Internet and children

Over the past few years, the usage of internet has gained a lot of popularity more so within the young generation. Children use the internet for various purposes such as doing assignments and learning, connecting with friends on social sites, playing games and listening to music. In as much as the use of the Internet is helpful to children, it also exposes them to hazards such as health risk and psychological influences. The use of internet also has a lot of negative effects on children, mainly on their social relations with others. Therefore, this article is a discussion on the adverse effects brought about by the Internet on the young generation.

If the use of the Internet by children is not controlled, it may have the following negative effects:

Health risk

Continuing presence on the Internet of the youth is one of the core factors contributing to obesity. Internet has become a chief source of entertainment for most children as they grow and spend little time on exercises. Lack of physical activity leads to accumulation of the fat as food is converted to fats which are deposited under the skin and on some organs. During exercises, such fats are broken down to yield energy that is used in motion and maintaining the energy requirement in the body. This translates to the fact that continuing presence on the Internet without any exercises would contribute to obese condition which is not fit for proper body functioning. Weight gain is characterized by high level of cholesterol in the body. The excessive cholesterol can get deposited on the walls of the blood vessels especially the arteries leading to hardening. As a result, the victim may

suffer from heart attack or arteriosclerosis. Hardening of blood vessels leads to hypertension which strongly threatens the life time of the victim. It means that too much presence of children on the Internet without adequate exercises increases chances of high blood pressure amidst the youth. Diabetes is also another condition always associated with obese people. It happens when the blood sugar level increases. With too much weight, one is likely to suffer low self-esteem based on the changed physical appearance. In fact, too much time spent on the Internet chatting, playing games, socializing, surfing and doing other activities amounts to weight gain that later may cause the mentioned conditions in the body. Therefore, the best solution is cutting down on the amount of time spent on the internet.

Also Internet overdose can result to the following the physical sideeffects (appearances) as: dry eyes due to lack of sleep and rest as usually time for the rest is spent on the internet; backaches caused by long-time sitting while browsing the Internet; seizures instigated by negative effect of the overflow of information on a brain and migraine headache due to overworking of brain nerves. After analysis of brain scans, scientists that too much time spent on the Internet leads to damage of the white matter in the brain. Therefore, it is an indisputable fact that behavioral addiction can cause physical brain damage just in the same propensity addiction affects the brain

Children who are addicted to the Internet devote many hours to their favorite activity. Actually, they usually spend almost all their free time browsing the Internet. Therefore, the child is not involved in other activities like playing and taking exercises with friends. As it is known, game is important to a child's health and fitness and it helps to reduce the risk of getting some

diseases associated with the lack of exercise. Therefore, when a child does not take any exercise, they are at the risk of gaining weight. While using the Internet, children also consume a lot of junk food. This may lead to weight gain. Weight is in turn associated to the developments of diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Being overweight also affects the children's self-esteem. A kid who is fat is usually viewed y other kids as funny looking or weird. The ridicule got from other kids will affect the child's self-esteem.

Various studies have shown that increased and continuous use of computer cause back ache, dry eyes, migraine headaches and epileptic seizures. Working for too long on the Internet when using a computer or a laptop may cause back ache due to bad posture. Sitting at the computer is also a very important issue. Proper posture may help to eliminate backache. The light produced by the laptop and computer screen is usually too bright. Over exposure to this bright light makes the eyes dry. Certain videos found on the Internet emitbright, flashing light. This is specifically harmful to the eyes. Such bright flashing light affects children who are photo sensitive and may in turn cause epileptic seizures to them. Continuing presence on the Internet causes fatigue and migraines.

The amount of time children spend on the Internet is a worrying fact to many parents. Children who are addicted to the Internet sacrifice their free time so as to use the Internet. Lack of rest and sleep is in turn negative and affects a child's ability to concentrate when in class and while doing other activities. Lack of concentration and alertness in turn impairs a child's ability to make fluid and sound decisions. A child who is also addicted to the Internet may

develop sleep disorders like insomnia. They may also get nightmares due to lack of sleep as they spend too much time on the Internet.

Another alarming sideeffect of the Internet usage is eating disorder. As a matter of fact, eating disorders are caused by the bad eating habits. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are the most common type of eating disorders. On the Internet, there are groups which encourage eating disorder habits and attitudes. The users are instructed and encouraged to be part of these communities by use of videos and instructions given to the users. At first, the sites may seem harmless, but the truth is that they pose a serious threat especially to children who visit such websites. Certain images are also shown on such sites that view a particular body size as the best. Teens are normally obsessed with such views and would do anything so as to fit in these groups. The media also plays a role in triggering of the eating disorders among children. The media and showbiz world mostly view slender size (especially for women) as the most beautiful. Children, especially adolescents, are caught up in this maze and they try by all means to look like the skinny models. This has resulted in increased cases of eating disorders especially anorexia nervosa.

Psychological influences

Children have increasingly become addicted to the Internet and most of their time is spent browsing. A number of studies showed that many teenagers used the Internet frequently, logging in from one to three times a day. Averagely, they spent around three hours a day on the internet. This in turn means that time they originally used to spend on studying is used for

browsing. This leads to a drop in their grades. If this is not carefully checked by parents, it might affect the child's book work. On the other hand, certain studies have shown that children use the net for their studies and research. This in the long term led to an increase in their overall grades and performance in tests.

Many people assume that children do not have or experience any kind of stress. However, this is untrue. While a certain level of stress is acceptable for kids, for instance stress for books and doing assignments, too much stress is not healthy for kids. With the advent of technology, modern media and means of communication has really changed. Children can now get a lot of information by just looking it up on the internet. The advancement of technology along with the burden of peer pressure puts a lot of strain on children. Television, internet and media are all over the place telling children whhat they should do and not do, how they should act and what they should have or not. This puts a huge pressure on kids and they feel like they are being conformed to a certain way of doing things. This results in uneasiness of kids. Kids have also been affected on how they feel about themselves, thereby lowering their esteem. This leads to moodiness and short temperedness of kids.

Depression is a common phenomenon among kids especially teenagers. In the US alone, studies have revealed that around 2 million teenagers suffer clinical depression a year. Teenagers who have a very high dependence on the Internet are twice likely to get depressed as those that are not. On the Internet too, there is cyber bullying. This is where children are insulted and intimidated over emails and text messages. Children who are cyber bullied

have symptoms like depression, suicidal thoughts, academic decline, insecurity, poor self-esteem, feelings of not belonging among others. Such kids normally live in fear and become usually separated from other kids. If this is not properly addressed, it may lead to self-harm by the children and death.

With the pressure that the Internet puts on kids, it may lead to children developing maladaptation behaviors. Mental maladaptation are disruptive in nature behaviors that children exhibit . This may be in form of them seeking too much attention, screaming and engaging in weird activities. Internet affects considerably the way children act and feel about themselves. For instance, there are video games in the net that are hostile and violent in nature. When kids watch such things, they start copying such behaviors and practice them.

Another problem is the Internet schizophrenia. This happens when a person is addicted to the Internet usage. Such a person has a lot of accounts in various social networks, have multiple personalities and identities on the Internet and spend lots of hours on the internet. Kids who suffer from the Internet addictions are usually isolated from other children.

Social problems

Although the Internet is a place where kids meet other kids through the different social networks, still kids who overuse the Internet have a number of social problems. First of all, spending too much time on the Internet may make a kid get lonely. Too much surfing with time gets overdone and boring. It becomes a repetitive action that within some time makes a kid feel

depressed and lonely. Such lonely minds can also be suicidal in the attempt of trying something new. Over the Internet, there are also videos and articles that would make a kid feel suicidal.

Such kids are normally in isolation from the real world and do not get in touch with other kids. They spend most of their time on the Internet and miss the touch of meeting and talking to other kids' face to face. This could make the kids feel lonely and left out. Also it may be the reason of low self-esteem of the kid as they are not actively involved in other kids' activities.

In the modern world, the Internet offers almost a solution to any problem. By just a click of a button, a child can access solution to any problem. This has made the gap between parents and kids bigger as kids don't seek as much advice or help from the parents. Children tend to spend most time on the Internet, they barely have enough time to either talk or bond with their parents through doing various activities. The connection between parents and children is slowly lost.

In conclusion, it is evident the many advantages the Internet has brought to us but then again, its negative effect can't be overlooked. The Internet is especially harmful to children because at their tender age they can't exactly know what is good or bad for them. Parents should, therefore, take caution that as their children use the Internet they are not exposed to its many negative effects.