THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: AN

EXPLORATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND EXPECTATIONS AMONG MALE AND

FEMALE ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Digital communication affects the psychological development of teenagers. The current study seeks to find the influence of digital communication on the mental well-being of the learners. The literature review shows that most people lose their social interaction abilities. In this case, they lose the confidence to interact with other people or express their thoughts. Interviews and observations will be the primary methods to gather the required data. The researcher will develop an experimental study to test the efficiency of the instruments. The expected findings will show an insignificant difference in psychological development among male and female adolescents. All learners will record adverse behavioral effects due to the extensive use of digital gadgets for communication.

The Impact of Digital Communication on Psychological Well-Being: An Exploration of New

Technologies and Expectations among Male and Female Adolescents

The emergence of the internet and modern technology-enhanced the efficiency of long-distance communication. Cheap hand-held devices allow people to engage in real-time conversation. In this case, people can send instant messages to their colleagues. The advent of social media platform enables people to share media objects like images and videos. Currently, a significant percentage of the global population cannot survive without their cell-phones. Both young and old remain tethered to their devices. The case implies that people can maintain close social ties irrespective of their locations. Despite its effectiveness in enhancing interactions, digital communication may pose substantial threats to the psychological well-being of users. Extensive use of mobile devices among adolescents has not met the expectation of improved social and intellectual potentials. On the other hand, the system poses significant threats to users since it hinders effective face-to-face communication and results in increased levels of stress. From a different perspective, increased use of internet exposes youths to unwarranted threats. Scholars have paid little attention to the overall impact of combined factors to the overall well-being of young people. Close examinations of the adverse effects of digital communication help to reveal the actual impact on the mental well-being of high school learners. Besides, the approach can disclose the exact cause of anti-social conducts in modern learning institutions.

Literature Review

Mental health affects how people think, feel, and respond to various circumstances. Poor psychological well-being affects people's lives and those around them (Haniff et al., 2014, p. 1). Mostly, children with mental have high levels of indiscipline. To some extent, they cannot make a sound judgment concerning their lives. According to Haniff et al. (2014), poor mental health motivates people to commit suicide (p. 2). The case suggests that affected persons lose the value of their lives. They perceive death as an easier route to escape life-related challenges. Therefore, children who experience poor psychological development lead to irresponsible lives.

Lewis et al. examine the influence of shared media communication on non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). Many adolescents who self-injure connect with peers who engage in similar practices through the internet and chat rooms (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 1). More accessible communication through such platforms enhances the sharing of ideas and thoughts. Besides, others share their NSSI experience through personal websites. Lewis et al. (2012) note that the sharing of images and motion pictures through e-platforms like YouTube influences individual behavior among high school students (p. 2). The statement suggests that NSSI leads pose a significant developmental risk to adolescents. Mental health professionals relate substantial risks to adolescents who interact with NSSI content. Therefore, extensive use of social media platforms lowers the ability to think critically among youths.

Valkenburg and Peter examine the impact of modern tools of communication on social behavior among adolescents. Young people who spend time sending instant messages to friends of interacting through chartrooms create virtual social groups (Valkenburg and Peter, 2007, p. 1169). The practice detaches them from interacting with parents and close relatives. Besides, they tend to overlook the need to discuss issues or play with friends. According to Valkenburg

and Peter (2007), the valuable time spent with friends and parents promotes intellectual abilities (1170). This statement suggests that the time spent communicating through the internet lower the values that a learner may gain from an experienced person. Eventually, such persons cannot manage various challenges that they may experience in their lives. Therefore, modern means of communication discourage youths from developing valuable life skills and abilities.

Subrahmanyam and Greenfield examine the overall impact of online communication on the relationships created by adolescents. Online discussion leads to the significant effects on social development among peers (Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008, p. 120). In particular, the fact is observable in the relationships that peers develop with their romantic partners, peers, and strangers. Besides, uncontained online interactions impact their identity development. According to Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008), teens tend to copy ideas from online platforms to establish their identities (p. 124). Such practices distract them from their daily activities as they try to maintain dominance in their online circles. The effect is significant in school going teens. Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) further state that the use of the internet in schools has failed to achieve initial expectations (p. 121). Educationists hoped that the internet-enabled gadgets would assist students in accessing learning materials and engaging their peers in school-related debates. However, such technological tools distract learners from their school work as they focus on maintain unwarranted relationships with their online peers. Therefore, internet-based communication tools serve to distract learners from active learning.

Loneliness and poor social skills encourage people to engage in the extensive use of online communication. According to Kim, LaRose, and Peng (2009), people with poor communication skills develop active compulsive Internet use behavior (p. 451). This statement

implies that the presence of online communication strategies discourages active social development among adolescents. Besides, the approach increases shyness and lowers the level of social self-efficacy. Kim, LaRose, and Peng (2009) further note that encouraging teenagers to communicate through the internet affects their overall learning (p. 452). In this case, it becomes hard for them to express their thoughts and share knowledge. In other instances, overreliance on the internet hinders critical thinking abilities. Therefore, virtual communication among high school learners leads to low levels of social self-efficacy.

Choi and Lim examined the effect of social and technological overload on teenagers to reveal negative psychological well-being. Addiction to social network services (SNS) has a positive and robust correlation with technological overload (Choi and Lim, 2016, p. 245). This case suggests that extensive use of internet-based and mobile communications leads to addiction among teens. In consequence, they lose their self-discipline and self-control. According to Choi and Lim (2016), social overloads occur when a person focuses on developing networks with many people (p. 245). The time required to maintain such associations hinders active learning. Besides, it distracts young people from engaging in productive relationships that can improve their overall quality of life. SNS obsession negatively affects psychological well-being (Choi and Lim, 2016, p. 250). This statement suggests that teenagers lose their ability to think critically about their lives. Besides, they fail to make substantial decisions based on the challenges that they experience in their daily lives. Therefore, SNS addiction leads to adverse psychological developments.

## Methodology

*Research Design Selection and Rationale*

The current research seeks to examine the impact of digital communication on the psychological well-being of learners. Parents, teachers, and curriculum developers hoped that modern technology would assist students in learning. Most scholars overlook the sociological effect of mobile phones on teenagers. Along these lines, it is essential to examine how extensive use of digital communication technology impacts the overall psychological development of young children. Linking the impacts on social interaction and problem-solving abilities can help to identify how virtual communication interferes with subjective well-being among high school students, based on their gender.

The primary goal of learning is to identify the impacts of digital communication on societal conduct among juveniles. The exploration seeks to answer the question, to what extent does combined vices of internet-based communication affect the overall psychological well-being among adolescents based on their gender? A useful answer to the research question will reveal the area to which cell-phones and computers have met the public expectations to enhance learning and socialization among young children. The following specific questions will help to achieve the primary goal of the study.

(a) How does extensive use of digital communication influence the social interaction abilities of a high school student?

(b) How does virtual communication influence confidence among high school learners?

(c) How does virtual communication influence academic performance?

(d) How does digital communication influence overall psychological well-being?

(e) Does digital communication impact male and female adolescents equally?

Digital media is responsible for wide-ranging changes in modern society over the past two decades. At the same time, social scientists do not agree on how people should understand these changes (Schroeder, 2018, p. 1). This statement implies that there exists little evidence on the actual impacts of the media and communication on young people. The above question will contribute to an understanding of how multiple factors influence the social well-being of teens.

*Participants*

High school students will be the participants in the study. Theory of polymedia suggests that technological media influences social communication (Madianou and Miller, 2012, p. 169). The impact of teenagers is more significant than adults. These facts make adolescents a suitable target for the study. Besides, including both boys and girls in the study will reveal the gender differences. An equal number of boys and girls will take part in the survey. The approach will help to determine how the use of social media influences different aspects of their social life.

*Instruments*

Interviews and observations will be the primary tools for gathering data for the study. Discussions are useful in gathering narrative information from respondents (Kielhofner and Mallinson, 1995, p. 63). The researcher will interview the students to determine how digital communication affects their way of life. Besides, the method will allow the researchers to seek clarifications from respondents. Practical questions will improve the quality of the research questions.

The researcher will set interview questions and carry out a pilot study. Pilot studies are useful in testing the validity of research questions (Vogel and Draper-Rodi, 2017, 2). In this case, researchers engage in an actual survey to identify the effectiveness of research instruments. The

outcomes help to identify areas that require improvement. Therefore, the pilot studies will allow the investigators to determine if the study will answer the main questions and objectives.

The second research instrument will be observation. Examining the behavior of learners in their natural setting helps to gather accurate details (Kielhofner and Mallinson, 1995, p. 66). This statement suggests that the researcher will observe how students behave with their phones in school. The main target will be attentiveness during learning and the ability to solve real-life challenges. Other aspects will include paying attention to their peers and willingness to engage in extra-curricular activities. The findings from observations will help to validate the data gathered through interviews.

*Data Analysis*

The data obtained from interviews and observations will help to answer research questions. The researcher will pay close attention to similarities of behavior among the respondents. Besides, differences in conduct between boys and girls will be a viable factor to consider.

<div align="center">Discussion of Expected Findings</div>

The findings from the study will reveal a significant impact of combined vices of internet-based communication on overall psychological well-being among adolescents. The effect will be similar to both boys and girls. In this case, it is expected that the extensive use of mobile devices among high school learners will hinder their ability to deal with social challenges.

Social media influence teenagers to connect with friends at a distance. They overlook the importance of face-to-face interactions. In this case, most students fail to engage their teachers

during learning. Besides, they lack the courage to answer questions orally. Majority of the learners find it hard to concentrate in class after taking the phones away. They value interactions through their phones over useful parental and friends' relationship. Finally, the levels of critical thinking remained significantly low.

## Conclusion

More accessible communication through online platforms enhances the sharing of ideas and thoughts. Most teenagers in the twenty-first-century value digital communication more than other methods. Extensive use of mobile devices among adolescents has not met the expectation of improved social and intellectual potentials. The system poses significant threats to users since it hinders effective face-to-face communication and results in increased levels of stress. Therefore, digital communication interferes with active psychological development among learners.

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