Socialization and Digital Media Addiction in juveniles

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Abstract

This study talks about the relationship of digital media addiction and socialization, especially the juvenile. This study takes into consideration the role and status of socialization in instilling virtuous values and principles in children and forming them properly to contribute to building their society in which they live. Should they fail to perform effectively within the norms of society, they become easy targets for any threats that stand in their way. Addiction, digital media addiction in particular, is similar to injecting poison into honey because it hides the negative effects on individuals in return for receiving digital practice. It may often be with the assistance of parents because they are the ones who provide digital technology. They do so for the purpose of education or entertainment, but due to their ignorance of its risks, they will push their children to deep hole.

- **Keywords:** socialization, digital addiction, virtual world. Digital technology.

1- Introduction

Humanity continues to experience constant throes which never ceasing. Humanity lakes its way out of a dilemma only to encounter a new one that threatens its existence and captures its attention. This new state can erode its strength if humanity does not hasten to comprehend and unravel its mysteries, whether by benefiting from it or seeking refuge from its dangers and containing it. Every recovery is considered a respite to enter a new state. Today, we find ourselves living in the era of information technology, which is the fruit of tireless efforts spanning centuries, from the era of hunting, agriculture, and industry. This era carries a quantitative and qualitative momentum of technological and knowledge capabilities, which significantly and deeply affect the recipient, either positively or negatively, depending on their position, role, exposure level, awareness, age, family and social environment surrounding them.

Human beings are inherently social creatures, acting as an active agent within their environment. Through their proper development over various stages over time, they can acquire their rights in exchange for performing their duties, according to their age and position, which are considered

rights for others. Therefore, any disruption to this process will impede the entire social mechanism, causing a disruption in the roles of others.

A society is like a body; if one of its members complains, the rest of the organs respond with vigilance and fever. Each member is a part that needs harmony and coordination with the other members in order to gain strength for survival in life, which continues through the integration of all body parts, analogous to individuals of the community. An individual cannot withstand the difficulties and challenges of life. Neither their body, their abilities, their capabilities allow them to achieve self-realization and adapt to life, except through solidarity with other individuals in a social environment that protects its members and realizes social solidarity for them. In order for humans to thrive in life and achieve psychological and social stability, it is essential for them to weave a cultural heritage that is rich in customs, traditions, and values that regulate social standards and bind individuals to adhere to them. This creates a conducive social environment that preserves their continuity effectively, harmoniously, and with mutual accord among all components of the community.

However, "WANT DOES NOT GET" as it is said. Therefore, they must exercise patience, resilience, and perseverance in order to survive and rectify imbalances on their own. Otherwise, their fate will be extinction. This is evident in extinct societies that lost control over stability and continuity mechanisms in the face of natural transformations and changes imposed on all living beings. Knowledge is an accumulative process that automatically refines human behaviors, compelling them to adapt, excel, or face extinction.

In the realm of the virtual world, which is considered an extended and unlimited realm without societal norms and values to regulate individuals, poses a significant challenge. Anonymous individuals roam freely, assuming different identities and creating situations to achieve specific material, moral, or leisurely purposes. These anonymous individuals maybe acting as a reflection to satisfying their psychological and social desires and disorders. However, this process is not easy or peaceful for individuals of young age, who have limited vision and limited thinking. It casts a profound and substantial impact on them, which may lead them astray if they do not find someone to guide them to safety. Therefore, we can say that the influence of social upbringing in the face of digital media addiction is significant, both on individuals and society as a whole.

Various scientific fields such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology agree that the primary goal of social upbringing is to transform a biological being into a social being. This is achieved through the contribution of socialization institutions, starting with the family, particularly parents, within the context of nuclear families, or the involvement of grandparents and extended family members. However, in our modern era, even in conservative societies, these institutions have witnessed significant decline, allowing schools to play a more crucial role given that schools are more of a secondary family. Additionally, the role of daycare centers, places of worship, clubs, and peer groups should not be overlooked.

2- Socialization

"Children go through a significant period in their lives where they require care, supervision, and monitoring. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Command your children to pray by the age of seven, discipline them for it by the age of ten, and separate their sleeping arrangements.'"[1]

Before the age of seven, a juvenile is exempt from religious obligations according to Islamic teachings. However, once they reach this age, they begin training and education. By the age of ten, they are obligated to perform the prayer, which is considered a pillar of the religion, and they become fully accountable for their actions upon reaching the age of puberty. This is intended to reinforce their upbringing and enable them to become righteous individuals within their social environment. Article 49 of the Algerian Penal Code, amended by Law 14-01 dated February 4, 2014,[2] stipulates that a minor who has not reached the age of ten is not subject to criminal prosecution or signing legal documents, except for protective measures if their age is between 10 and 13. In terms of offenses, they are only subject to reprimand. Before reaching the age of legal majority, which is set at eighteen years, they benefit from reduced penalties, where a felony becomes a misdemeanor, a misdemeanor becomes an offense, and an offense becomes subject to reprimand only.

For a juvenile to transition from a biological being to a social being, it is necessary for them to assimilate the social heritage of the environment in which they live. This heritage encompasses values, customs, traditions, norms, and the governing laws that regulate their relationships with others and determine their adaptation to the social environment. By internalizing and understanding these aspects, the individual becomes integrated, interactive, and harmonious within their social milieu. Through this process, they can achieve material and moral gains in exchange for fulfilling a set of obligations that are considered rights for others. According to Dinken Mitchell, social upbringing is the process of imparting to the individual the standards and concepts of their society in which they live.[3] Moreover, juveniles cannot achieve this qualitative leap without adhering to influential social institutions, primarily the family, which is considered the cornerstone of the process of individual upbringing due to its significant psychological, social, and legal status. The presence of the mother in the family holds immense importance, as the poet Hafez Ibrahim said, " If a mother, at first as a child is brought up well, you'll insure fine descendants on a strong plot dwell."[4]

Family is the primary source for raising well-rounded individuals, as Harold Macmillan stated, "Give me a family ambitious, stimulating, encouraging, and nurturing, and I will give you intelligent and brilliant children."[5] Family shapes the social existence of a juvenile within its embrace, just as the biological fetus which is formed within the mother's womb.[6] It is within the family that the process of social upbringing takes place, where a child learns how to perceive life, navigate guidance, and interact and harmonize with others.[7] Indeed, family is the primary social

unit where an individual is raised and learns everything that contributes to effective social integration. Within family, the juvenile develops the psychological aspect, which includes love, affection, and providing a nurturing environment filled with tranquility and comfort. It also develops the educational aspect, where virtuous values and good morals are instilled. Additionally, the social aspect of the family involves assisting individuals in forming relationships, friendships, and positive interactions with those around them. While there may be some external influences in this domain, the biological aspect, especially concerning procreation, remains inherently and primarily the responsibility of the family. Consequently, the family has the right and full responsibility for the proper upbringing of children.

Schools play a significant role in the upbringing and shaping of individuals' behavior as well. It serves as the second social unit for a child, offering elements such as educators, educational programs, and pedagogical resources. Schools hold an important social status within families. It is within the school environment that individuals learn reading, writing, and are taught good morals and virtuous values. They also become acquainted with their roles in society, including their rights and responsibilities towards others. The individual begins at school by forging friendships and engaging in social interactions with others. As for the cognitive aspect, it remains within the core of its expertise, as schools impart knowledge and enlightenment that illuminates individuals' paths and opens up horizons of good life for them in the future. They become the eyes of society, through which it sees, repairs, develops, and advances among communities and other realms. Children spend the majority of their daily time and a significant portion of their lives in school, it serves as an educational and social system that aims to nurture future generations.[8] School is considered a safe place to accommodate children from a young age until they reach adulthood, encompassing various educational stages through which they progress. It is within the school environment that they acquire knowledge, understanding, upbringing, and awareness, enabling them to be qualified for integration and harmony with others as active and positive members of society.

Children also benefit from the contributions of various social institutions in the process of social upbringing, such as preschools, youth centers, and places of worship. These institutions provide a foundation for instilling educational and social values, enabling children to become more competent and capable of healthy integration, positive interaction, and collaboration with others. Particularly, peers play an active role in shaping children's personalities, as they have a psychological and social influence on each other. This is because one's companions can either have a positive or negative impact on them.[9] In addition to the influence of media outlets such as the press, television, mass organizations like political parties, and social platforms, which have emerged from modern digital technology, such as the Internet, everything now affects everything else. As a result, individuals are exposed to both influence and being influenced by everything they interact with. Some influences are obligatory and positive, such as those exerted by the family and school, as they are necessary for one's existence and development. These institutions

are organized, structured, and qualified for this purpose. On the other hand, there are optional influences where individuals act voluntarily and selectively. In such cases, individuals have the freedom to choose what suits them and avoid anything that may harm them, as there is a mix of both beneficial and harmful elements.

3- Digital Media Addiction

Previously, we mentioned what individuals experienced in their lives in terms of traditional systems, practices, and institutions, whether related to social upbringing or daily interactions through managing their life affairs. In that regard, their mobility, communication, and interaction were simple in terms of style, influence, and being influenced. However, today, modern variables have been introduced to lives of individuals and institutions due to the digital revolution that has engulfed our world. It has been a qualitative leap in the use of technology in various social and other aspects of life. However, every gain has its rewards and side effects. While it facilitated life by bridging distances, facilitating tasks, and fulfilling needs, it also affected the mechanisms of individual upbringing at various levels of institutions and other as well as other factors. Modern technology has permeated all aspects of life, capturing attention and hearts, asserting itself as a representative for all actors, especially those who are illiterate, whether traditional or digital illiteracy.

The virtual space, as an institution for social upbringing, was first addressed in a study in the mid-1990s within what is known as the virtual community, which focuses on the movement of individuals within the online network. [10]In this space, the process of random communication takes place, which grows exponentially beyond its counterpart in the real world. It includes virtual friends and a virtual environment, where social facts can be virtualized.[11]

The virtual community is the expansive and limitless realm of interaction through the internet that emerged with the digital communications revolution. It possesses the characteristics of a real community, such as individuals, environment, interaction, and the exchange of emotions, opinions, and needs through audio, visual, written, and graphic means, as well as all the expressions used in reality. However, it also involves a significant margin of manipulation, deception, and falsehood, where parental, familial, and societal control is weakened. Virtual communities are social gatherings composed of individuals located in different parts of the world who communicate with each other through electronic devices connected to the internet. They are united by shared interests, exchanging knowledge, information, and engaging in conversations.[12] The actors in the virtual space are, in a sense, liberated from familial and societal restrictions, which can make them vulnerable to predators, deviant individuals, or media companies and global websites.[13]

Virtual communities bring together many contradictions that are not accepted by reality or logical reasoning. Members of it may encompass diverse cultural and values, educational and cultural differences, as well as variations in age and gender. Consequently, there is an inherent

inequality among individuals, which can lead to exploitation, manipulation, and a sense of alienation from their social environment. This can be considered a precursor to deviance and rebellion against familial and societal norms.

Parents have found themselves in an unenviable position due to the repercussions of this digital technology. Positive and negative aspects can be of profound and significant influence. On one hand, the availability of remarkable services and abundant information has enhanced its influence on individuals, especially during the COVID-19 period, where it has been imposed as an alternative mode for education and remote communication. Consequently, parents have been compelled to provide the necessary electronic devices for their children to keep up with this new phenomenon and benefit from its requirements. However, the negative aspect remains the one that troubles both families and society as a whole, due to what this modern technology produces in terms of ease of isolation from family which makes it difficult for parents to supervise. It contributes to family detachment, even if physical contact is maintained, as the mind remains preoccupied with close association with electronic devices, which are, for the juvenile, preferred companions and confidants. These devices include mobile phones, tablets, and personal computers, especially when connected to the internet, which allows easy access to the virtual world.

The virtual world leaves significant negative effects, including consuming time as the virtual world distracts individuals from their psychological and biological needs, leading to severe health issues. According to psychological specialists, it causes mental and psychological disorders. It also harms individuals, especially juveniles, by fostering a false awareness on social media platforms. This is achieved through the use of automated robots impersonating real personalities, which read human posts and simulate their posts and behavior patterns. Moreover, there are other forms of deception, such as fake names, images, accounts, and even misleading information that bears no relation to reality. Often, these take the form of promotion, self-gratification, or for unknown reasons. Digital media addiction has significant effects and risks on individuals, especially juveniles, who continuously desire to be connected to the internet at all times.[15] This has a negative impact on various aspects of their health and social lives. The American Society confirms that using the internet for more than 38 hours per week, excluding work-related needs, leads to psychological and physical symptoms.[16] These symptoms include motor psychological tension, anxiety, and obsessive thinking about the internet. Moreover, many researchers assert that 90% of internet users are young people, and approximately 50% of them suffer from addiction, leading to psychological disorders.[17]

Regarding the social aspect, individuals cannot be completely safe from the risks of the virtual world, which gives rise to a range of negative phenomena such as isolation, depression, loneliness, and the absence of parental supervision. This contributes to a reduction in social support, causing human emotions and feelings to be reduced to electronic interactions dominated by images and comments.[18] In the virtual world, individuals become part of the playacting rather than engaging

with the applications themselves. This leads to significant social changes, such as virtual marriages, virtual religious rituals, and interaction with electronic games. Furthermore, it extends to the cultural, economic, and other domains of life. These changes have a profound impact on society as a whole and reshape various aspects of human interaction and behavior.[19]

The digital world has posed a real challenge to humanity, despite the manifold benefits and remarkable services it offers in all domains and at various levels. Yet, it has a negative and dark side that harms individuals and even institutions when linked to the virtual realm, threatening their security and interests, while inflicting psychological, mental, and social disorders.

Therefore, it is necessary to address these medical cases through accurate and comprehensive diagnosis and providing the necessary treatment, whether through psychological sessions or pharmacological intervention, following the proper diagnosis. Additionally, it is crucial to activate and raise awareness about the role of parents, through educational programs, and to enact additional laws to protect children by holding parents legally responsible for any negligence or failure to protect their children from any form of exploitation or real and virtual social deviation.

4.Conclusion

Digital technology is considered a groundbreaking leap in our modern era, owing to its abundant utility and astonishing capabilities that bring significant benefits to individuals and societies through its exemplary and sophisticated services. However, human beings remain susceptible to their own ambitions and hubris, which may lead them to indulge in negative and exploitative aspects of this technology. Therefore, utmost caution must be exercised to prevent individuals, especially juveniles, from succumbing to the perils of the dark underbelly of digital technology. Such exposure can result in profound harm, as mentioned earlier, becoming a scourge upon both individuals and society at large. However, we should not burden others beyond their capacity, and it is essential to hold ourselves and our society accountable by actively contributing to the establishment of appropriate and stringent legislations that oblige everyone to promote sound social upbringing for individuals, whether by parents or institutions. Additionally, there is a need to expedite the development in this field to gain control over the challenges imposed by the present and future digital world. Society has witnessed profound transformations and has been deeply affected in various aspects, reaching a level of depth due to its exposure to internal and external influences. Roles and functions have become blurred for both individuals and institutions, as everyone cancels out others without justification, qualifications, or appropriate circumstances. Their motto seems to be, as the prover goes, "I and I matter".

It is evident in our current society, to our great dismay, that there has been a significant decline in individual and collective behaviors, whether in private or public spaces. These behaviors have extended beyond mere words or actions and have permeated all aspects of life, whether in interactions with close ones or strangers. This observation is shared by intellectuals, thinkers, and

even the general public, who unanimously agree that many abandon taking responsibility for the upbringing of individuals within families and institutions. Instead, they engage in a blame game, accusing one another of negligence and shifting the entire burden onto a single party. We often come across cases where parents complain about their inability to control their children, while attributing blame to the streets, schools, mosques, and other external factors. Yet, those who are knowledgeable say that one's upbringing plays a significant role in shaping their character and behavior.

There is no place that can influence a child's character than the family. Therefore, parents bear a significant responsibility for providing proper upbringing to their children, even if they are unfamiliar with the intricacies of digital technology. The primary focus should be on instilling strong moral and educational values in children, which will protect them from any moral slip-ups. This foundation will serve as a solid ground upon which individuals can build and thrive, complementing the teachings received from other social institutions and even peers who align with the same healthy values they were raised upon. However, this does not diminish the effectiveness of other institutions in repairing and rectifying the behavior of individuals, particularly schools, which possess the necessary elements to address and correct the negative influences that some parents may have had on their children's upbringing.

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