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IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON CHILD PSYCHOLOGY DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 has impacted the education industry. Young students are exposed to technology for long-duration since education has shifted to online mode. They are also an avid user of social media. The cumulative effect has increased the interaction time with technology which leads to stress. The paper suggests some coping strategies such as involvement in creative activities, objective-oriented communication with parents.

INTRODUCTION

"Technology is a good servant but bad master" is an old saying that needs to be verified now. With the pandemic taking over the life of a common man, one of the most impacted sectors is education (Marinoni et al., 2020). Before March 2020, it was impossible to imagine the education industry-shifting online. Although traditional education made a quick shift to online education with limited available options, now, almost after one year of pandemic the schools and colleges have established themselves in virtual mode. Teachers have gained relevant technical skills for online teaching (Nambiar, 2020). Many start-ups emerged while existing software's upgraded themselves to get the benefit of the opportunity.

Technology can be disastrous to students at times. Games like Blue whale have made children commit suicide (Mukhra,2019). Some other games like pub g have or even made parents sell their car for a game purchase by seven-year-old (India today, 2021). The consumption of social media is on rise among young children. The young teens use social media to express themselves and are engaged in eWOM (Samu and Mishra, 2018). Young consumers prefer selfies, Emojis and animated icons to express themselves online (Samu and Mishra, 2018).

Keywords: *Stress, Covid-19, Online Education, Technology*

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While expressing themselves, the behaviour of male and female teenager is different while consumption and dissemination of eWOM. Male teenagers are influenced by the existing peer norms, whereas for female teenagers, their reliance and belief in the credibility of online information is more critical (Mishra et al. 2018).

Compounded concerns and worries can cause stress and fatigue (Macarran, 2021). Parent-child communication, peers, media and self-construal have varying influences on the technology readiness of teenagers. The effects of parent-child interactions are mediated by self-construal, which reaffirms the importance of identity during adolescence. (Mishra et al 2018). Parents engage in higher socio-oriented communication as compared to concept-oriented communication. Also, adolescents report higher scores on the interdependent self-construal dimension in contrast to independent self-construal (Mishra and Shukla, 2020).

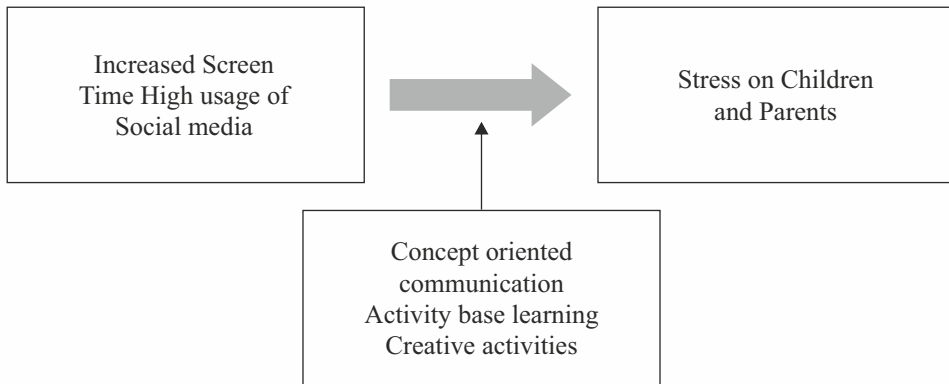


Fig 1. Impact of technology on Children

ANTECEDENTS OF STRESS AMONG CHILDREN

There are multiple reasons causing stress among children. The timing of online classes and limited physical activity brings children are under stress. There is a significant increase in the screen times of school children while learning online under school closure scenario (Harzule et al 2021). However, use of social media is for hedonic purpose whereas online classes are for utilitarian purpose. This higher consumption of social media and online academia have stressed children. This stress gets transferred to parents as well (refer Fig 1). Among the many causes of stress among children few of them are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Antecedents of stress among children

Factors	Description	Source
Increased exposure to screen	With the education shifting online, children are more exposed to screen, which causes fatigue and stress	Harzule et al
Lack of concept-oriented communication between parents and children	Indian parents are indulged in socio oriented communication, which may develop a feeling of lack of empathy among children.	Mishra 2021

Factors	Description	Source
Lack of availability of resources	The online education can be made best use of if resources like Laptop, smartphone and internet is easily available. In absence of these resources, student may feel stressed.	Mahapatra and Sharma (2020)
Frustration and boredom	With limited physical activity and limited face to face interaction, the children may feel boredom and frustration	Wang et al, 2020
Missing physical school	With online education, children do not have access to the library, canteen, or even playgrounds. Childrens miss the fun and enjoyment while remaining with in home.	Chandra 2020

CONCLUSION

As a society we need to re-evaluate the access of technology in the hands of children. The increased stress could result in dropout, non-effective learning which will further add to the rising unemployment (Mahapatra and sharma,2020). The role of parents is very important in such situation. Parents can help the children cope up with the stress (refer Fig 1) We extend the solutions provided by (Macaracan, 2021) to tackle stress caused due to technology.

1. The stress can be reduced by communication between parents and children. Parents must engage in positive concept-oriented communication with children as Indian parents tend to engage in higher socio-oriented communication as compared to concept-oriented communication (Mishra 2021).
2. Engage in activity-based learning which may involve developing of an idea, video creation by reciting poems or even making a painting for history classes (Mishra and Yadav, 2013). Doing activities together will bring a fun element and reduce family stress.
3. Engage the children in creative online activities such as grocery shopping (Sharma and Shukla, 2018) or supporting in food donation through NGO (Chandra 2020) which brings them fun and develops life skills. . Such activities will bring feeling of proud and worthiness in children and they will not be left out. Simultaneously, it will develop a cordial relationship between parents and children.

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