

5. A Study of Screen Time Behavior on Mental Health Issues of Adolescent Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of screen time behavior on the mental health of adolescent students. Present time with the increasing prevalence of digital devices (smart phones, tablets, and computers), adolescents are spending more time on screens, raising concerns about the potential adverse effects on their mental health. This research aims to explore the correlation between screen time behavior and mental health issues such as anxiety, aggression, and social withdrawal among adolescents. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys and interviews with a representative sample of adolescent students in Jabalpur district and analyzed to identify significant patterns and correlations. The findings reveal a strong association between excessive screen time behavior and various mental health issues such as anxiety, aggression, and social withdrawal, highlighting the need for interventions to promote healthy screen time habits among adolescents.

Keywords: Screen time, adolescent mental health, anxiety, aggression, social withdrawal, digital behavior

Introduction

The digital era has brought about significant changes in the lifestyle and behavior of adolescents, particularly in their screen time habits behavior. With the endless presence of digital devices such as smart phones, tablets, and computers, adolescents are increasingly exposed to extended periods of screen time. While these devices offer numerous benefits, such as educational resources and social cohesion, concerns have emerged regarding their potential adverse impact on mental health. This study aims to examine the relationship between screen time behavior and mental health issues among adolescent students, providing insights into how screen time influences their absence of Negative feelings.

Need & Significance

Understanding the effect of screen time on adolescent mental health is critical in an era where digital devices are vital to daily life. Adolescents are at a crucial developmental stage, and excessive screen time can have continuing effects on their mental health. Identifying the unrealized risks associated with screen time can inform parents, educators, and policymakers about the necessary measures to promote healthier digital habits and reduce adverse mental health outcomes.

Objectives

1. To assess the extensiveness of screen time behavior among adolescent students.
2. To identify the types of screen activities most routinely engaged in by adolescents.
3. To examine the correlation between screen time and mental health issues such as anxiety, aggression, and social withdrawal.
4. To explore the perceptions of adolescents regarding the effect of screen time on their mental health.
5. To provide recommendations for minimize the negative impact of screen time on adolescent mental health.

Hypotheses:

1. Excessive screen time is positively correlated with higher levels of anxiety among adolescent students.
2. Excessive screen time is positively correlated with higher levels of aggression among adolescent students.
3. Excessive screen time is positively correlated with higher levels of social withdrawal among adolescent students.

Literature Review:

Various previous studies have indicated that excessive screen time is associated with various mental health issues. For example, Twenge and Campbell (2018) found that adolescents who spend more time on screens are more likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety. Similarly other research has indicated the negative impact of social media on self-esteem and the potential for cyber bullying to exacerbate mental health problems (Kross et al., 2013). This study builds on existing literature by specifically focusing on the adolescent behavior and exploring the variation of different types of screen activities.

Methodology

Research Design: A mixed-methods research design was used, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effect of screen time on adolescent mental health.

Participants: The study involved 300 adolescent students aged 12-18 years from various schools, selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diverse representation.

Data Collection:

- **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire was administered to participants, assessing their screen time behavior, types of screen activities, and mental health status using validated scales for anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal. 300 questionnaires were distributed among the Students and out of which 243 were returned.
- **Interviews:** An interview schedule was used to collect the Mental Health Data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and experiences related to screen time and mental health.

Data Analysis:

- **Quantitative Data:** Descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, including correlation and regression analysis, were performed to examine the relationship between screen time and mental health issues. Significance levels were set at 0.05 and 0.01.
- **Qualitative Data:** Thematic analysis was conducted on interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and insights.

Table 1: Correlation between Screen Time and Mental Health Issues

Variable	Anxiety (r)	Aggression (r)	Social Withdrawal (r)
Total Screen Time	0.45**	0.52**	0.38**
Social Media Use	0.41**	0.48**	0.34**
Gaming	0.30*	0.35*	0.28*

*Significant at the 0.05 level, **Significant at the 0.01 level

Interpretation: The results indicate a significant positive correlation between total screen time and mental health issues, with higher screen time associated with increased levels of anxiety ($r=0.45$, $p<0.01$), aggression ($r=0.52$, $p<0.01$), and social withdrawal ($r=0.38$, $p<0.01$). Social media use and gaming were also significantly correlated with these mental health issues, though to a slightly lesser extent.

Major Findings

1. **Frequency of Screen Time:** The majority of adolescents reported spending more than 9 hours per day on screens, with social media and gaming being the most common activities.
2. **Correlation with Mental Health:** There is a significant positive correlation between screen time and mental health issues, particularly anxiety, aggression, and social withdrawal.
3. **Perceptions of Impact:** Adolescents perceive that excessive screen time negatively affects their mental health, citing reasons such as online bullying, sleep disruption, and social isolation.

Suggestions:

1. **Parental Monitoring:** Encourage parents to monitoring settings and regulate their children's screen time, promoting balanced use of digital devices.
2. **Educational Programs:** Implement school-based programs to educate students about the potential risks of excessive screen time and promote healthy digital habits such as stop notification, setting boundaries, Digital detox, and nighttime digital habits.
3. **Mental Health Support:** Provide accessible mental health resources and support for adolescents experiencing negative effects (such as sleep problems, obesity, heart health issues, depression) from screen time.

Implications: The findings indicate the need for a joint shared approach involving parents, educators, and mental health professionals to address the impact of screen time on adolescent mental health. Policy measures should focus on creating supportive environments that foster healthy screen use.

Limitations: The study's dependence on self-reported data may introduce bias. Additionally, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term effects of screen time on mental health.

Future Research Directions:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct long-term studies to assess the influential relationship between screen time and mental health issues.
2. **Intervention Studies:** Calculate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing screen time and improving mental health outcomes among adolescents.
3. **Diverse Populations:** Explore the impact of screen time on different demographic area groups (such as Urban & Rural areas) to identify potential disparities and tailor interventions accordingly.

Conclusion

This study indicates the significant association between screen time behavior and mental health issues among adolescent students. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to promote healthier screen time habits and support adolescents' mental well-being. By addressing the concerns identified in this research, parents can contribute to fostering a healthier digital environment for adolescents.

References

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