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DIGITAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION, PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND BEHAVIOURAL TRENDS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CALABAR METROPOLIS

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Abstract

Digital revolution in the 21st century, has become an indispensable aspect of life and living globally. In many Nigerian homes, exposure to digital media has brought challenges that have disrupted the modus operandi of most homes. Children are increasingly consuming digital information without discretion from WhatsApp, smart phones, laptops and internet among many others, widening their cognitive and emotional horizons. Parents on the other hand, are grappling with controlling media consumption and shaping the children's behaviours to acceptable societal expectations. It is against this background that this study assessed digital media consumption, parent-child relationships and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar metropolis. The sample was drawn from parents of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. The study was guided by a research questions and two hypotheses. A questionnaire was used to collect data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that the behavioural trends observed from children as a result of social media consumption are positive, the result also showed that digital media consumption is a significant predictor of behavioural trends and parent-child relationship of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. It was recommended that parents should strongly discourage media contents that could negatively impact on the behaviour of their children. Policy makers should develop guidelines for responsible digital media consumption among minors.

Key words: Digital Media Consumption, Parent-Child Relationship, Behavioural Trends, Students.

Introduction:

Digital revolution in the 21st century, has become an indispensable aspect of life and living globally, and it has massively influenced digital media consumption. Digital media consumption involves all the information and entertainment that individuals have access to, and consume through the media (Narang & Tiwari, 2021). Digitalization has leveraged the use of technological tools to access consumers and make products easily and directly accessible and available to end users. It has opened up vast opportunities for jobs, content creation, advertising, entertainment, access to educational materials, training opportunities and skill acquisition, These have brought about a paradigm shift in the way that society used to access information, through the television, newspapers and radios to a more dynamic culture of prolific utilization of digital devices like the smart-phones, lap-tops, tablets and E-readers, to mention just a few to access digital media contents from emails, websites, social media platforms, streaming services like YouTube and a lot more. Njoku and Ofoegbu (2020) observed that digital media sources have given people all over the world opportunity to unite and relate with one another irrespective of distances. It has become a global trend of activities among different age groups and social classes particularly, the young people. One of the most significant advantages of digital media is its interactivity. Users can actively engage with the content, click links, watch videos, interact with animations and provide feedback or comments.

However, there is a growing concern that exposure to digital media devices and sources, especially among the youths, is currently being abused. In many Nigerian homes, this exposure to digital media sources, have brought challenges that have disrupted the modes operandi of most homes. Young people are increasingly consuming digital information at home without discretion, from their smart phones and iPad, exposing themselves to some corrupting influences by a click. This has brought some much worry and anxiety to the parents. Atim (2022), in an in-depth interview with some parents, confirmed that most parents expressed difficulty in parenting children in the digital age. They experience clashes in their relationship, by trying to moderate their staying online and maintaining family rules. She further implied that their exposure to media platforms and sources, tend to influence them to the point of addiction and some other negative outcomes like weight gain due to inactivity. Parent-child relationship is an important aspect of child development that cannot be compromised, because that is the beginning of socialization, where family values, social skills and societal norms are inculcated into the child. Kalibbala (2024) reporting the study carried out by Commonsense Media in 2020 in the United States, revealed that children between the ages of 8-12years spend about five hours online, while the teenagers are glued online for about eight hours. The study implies that parent- child relationship is bridged. Kalibbala further pointed out that

technology is not bad in itself, it has a lot of benefits and advised that families should choose the options that will serve the health, education and entertainment needs of their children. However, it was pointed out, that the most worrisome aspect of the study is the inability of the parents to monitor the content of digital media consumption by their children.

In another study carried out to investigate the parent-child relationship quality in internet use in a developing country, the researchers sampled a total of 1,216 Vietnamese students between the ages of 12 and 18, who agreed to participate in a cross-sectional online survey. They gathered information on participants' socioeconomic characteristics, internet use status, perceptions of how internet use affects their relationship with their parents, and experiences with parental control over their internet use. The results revealed that only 7% felt that their relationship with their parents deteriorated, 78.2% felt it was stable, while 14.8% felt it rather improved. Conclusions from the study showed that this response was from the participants themselves, and it was during the covid19 pandemic period and so their parent allowed them the use of the internet. (Nguyen, Nguyen, Do, Vu, Vu, Do, Nguyen, Doan, Vu, Do, Nguyen, Latkin, Ho, & Ho 2022). In a similar study that examined the association between social media use and parent-child relationship. The study gathered data from a sample of 9,732 students aged 11-20 years from a provincially representative school based survey. Among the variables considered, it was found that those who indulged in heavy usage of the media, had negative parent-child relationship. They were identified as those who daily spend more than two hours on social media. Parents were also concerned about the time spent on social media, and students' behavioural patterns. Olaseinde, Ojomo, Olayinkaawofadeju & Onifade (2021), also carried out a study on media consumption and secondary school students' behavioural patterns in Abeokuta. 120 students were purposively sampled and data collated was analyzed, result showed that 54% of the student respondents indicated that what they consumed on social media influenced their language, relationship and dressing. Similarly, Mukui (2015), in a study examined a sample of 10 principals, 40 teachers and 450 secondary school students in Kitui central sub county in Kenya, to determine the influence of media on the behaviour of secondary school students. The media examined include cellphone, video game, TV and others. The analysis revealed that the media examined, influenced the behaviour of secondary school students. They also noticed that lack of parental control over the students could be a contributing factor and also noted that digital media has both negative and positive impact.

Purpose of the Study

This study, specifically determined:

i. the behavioural trends observed in secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis as a result of their social media consumption.
ii. the relationship between digital media consumption and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis
iii. the relationship between parent-child relationship and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis

Research Questions

To guide the study, a research question was posed:

i. What are the behavioural trends observed in secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis as a result of their social media consumption?

Research Hypotheses

Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between digital media consumption and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis
2. There is no significant relationship between parent-child relationship and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis.

Methods

Design and Participants

The research design that is used for this study is Survey and correlational designs. They are described as types of research that study large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution, interrelations of sociological and psychological variables.

The study area is the Calabar Metropolis, which is located between latitude $4^0$28" and $6^0$31 north and longitude $7^0$50" and $9^0$28" east of the Greenwich meridian. It spans an area of 18,074, 4.35km, and encompasses two local government areas, the Calabar Municipality and Calabar South local government areas.

The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The stratification was based on the two local government areas in the Calabar Metropolis. In each of the Local government area the accidental sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. 10% of the parents in each local government area were used for the study. This was because the instrument was given to parents who were willing to respond to the instrument, and also have secondary school children.

The sample consists of 200 parents which comprised of 10% of the estimated population from the two local Government Areas in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State.

Instruments

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire tagged "digital media consumption, parent-child relationship and behavioural trends Questionnaire (DMCPCRBTQ). The instrument consists of three sections. Section A elicits information on respondents' personal data such as sex and age. Section B consists of 20 items, which measure digital media consumption and parent-child relationship. Section C consists of 6 items that measured behavioural trends. The questionnaire is a 4–point modified Likert scale type, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA, 4points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD, 1 point) and the reverse for negatively worded items.

Face validity was established for the instrument of this study. The face validity was established by using the experts in Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation who vetted the items developed. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient method and reliability co-efficient rages from .78 to .85. Some copies of the instrument were administered to 30 parents who were not part of the main study.

Procedures (for data collection and methods of data analysis)

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers with the help of some research assistants. Out of two hundred and ten (210) copies of questionnaires administered, only 200 were successfully completed and retrieved and were used as the sample for the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

This section focuses on addressing the research question and testing of the hypotheses. The results of the data analysis carried out for this purpose are presented. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance.

Research question one

What are the behavioural trends observed in secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis, as a result of their social media consumption?

To answer this research question, responses of items 1-7 of section B on the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Behavioural trends and social media consumption of secondary school students.

S/N	The respondents' feedback on the behavioural trends exhibited by secondary school students due to social media usage. My children exhibit	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1	Problematic use (absent mindedness)	3.3911	.48909	Significant
2	Poor emotional health	3.2578	.68481	Significant
3	Sleeplessness	3.5911	.51052	Significant
4	Peer victimization (use of harsh words and comments)on social media)	3.5556	.53266	Significant
5	Cyber-bulling (involved in blocking and deleting peers on social media)	3.2489	.99567	Significant
6	Self-harming behaviour (modelling harmful behaviours)	2.5356	.96204	Significant
7	Privacy issues (secretive)	2.8489	.86824	Significant

The criteria used for judging the significant level is the cut-off mark of 2.50

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of the behavioural trends observed from secondary school students as a result of their social media engagement. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 2.53 to 3.59 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that the behavioural trends observed from students as a result of social media consumption are positive. The standard deviation ranged from 0.49 to 0.99 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses. This implies that all the sampled students exhibit behavioural problems due to exposure in digital social media usage

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between digital media consumption and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is digital media consumption; while the dependent variable is behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. Simple regression analysis was the employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Relationship between digital media consumption and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.452(a)	.205	.203	2.80086	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	873.638	1	873.638	111.365*	.000(a)
Residual	3396.808	198	7.845		

Total	4270.446	199			
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value
(Constant)	8.757	1.176		7.447	.000
Digital media consumption	1.263	.055	.847	23.169	.000

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the relationship between digital media consumption and the behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis was found to be significant f=(1, 198) 111.365* p = .000, with an adjusted R^2 of .203. The implication of this result is that digital media consumption is a significant predictor of behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis.

The beta of .847 indicated that the digital media consumptions account for 84.7% of the variance in behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis in the study area. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that behavioural trends = 8.757 + 1.263 (digital media consumption). That is Y= 8.757 + 1.263 x where Y is the behavioural trends, X is the digital media consumption and 7.447 is the regression constant. It is reported as β =84.7% (the beta scores x100), p value = .000

Hypothesis two

There is no significant impact of digital media consumption on parent-child relationship of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. The independent variable in this hypothesis is impact of digital media consumption; while the dependent variable is parent-child relationship. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Impact of digital media consumption and parent-child relationship

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. Square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.721(a)	.520	.518	2.17678	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	2218.740	1	2218.740	468.251*	.000(a)
Residual	2051.706	198	4.738		
Total	4270.446	199			
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value
(Constant)	14.252	1.879		7.583	.000
Digital media consumption	.966	.090	.706	10.725	.000

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the relationship between digital media consumption and parent-child relationship of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis was found to be significant f=(1, 198) 468.251* p = .000. p = .000, with an adjusted R^2 of .518. The implication of this result is that digital media consumption is a significant predictor of parent-child relationship of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis.

The beta of .706 indicated that the digital media consumptions account for 70.6% of the variance in parent-child relationship of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis in the study area. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that parent-child relationship = 14.252 + .966 (digital media consumption). That is Y= 14.252 + .966 x where Y is the parent-child relationship, X is the digital media consumption and 7.583 is the regression constant.
It is reported as β =70.6% (the beta scores x100), p value = .000

Discussion

This section is devoted to the discussion of findings of the research question and the hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study. From the research question one, certain negative behaviors were observed by parents as a result of excessive digital media consumption of their secondary school students. Some of these behaviours include poor emotional health, absent-mindedness, which makes them not to pay attention to tasks. Sleeplessness, peer victimization, which usually takes the form of use of abusive words and derogatory comments about their peers on social media. Many of the secondary school students were also observed to exhibit cyber-bullying, being unnecessarily secretive and modelling self-harming and destructive behaviours learnt from social media. These observations agreed with the study carried out by Ojomo, Olayinkaawofadeju & Onifade (2021), on media consumption and secondary school students' behavioural patterns. They confirmed that students who were engaged in deep media usage, have their language, relationships and mode of dressing influenced.

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between digital media consumption and behavioural trends of secondary school students in Calabar Metropolis. This result implies that the behaviour of secondary school students is influenced by what they consume on media. This result also agrees with the findings of Olaseinde, Ojomo, Olayinkaawofadeju & Onifade (2021), who found that 54% of the students they sampled confirmed that what they watched on media influenced their language, dressing and relationships. This then suggests that some of these violent and antisocial behaviours that secondary school students often exhibit especially those earlier on identified in the study, were traced to their deep media involvement. The result also agrees with the study of Mukui

(2015), who concluded that cellphone, video game, TV and other forms of social media, influence the behavioural trends of students. Since these digital devices are influential, there will be need for adult supervision and guidance to ensure that they view the positive aspects of the social media.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that the impact of digital media consumption is a significant predictor of parent-child relationship. The finding further indicates that excessive digital media consumption negatively affects the quality of parent-child relationships, leading to diminished communication, emotional distance, and decreased parental involvement in the children's upbringing. These outcomes underscore the need for parents and caregivers to be mindful of their own digital habits and prioritize quality time with their children. This gap in parent-child relationship has other remote consequences. It can drive the child into compromising to some antisocial involvements online. For instance, some are recruited into cybercrimes and cultic activities, unknown to their parents. Others have become pornographic addicts. Atim (2022), in a study, interviewed some parents, and their responses agreed with this study. The parents interviewed, lamented their difficulty in parenting children in a digital age. That further confirmed the result of the study, that parents find it obstructive breaking into their children's space. Media consumption apart from altering parent-child relationship, could affect the social climate of the home making it most unconducive to raise children. Nguyen et al (2022) and Kalibbala (2024) in their respective studies, all alluded to the fact social media consumption worsened parent-child relationship.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

Based on the results of the study it was concluded that digital media consumption of students is a predictor of behavioural trends of secondary school students and of the relationship between child-parents.

Recommendations

There are needs for children to be supervised very closely by parents and teachers to guide the knowledge of what they consume, since that has a measure of influence on their behaviour

It was also found out that it affects their relationship with their parents. Too much media exposure can alter parent- child relationship negatively and can hinder bonding, which children require for proper development. Media consumption by students could have some psychological impacts, for instance, students who spend much time on media, could develop some withdrawal syndrome and become secretive, as discovered in the study, because they crave for uninterrupted solitude. For the youths, watching face book, Instagram, Netflix and

others, could alter their thought patterns and emotions if unsupervised. It is therefore recommended that there should be balance and moderation between the young people's devotion to prolonged screen time viewing and parental guidance. Parents should strongly discourage media contents that could negatively impact on the behaviour of their children. Policy makers should develop guidelines for responsible digital media consumption among minors. Future researches should explore strategies for promoting healthy digital media habits among families. It should investigate effective interventions for reducing digital media's negative impact on students and explore cultural differences in digital media consumption and parent-child relationships.

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