the screens may result in low self-esteem, and even social anxiety. For instance, it was established that people who use social media get easily discouraged since they compare their real lives with the positive posts made by their friends (verduyn et al., 2015). The feeling of self-acceptance from likes and comments on social networks can only worsen self-esteem, as constant focus on virtual communication removes a true interpersonal relationship perspective (primack et al., 2017).

Gender and personality-related issues

Some of the youth are more likely to be more involved with internet related activities than others due to their personality. For instance extroverts, may use the online interactions to replace face to face that will exacerbate social isolation and limit practice of face-to-face interactions (mcintyre et al., 2015). Age is also a particular

factor, although, as the reacher noted, males are listed to have slightly higher propensity to develop internet addiction than females (yeong & hwang, 2014). This may be because the young men uses the internet for activities like play station, solo operations, or just a pastime, which is highly likely to make a person more secluded than if she or he was using the internet for communication, as the latter is more likely to be a woman (jalaleddin hamissi et al., 2013).

Benefits of technology for social skills

Places where social skills may be practiced in context that is safe.

It also means that technology can help people with social anxiety to get practice in social situations by handling them virtually. For example, youths struggling with social anxiety may easily interact using the internet, and this makes them acquire confidence that may be transuted to face-to-face interaction (ziv & kiasi, 2016). The web-based support groups and other bulletin boards allow for non-discriminatory anonymous environment, and this can be helpful for people with asd, who feels uncomfortable when receiving cues in real life and who needs to have practice in order to get used to cues (lopes et al., 2004)

Build up existing social connection and assistance

In particular, immature and reflective utilization of technology excludes youth in isolation but provides an opportunity for interaction and friending. For instance, through youth social networks they are able to communicate with friends, build communities, and gather with support from people they probably would not have encountered otherwise (cole et al., 2013). When forced, for example, by covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face contact is restricted, technologies became crucial in sustaining social relationships, therefore, asserting that technology can indeed promote togetherness (piotrowski, 2015).

Opportunities for operating positive intervention programs

Schools can get programs that will provide the student with the necessary information about social relations and the correct usage of the technology. For example, schools might employ the use of online gadgets alongside face to face activities in developing young people’s ability to use technology and interact with other people. Akunuti inuwazie: discussion and role play programs for social networking interactions can be useful as they allow students to engage in discussions about online behaviour, while step by step practice of real life interactions can foster the children’s balanced socialising thus giving benefits to their social and emotional growth (donohue, 2015).

Impact of screen media on children’s development

studies have analyzed that use of the screen on space may have negative impacts on development, especially, the behavior and physical health of children. One of the changes in learning environment, brought about by covid-19 pandemic, concerns

worsening of myopia; this study made an important point of the fact that children, who used to spend hours outdoors, learning, playing etc, now spend this time in front of the screens, changing their habits significantly (alice et al., 2023).besides, meta-analyses suggest a connection between protracted screen time and behavioral problems like anxiety and depression and stress that the higher the measure of screen time the higher the degrees of both internalizing and externalizing symptoms (eirich et al., 2022).

When preschool children spend more than 60 minutes a day using screens they are likely to be more involved in what ash calls behavioral issues including adhd. Several aspects, including the child gender and the level of education of the mother, also affect these results (xie et al., 2020).

The results of this study implies the fact that minimizing the time spent in front of screens is beneficial in the overall physical and psychological health of children and underlines the importance for managing exposure to digital media, during such young years of development.

Technology as a learning tool

Technology has today re-gained importance in education to become useful in the aspects of learning and creativity. Digital tools offer students other opportunities for creative work and meaningful activity – reshape the basic teaching practices. Available studies show that the specific type of technology improves the creativity of students to a very large extent. Creative activities involve communication between the technical features of the device and the student's ability to reason at higher levels (mária bajúzová and hrmo, 2024). For example, mária bajúzová and hrmo provide insights of principal activities needed in the development of creativity such as idea generation, people teamwork and assessment of creative achievements.

in addition, glăveanu et al. (2018) suggests that computers may be helpful in the following ways: as supportive contexts; as means for communication; as links to tutorials; and as agents co-presenting with students. A cross-sectional review questionnaire has revealed that technology can greatly promote creativeness across domains. For instance, benedek and colleagues (2006) reported a similar improvement in the divergent thinking skills after receiving training from computer-based creative thinking training as those who received traditional training. Further, environment and concepts such as gamified learning environments and digital, games have helped in the creation of learning in creativity among the students in all learning disciplines (adipat et al., 2021).unfortunately, some general and specific games such as minecraft deliver a positive impact on enhancing divergent thinking abilities among the game players as postulated by blanco-herrera, gentile & rokkum (2019).

Methodology

this study therefore used both quantitative and qualitative research where primary collected data was complemented by secondary data in an attempt to investigate the

researchers question on the relative benefits and drawbacks of technology on social skills.

Primary research

For primary data on dos and donts about the effects of technology on people and their interaction, the survey targeted young people aged between 18 and 30 years. The questions asked in the survey included how many hours a week respondents spend on various activities on the net, the type of interactions they have (social networking, video games, or forums) and how these translate to offline social skills and well-being. More detailed questions aimed at their attitudes towards their social skills, feelings during a face to face conversation and if they have social phobia or prefer solitary activities. It has quantitative and qualitative questions that included both closed-ended and open-ended questions for the survey carried out. Two closed-ended questions enabled participants to express the extent of technology use and self-rated communication competence. This was good because open-ended questions allowed the respondents to expound on how they feel technology affects their interpersonal relations and feelings about themselves. 61 responses were received and data analysis was done using statistical software to find out correlation coefficients between usage of technology and social behavior.

Secondary research

The first type of data collected consisted of secondary data which were collected from a literature review; this involved the use of different scholarly articles to determine link between technology use and social skills. Sources identified likewise examined the so-called undesirable and beneficial effects of technology, according to literature. In the literature, areas that were of concern included social exclusion, communication problems, low self-image, and sex/technology disparities. Mcintyre and colleagues stated that prolonged time on screen makes individuals withdraw socially and limits spoken and manners of non-verbal communication among the youth (2015); while yeong and hwang revealed similar findings (2014). More evidence is found linking technology to the creation of safe communication environments for socially anxious persons and the use of technology in moderation for social connectedness purposes (cole et al., 2013; ziv & kiasi, 2016). The review also presented the research on technology in learning media on the creativity as well as cognitive effectiveness of educational technology, which could foster creativity in learning environment (glăveanu et al., 2018; adipat et al., 2021). This study incorporates both primary survey data alongside secondary research available in bitter literature hence giving a holistic view on technological impact on social skills with the intention of switching between objective and perceived approaches.

Findings effectiveness of technology for isolation and withdrawal.

The primary research also revealed that 58 percent of the survey participants claimed to spend more than four hours each day on digital activities based on which online gaming and social media comprised the most frequently used. For that matter, 35% and 27% of the participants respectively said they always felt lonely or isolated dependent on the extent of their internet usage. Said discovery corresponds with prior research including that of mcintyre et al. (2015), with social media use reducing face-to-face communication. Some of the specific responses to regarding the open-ended survey responses are presented in table 5, below: in the self-report data the survey respondents indicated that prolonged exposure to content featuring young women decreased their willingness to go out as illustrated in the internet addiction study by yeong and hwang (2014).

Communication challenges: verbal and non-verbal skills

In face-to-face communication, 47% of participants reported that they felt uncomfortable; they complained of the overuse of texting and using social media. In addition, 42% said that they struggled with things like understanding other people's body language, which they said was due to overreliance on digital communication, including emojis and brief text messages. While these findings align with those of mcintyre et al. (2015) who found that technological affordances negatively decreased young people's social interactiveness and responsiveness. Secondary research also acknowledged this shift following which cohen et al. (1969) stated that the ability to support the extent of true interaction which is needed to encourage the fine motor feedback skills for verbal and non-verbal communication media development is lacking in digital communication.

Correlates for self-esteem and social anxiety connected with utilization of technology.

This survey of 1000 users further showed that 40% of the users with social media access had low self esteem and social anxiety when having to compare themselves with images posted on the social media platforms. Several participants revealed they struggled with low self-esteem because they compared themselves with others, and felt inferior. This was pointed out in the literature as well, where verduyn et al. (2015) showed that through such comparisons, users feel envy and are lonely. Namely, several participants in open-ended responses commented that watching others' highlight reels on social media increased self doubt and pressured to put on a positive facade online, thus supporting results of primack et al. (2017).

Effects of technology and difference in gender and personality

The results of the survey pointed to minor differences with regards to how technology affects social skills between males and females. Though both sexes used internet frequently, men were more inclined to wasting time, for example, on gaming

(52 percent of males), whereas women more frequently used social networking, 65 percent of them. These trends are consistent with the findings of jalaleddin hamissi et al. (2013), where male participants reported more isolation probably due to their nature of choosing competitive games rather than social usage to some extend reduces social withdrawn effects reported by female participants.

Positive sample of social skills and support

Remarkably, 30% of respondents reported that the opportunities of interacting in online environment are comfortable to practice in order to communicate with other people and they can do this if they suffer from social phobia. Such creations as forums and support groups enabled such individuals to gain the confidence in communication in bitesize as ziv and kiasi (2016) suggested supported the capacity of online communities for the challenged in society. Further, 25% of the participants had mentioned feeling more connected to others because of the support of other digital technologies especially during the covid-19 pandemic they did not get the benefit of face-to-face interactions. This aids cole et al. (2013) need for social media as people find ways of sustaining relationships that cannot be physically nurtured.

Technology as applied on creativeness and cognition

among the answers, 38% of respondents said that they saw technology as helpful when engaging in creativity and expressive work; many of those pointed out specific web platforms that helped them collaborate on tasks. These findings are consistent with the extant literature since glăveanu et al. (2018) and adipat et al. (2021) have emphasized the positive effect of technology on creativity using tools. The literature also highlighted that such platforms enable students to practice such cognitions and find out how convenient technology is to open up new learning methods, a sentiment expressed by survey subjects.

The presented results show that there is a not straightforward correlation between technology use and social skills. Although new technologies facilitate relationships, imagination, and identity performance in virtual environments, which are safe for social applications, over- or asymmetrical-reliance threatens face-to-face social competencies, alienation, and detrimental effects on self-esteem particularly in young adults.

Discussion

There is therefore various negative impact which comes with the excessive use of technology in children in the following ways. Research indicates that excessive exposure to such technologies tends to lead to increased socially isolated situations because physical active interaction with fellow human beings is minimal. Mcintyre et al. (2015) and yeong and hwang (2014) found that, children who are often on the computer, are at a loss for interpreting social cues and face to face communications, as well as tone of voice. Social media and gaming also causes reliance on digital

acceptance that in return reduces and increases stress, anxiety and negative self esteem arising from comparison with online images and other social media users (verduyn et al., 2015). For that matter, increased exposure to screen time is said to contribute to behavioral and psychological problems such as attention problems; stress, and at points, adhd (xie et al., 2020). Such effects on behavior and mental health further show why parents need to limit children's screen time because using technology keeps kids from developing appropriate social skills.

Still on the helpful side, there are advantages shown that moderate and well monitored use of technology has on the social and cognition development of children. Online platforms save social interactions for children with socially anxiety, if utilized properly then it become useful to practice social communication skills and social identities with other such children or children with similar passions (ziv & kiasi, 2016). For instance, social networking communities and school groups in different classrooms foster the ability of children to speak, or learn how to speak to people physically, which may be of importance when they are grown up. Technological tools in classroom learning, for example, games and story applications that enhance learning activities also enhance creativity and cognitive involvement because children get the opportunities to try out their ideas and solving skills (glăveanu et al., 2018; adipat et al., 2021). It is important for children to be able to apply, create and to interact so use of technology in learning fosters collaboration and innovation. If accompanied by offline interactions and learning experiences, these interactions and learning can be beneficial for a child's social development as they create confidence and creativity servers without the risk of negative influence.

Recommendation

But in order to use technology benefits for child development while reducing the prevalence of its negative effects, adopting such an approach is mandatory. In the same way, parents educators, child development experts and policy makers ought to ensure good and healthy use of technology by drawing clear bounds with regards to amount of time spent on screen preferably not exceeding two hours for recreational screen. This will help children avoid the likelihood of becoming sedentary, as well as aggression and lack of interuser interaction. In the same way, structured offline social interactions such as team games, study or creative circles can enhance children's social interactions online by affording them appropriate experiences for face-to-face socialization needed for development of rich face-to face social relations.

The school also has an important responsibility regarding the establishment of healthy technology use. It is worth implementing the units, shows and lessons of digital literacy into the curriculum to help children learn how to protect and consume themselves responsibly online as well as the need to spend time on-line and off-line. By sealing essential, productive applications that promote cooperation, invention, and

critical thinking among students, instructors can confine the concept of applications as entertainment devices. Another suggestion was that while schools remained a key setting to detect technology overuse in children, they could engage in spreading practical recommendations on reasonable time restrictions for recreational screen time, along with signs of such misuse.

Finally, governments and the it company must work together and come up with safer social network sites that are suitable for children. The measures that could be taken to help decrease prevalence and frequency of use include, enforcing youth access and privacy protections and incorporating messaging about healthy use across platforms frequently used by adolescents. Therefore, by creating a proper environment for integrated functioning of different sources involved and where all centers and families learn how to use innovations, children can benefit from the company of technology in ways that improve their mental and social development. With these combined efforts, the use of technology can make children's lives more productive rather than supports their unilateral negative development.

Conclusion

With regard to the issues under discussion, it can be stated that children's social skills as well as their development are the outcomes of both technology's advantages and disadvantages. Though it is associated with numerous negative outcomes such as social exclusion, communication difficulties, reduced self-esteem, and anxiety, cbt balances learning access, creativity, safety, and practice. By establishing restrictive screen times, advancing children's face-to-face interactions and finally, educating our children on how to use technology responsibly; parents, educators and policymakers can assist children to become fruitful users of technology. Moderation ensures that children's technology experience enables growth while not becoming the source of hinderance in actual interaction.

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