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Child in the Digital World

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Abstract

This research aimed to reveal the challenges facing children in the digital world. The study relied on the descriptive approach to achieve the study objectives by using previous studies related to the research field. The study concluded that children face many challenges that affect different aspects of their lives, including the psychological, social and health aspects. It also concluded that the challenges facing a child in the digital age constitute a major challenge for the family in the digital world, which requires enhancing the awareness of parents and children about the responsible use of technology. Keywords: child, digital world, challenges.

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1. Introduction

The child is the cornerstone of family and community life, the fundamental pillar for the continuation of human existence. With the development of societies and the rapid pace of social, economic, and technological changes, the life of the child in the modern age has become a subject of paramount importance. Child rearing and development today are influenced by numerous factors that differ from those of the past, necessitating a focus on these challenges and opportunities.

In the age of the digital revolution, the digital world has become an integral part of human life, transforming daily routines through technological advancements. Children are no longer isolated from these changes; rather, they live in a digital environment that opens vast horizons for learning, entertainment, and communication. However, this environment also presents significant challenges related to safety and proper upbringing (Al-Jali, 2021).

Digital technology has impacted every aspect of children's lives, from education, which has become reliant on smart devices and distance learning, to social interaction through various platforms, and even electronic games, which occupy a considerable portion of their time. While this environment offers countless opportunities to develop thinking and creative skills, it also carries risks that can affect a child's mental and physical health if not managed wisely (Lui et al., 2011).

Understanding the impact of the digital world on children today is crucial, requiring collaboration between families, educational institutions, and communities to ensure that technology is used beneficially and with minimal risks. In this context, it becomes important to examine the opportunities and challenges children face in the digital world.

1.1 Research problem

The digital world has become an integral part of the modern child's life, with modern technology and the internet impacting various aspects, from learning and communication to entertainment and social interaction. While this digital environment offers opportunities for skills development and knowledge enhancement, it also raises numerous concerns about its impact on the child's psychological and social development (Al-Kathiri, 2024).

Children in the digital world face many challenges, such as addiction to smart devices,

cyberbullying, reduced face-to-face social interaction, and exposure to inappropriate content. These challenges can lead to mental health problems, such as stress and anxiety, in addition to negatively affecting their personality development and social interactions. Therefore, the current research problem can be summarized in the following question: **What challenges do children face in the digital world?**

1.2 Research importance (significance)

A child is not merely a member of the family; they are the future, reflecting the development of societies. Proper and healthy childcare ensures the building of a strong and prosperous society. Therefore, families, social institutions, and educational establishments must provide a supportive environment for a child's growth and development. Considering the radical transformations brought about by the digital revolution, the importance of scientific research in studying the impact of digital life on children from various perspectives becomes paramount, given its pivotal role in guiding societies to ensure healthy and sustainable upbringing. The importance of this research can be summarized in the following points:

1. Understanding Psychological and Social Impacts

- Research provides an opportunity to understand the impact of excessive use of digital devices and the internet on a child's psychological state, such as stress, anxiety, and social isolation.
- It helps analyze changes in children's social interaction patterns, both within the family and with peers

2. Raising Awareness of Digital Risks:
- It highlights the risks associated with digital life, such as addiction to electronic games, cyberbullying, or exposure to inappropriate content.
- It contributes to raising awareness among families and schools about these risks and how to address them.

3. Enhancing the Use of Digital Opportunities:
Demonstrates how technology can be used to develop children's intellectual and creative skills through innovative educational tools and digital learning platforms.

4. Designing Child Protection Policies and Programs:

- Support the development of national strategies and policies that protect children's rights in the digital world, including data protection and privacy.

- Assists educational institutions in designing balanced, technology-based curricula.

5. Strengthening the Family-Technology Relationship:

- The research provides advice and guidance to parents on how to manage children's technology use in a way that promotes family values and maintains a balance between the real and digital worlds.

- It clarifies the role families should play in monitoring content and selecting appropriate digital activities.

6. Preparing for a Sustainable Digital Future:

- It contributes to preparing children to become conscious and responsible users of technology, while enhancing their critical thinking skills in dealing with digital information.

- It helps create a generation capable of adapting to the digital future consciously and responsibly.

2. Research Methodology

To achieve the study's objectives, the descriptive approach will be used, based on a review of previous studies related to the current research field.

3. Literature review

3.1 The Family in the Digital World

With the rapid development and spread of digital technology into all aspects of life, the family now lives in a new digital environment that has transformed the concepts of communication, parenting, and even entertainment. The family is no longer merely a social entity living in a physical world, but has become part of a connected digital world that presents new challenges while simultaneously offering unprecedented opportunities (Annansingh and Veli, 2016).

Digital technology has impacted relationships within the family, as smart devices and social media platforms have become an integral part of individuals' lives, including children and parents. While these technologies have contributed to strengthening family bonds by facilitating communication and access to learning and entertainment resources, they have also raised concerns about the decline in direct interaction among family members, as well as the

effects of technology use on traditional family values and roles. With the integration of digital technology into all aspects of daily life, the family has faced numerous challenges and problems that have affected the nature of family relationships and traditional roles. The most prominent of these problems can be summarized as follows (Al-Dahshan, 2016; Al-Kathiri, 2024):

1. Reduced Direct Communication Among Family Members:

- Family members' preoccupation with smart devices such as mobile phones and computers has led to fewer opportunities for face-to-face interaction.

- A decline in daily conversations between parents and children, which can affect family cohesion.

2. Digital Addiction:

- Addiction among family members, especially children and adolescents, to using social media or electronic games.

- The impact of this addiction on time spent on family activities, studying, or even sleeping.

3. Cyberbullying and Digital Risks:

- Children and adolescents are exposed to cyberbullying or online abuse, which affects their mental health.

- The risks of accessing inappropriate or unsafe content while using the internet.

4. Reduced Parental Supervision:

- Some parents find it difficult to monitor their children's digital activities due to technological advancements and the expansion of the digital world.

- Parents lack sufficient knowledge about how to manage their children's digital time and use appropriate programs to protect them.

5. **The Impact of Technology on Family Values**: which includes the decline of traditional family values because of children and adolescents being exposed to content reflecting different

cultures and ideas. In addition to the weakening of parental influence due to children's reliance on external sources of information such as the internet and media.

6. **The Generation Gap**: this is represented in the difference in technological literacy levels between parents and children has led to a digital divide that hinders communication between them. Moreover, some parents feel unable to keep up with the digital world, which their children are mastering more quickly.

7. **Reduced Privacy within the Family**:

- Family members sharing details of their personal lives on social media without considering privacy.

- Fear of digital breaches or data misuse.

8. **Impact on Health**:

- Reduced physical activity due to prolonged periods of sitting in front of electronic devices.

- Health problems such as vision problems, sleep disorders, and increased obesity rates resulting from excessive digital lifestyles.

3.2 Problems facing children in the digital world

With the rapid shift towards a connected digital world, children face numerous challenges that impact various aspects of their lives, including their psychological, social, and health well-being. These challenges necessitate increased awareness from parents and the community to ensure a safe and productive digital environment for children. The following are some of the most prominent challenges children face in the digital world (Al-Kathiri, 2024; Joan, 2016):

1. **Technology Addiction**: Excessive use of smart devices and electronic games leads to reduced time spent on physical and social activities, and to digital addiction, which negatively affects a child's lifestyle and their mental and physical health.

2. **Exposure to Inappropriate Content**: Unregulated internet access may expose children to violent or unethical content, inaccurate or misleading information, and the impact of such content can be negative on a child's values and behaviors. Furthermore, bullying via social

media or electronic games can lead to psychological effects such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, feelings of isolation, or fear of online interaction.

3. **Privacy Violation**: Children's lack of awareness about the importance of protecting their personal data makes them vulnerable to digital hacking and exploitation by untrustworthy parties.

4. **Reduced Direct Social Interaction**: Excessive technology use reduces children's opportunities for real-life interaction with family and friends. This can lead to poor social skills, feelings of isolation, and withdrawal.

5. **Psychological and Social Pressures**: social media can cause pressure on children due to social comparisons (appearance, achievements, number of followers) and the need to conform to the standards of the digital society.

6. **Exposure to Digital Exploitation**: Children are vulnerable to scams and phishing attempts, and exploitation by strangers on social media platforms poses a significant risk.

7. **Negative Impact on Education**: Using smart devices during study time leads to poor concentration and distractibility, negatively impacting academic performance.

8. **Impact on Physical Health**: Excessive use of electronic devices leads to vision problems due to prolonged screen exposure, spinal problems due to poor posture, reduced physical activity, and increased obesity rates.

9. **Lack of safe digital skills**: Children may not have enough knowledge to deal with digital risks, such as how to handle cyberbullying or abuse, and the responsible use of technology

4. Research conclusion

The digital world presents a challenging environment for children, despite offering significant opportunities for learning and development. Parents, educational institutions, and communities need to work together to guide children toward the safe and positive use of technology. Promoting digital literacy and developing family and educational guidelines are essential to protecting children from digital risks and ensuring they benefit from the opportunities the digital world offers.

These issues pose a significant challenge to families in the digital world, requiring increased awareness among parents and children about the responsible use of technology. Clear rules must be established for managing digital time and guiding it in a way that supports strong and sustainable family relationships. The solution begins with the family, as the fundamental unit of society, enabling it to adapt to the digital world without sacrificing family values and genuine

human interaction.

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