

ADOLESCENTS' VIEWS ON TECHNOLOGY: HOW IT AFFECTS THEIR EMOTIONS, LEARNING, AND PEER RELATIONS.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the impact of adolescents' interaction with technology on their emotional well-being, academic achievement, and peer relationships. The study employs a thematic analysis of interviews with 60 adolescents from Gujarat, interpreting their lived experiences and behavioral patterns associated with digital usage. It identifies both beneficial and detrimental consequences, emphasizing concerns such as anxiety due to excessive use, academic distractions, and the decline of in-person interactions. The study underscores the necessity of digital equilibrium, contributing to dialogues regarding youth well-being in a technology-dominated context.

Keywords: Technology, Adolescents, Mental Health, Academic Performance, Social Relationships

INTRODUCTION

The rise of digital technology has had a big effect on the daily lives of adolescents. Smartphones, social media platforms, and streaming services are now a big part of school and leisure, so digital interactions have become a normal part of growing up for adolescents. People are worried about how this increase in technology use may affect their mental health, academic performance, and society as a whole. Adolescents today often experience sleep disturbances, increased anxiety, and declining academic engagement due to their technology habits (Orben & Przybylski, 2019; Twenge et al., 2022).

Adolescents' mental health is especially at risk in this environment. Too much time in front of a screen and inadequate digital hygiene might hurt your mental health, which is made up of your emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Bhatia, 1982; WHO, 2014). Online connections are a major impact on emotional regulation, identification formation, and colleagues-compared to the three important parts of being a teenager-the events of the world-world life. Studies suggest that using your phone can be forced to behave and it can be difficult to focus, especially when you are doing schoolwork (Shaffer et al., 1999; Vombal, 2003).

Dual role of technology function in education. This makes learning more interactive and provides people access to a wide range of information. On the other hand, using it can make you focus and close your schoolwork. Teenagers have reported to feel alone and separate from others because they have gone to talk to the person to talk to people online (Suldo et al., 2008; Kubey et al., 2001).

This study wants to qualitatively examine the effects of technology use on adolescents by documenting their living experiences. This study explains emotional, educational and social components affected by technology, which provides insight into the obstacles and duplicate system adopted by adolescents in navigating the digital world.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate how adolescents perceive the impact of everyday technology use on their emotional well-being..
2. To understand adolescents' views on the role of digital devices in their academic focus and learning habits.
3. To assess adolescents' experiences of how online interactions impact their peer relationships and face-to-face social connections.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have investigated the impact of technology on adolescent life. Soderqvist (2008) noticed that excessive mobile phones are used to use psychological symptoms such as tiredness and sleep difficulties. Orben and Przybylski (2019) examined the effects of screen time on adolescent welfare using a broad dataset and determined that its effects were minimal and complexly fine. Their findings emphasize that the context and intention of internet use is more important than the overall period spent online. Odors and Jensen (2020) examined evidence about the use and welfare of adolescent technology, highlighting that technology can intensify stress and distraction, although it also provides support and connections for children, especially from groups of margins.

Tweng et al. (2022) found that teenagers, especially women, who use social media, are more likely to have depressed symptoms. However, they also point out that parental guidance and support in real life can help prevent against these problems. Another research by Oh and Kanai (2021) showed that using devices for more than one thing at a time while doing academics makes it harder to stay focused and do well in school. This resonates with what adolescents say about how online study tools can help and hurt them at the same time. Steers et al. (2023) looked at how adolescents connect with each other in hybrid (online and offline) settings. They found that supportive interactions between peers often happen in private online spaces like chat groups, while public posts can make adolescents feel socially anxious and pressure them to be perfect.

Diener et al. (2002) and Suldo et al. (2008) highlighted the influence of digital activities on life satisfaction from a well-being perspective. Adolescents who overly partake in digital entertainment frequently express reduced self-esteem and lower life happiness.

METHODOLOGY

- **Design:** Qualitative research with a phenomenological orientation.
- **Sample:** 60 adolescent students (13–18 years) selected using purposive sampling from urban and semi-urban schools in Gujarat.

- **Tool:** A semi-structured interview schedule was developed based on insights from existing literature on adolescent development and digital media. The schedule comprised open-ended questions categorized under the themes of emotional well-being, academic performance, peer relationships, and digital behavior. Expert psychologists and educational researchers validated the tool to ensure its relevance, cultural appropriateness, and clarity.
- **Data Collection:** In-depth interviews were conducted individually, each lasting 30–45 minutes.
- **Data Analysis:** Interviews were analyzed using “Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework”. The steps involved were getting to know the data, making some preliminary codes, looking for concepts evaluating them, giving them names, and finally putting up the report. Coding was conducted manually, and peer debriefing was employed to ensure inter-coder reliability.
- **Ethical Measures:** Before beginning investigation, we received ethical permission from the institution's investigation committee. Anyone who participated and those who were their legal guardians were asked to provide their informed permission. The researcher made sure that taking part was completely optional and that people may stop at any moment if they wanted to, and strict confidentiality regarding all responses. Anonymized codes were assigned to participants to ensure privacy during analysis and reporting.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Emotional Dependence and Psychological Overload

A significant number of adolescents expressed an affective connection to their devices. They frequently experienced feelings of anxiety, restlessness, and even wrath when disconnected from their phones. Sleep and emotional regulation were frequently disrupted by prolonged screen time. Students who were not subject to screen-time regulations were particularly susceptible to psychological excess.

Theme 2 : Academic distraction versus digital learning.

While some participants acknowledged that digital platforms facilitated their access to educational videos and seminars, a significant number admitted that they frequently diverted their attention to social media or gaming during their study sessions. This resulted in incomplete assignments, last-minute preparation, and a decline in academic performance.

Theme 3: Changes in Peer Relationships

Online platforms have become the primary medium for social interaction among adolescents, according to their reports. Although this facilitated communication, it also diminished the profundity of interpersonal relationships. Female students, in particular, mentioned incidents of cyberbullying and sentiments of social exclusion.

Theme 4: Digital Boundaries and Parental Guidance

Students who followed screen-time rules or breaks of scheduled studies reported to improve educational performance and less emotional issues. Parents' participation often depends on their educational background and digital literacy. Families with low educational levels were

influenced by lack of awareness about the results of particularly unrestricted technology use results.

Theme 5: Self-Regulation and Coping Strategies

Some adolescents implemented strategies such as restricting their social media usage before bedtime or disabling notifications during study hours. As an alternative, others participated in sports, literature, or journaling. These students exhibited improved academic discipline and emotional equilibrium.

6. Implication of the Study

1. To promote healthy online behaviors, enhance time management, and reduce academic distractions, schools must prioritize the implementation of digital literacy programs.
2. It is recommended that parents receive orientation and training to facilitate the monitoring and regulation of screen time in the home. Emotional regulation and academic commitment in adolescents can be improved through effective communication regarding digital boundaries.
3. Interventions that emphasize emotional well-being, cyberbullying awareness, and digital detox techniques should be implemented by mental health professionals and school counselors.

CONCLUSION

The research reveals that adolescents face significant challenges when they misuse or overuse technology, despite its many benefits. The results corroborate a robust correlation between mental health issues, including anxiety, emotional instability, and sleep deprivation, and excessive screen time. Academic distractions and reduced social interaction further exacerbate the situation.

However, studies have demonstrated that structured screen time, parental guidance, and self-regulation among adolescents significantly reduce negative outcomes. Promoting family engagement, emphasizing offline social connections, and encouraging digital literacy are essential measures toward progress. To optimize their academic performance, social relationships, and mental health in an increasingly interconnected world, adolescents must be encouraged to exercise conscious control over their digital behavior.

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