

Impact of Technology Presence on Late Adolescent/Emerging Adult Social Development Research Proposal

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Introduction

Technology is all around us and is utilized often in a person's daily routine, whether it's a cellphone, a computer, a smart watch, or any other kind of technology. There are many benefits to having access to technology such as being able to build stronger relationships, having a better way to learn, or even more effective transactions (Baron & Gomez, 2013). Having access to a public computer can have a positive impact on community development because this leads to feelings of empowerment and development of social capital, which are the foundations for a strong community (Baron & Gomez, 2013).

Since the adolescent/emerging adult age span is a crucial time for social development, it makes for an appropriate age range to study when looking at the influence of SES on technology availability and whether or not this will inhibit social development. With the amount of technology that is available to the public today, it's important to know if there should be more focus on finding a way to make technology more widely accessible for those that may not be able to afford it otherwise; especially if this means they will have more positive social development. This is what the current study plans to examine. This study plans to examine the social development of adolescents and emerging adults based on their daily technology usage, which may be influenced by their socioeconomic status. The results found could be because of previously existing conditions, but it's expected that those who have more daily access to multiple forms of technology will have more positive levels of social development because they can create more social interactions.

Methods

Participants

This study will consist of 40 participants ranging in age from 16 years old to roughly 22 years old, in order to include those in high school as well as some in college. The most effective way to find participants would be by visiting local high schools and local colleges and asking people if they would be willing to participate. By doing this, it could help to balance the SES classifications because schools and local colleges of different budget levels can be included, some of which might not have technology for students available. Those who participate in the study will be given a few bonus points in a previously determined choice class.

Plan and Procedure

The current study is looking for any significant differences between the daily technology usage and the impact this could have on social development when controlling for socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is important to include because this is an existing factor that could influence the predicted results of this study, so it will be a factor used for pairing those in the low technology usage group with those in the high technology usage group. The best method for conducting the study would be through observation, but with supporting data provided via a checklist. The checklist provided to the students will consist of simple questions such as how much time they spend using technology every day, the kinds of technology they use daily, the amount of time spent with friends each day, where they attend school (and the amount of technology access provided by the school).

The independent variable in this study will be the technology usage. Participants from lower SES and from higher SES will ideally be divided into the groups equally in order to help balance the predicted results

The dependent variable for this study will be the social development. This will be measured by accessing how well a student can socialize with peers and adults.

Abstract

The purpose of the proposed study is to examine the positive or negative impacts technology can have on late adolescent and emerging adults' social development. Technology has become more easily accessible to us, but only to those who can afford it. In order to study this, participants from different socioeconomic backgrounds as well as different ages will be found to provide the best possible representations for each group. The study will consist of 40 participants ranging in age from 16 years old to roughly 22 years old. This study will be done primarily through observation of daily technology use and social developments that could occur from using the technology. The expected results are that having larger amounts of technology usage will positively impact social development. The current study could be the foundation for future research to see if having technology available to everyone could enhance the outcomes of social development.

Discussion

As earlier discussed, technology can provide a lot of different benefits for those who are using it wisely. It can also create some issues where dependency upon it becomes a problem in which a person might need to find a way to adjust their reliance on the devices in order to have a more positive relationship with technology. In regard to adolescent/emerging adults, having access to technology more frequently can be especially beneficial because it allows for the creation of more social interactions that they might not have gotten if they had very limited access to technology/social networking sites. A person's socioeconomic status can play a role in the amount of technology someone might have because they might not see having a lot of technology as a necessity that they can afford. In the same respect, a low budget school might not be able to provide technology for students, which could drastically change the amount of technology they have access to if they don't have much at home already.

The amount of social development a person has varies, and this could be because of pre-existing differences such as someone being more outgoing and willing to create friendships. It's important to see if technology usage actually plays a significant role in determining whether or not a person is more socially developed from using technology often. Having a checklist prior to grouping the participants allows for them to be placed into the group that fits best with their technology usage (high or low) in order to provide the most accurate results. Based on previous research, the predicted results seem likely because technology has shown positive results in regard to helping an adolescent/emerging adult to improve their social skills and to develop a more effective foundation for their continuous social development.

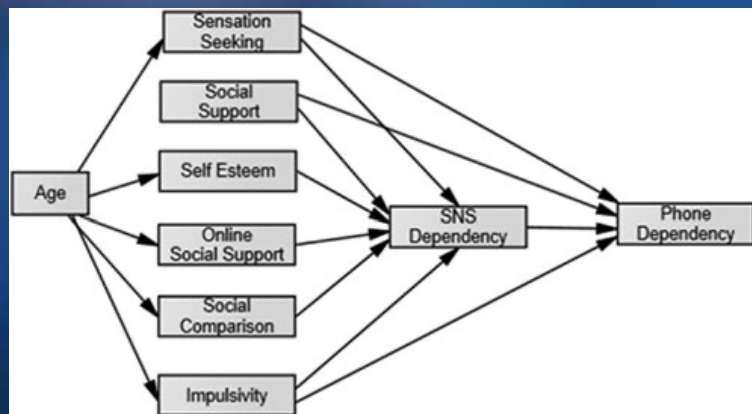
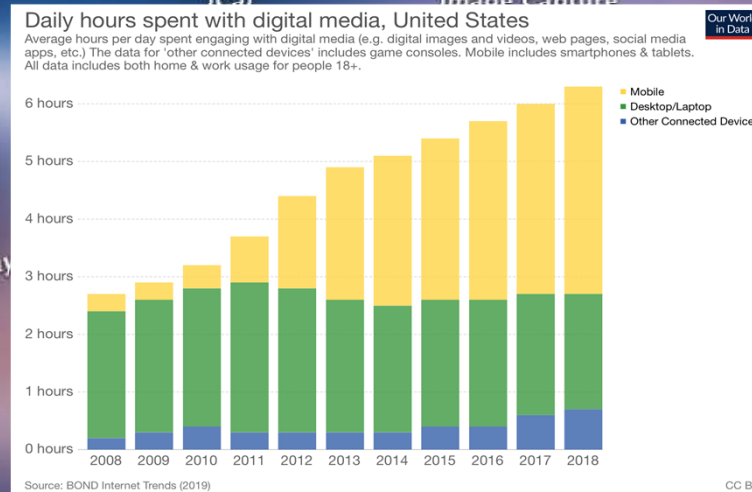
Predicted Results

It is predicted that students who use more technology forms in their daily lives, will have more positive social development levels. This is best done through a dependent samples t-test that would be used to determine if there is a significant difference between the two groups. A t-test would likely work best because the study would be looking for the difference in social development between the two groups when matched for SES. Based on previous research, it's expected that there would be a difference between the groups' social developments based on their overall technology usage.

It is possible that because of pre-existing differences that the predicted results would not occur. The results could show that those with high technology usage actually have lower social development levels. Based on previous research, it does seem unlikely that this would occur, but it can't be ruled out entirely.

References

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Hypothesized relationships among age and social and psychological predictors of SNS and mobile phone dependency. SNS, social networking site.

