

The Roles of Media and Technology in Adolescents' Development in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The adolescents are exposed to an expanding array of media that carry messages that shape their judgments and behaviour. Parents, however, need to be able to monitor what the adolescents access in the internet so as not be criminal intended. There is hardly anything you do now a day in terms of admission to university, polytechnics and bank transactions that one would not need to be connected to the internet. To this end, adolescents need to be closely monitored and be careful what they do on the internet. What they do is expected to be purposeful and meaningful.

Key words: Media • Technology • Adolescents • Development Parents

INTRODUCTION

Literarily, the term adolescence means “growing to maturity” or becoming an adult. There has not been consensus about the definition of adolescence. The result is that each author attempts a description based on his own ideas and the focus of his study [1] in Osakinle [2]. Adolescence is a stage of development, a situation or a distinct culture, a state of mind or a combination of all these [3] in Osakinle, [2]. It is a time when a teenager is struggling to find a place for himself in his own society. The question is what does the adolescent do in his own society?

Few developments in society over the last 40 years have had a greater impact on adolescents than television [4-6]. Many of today's adolescents have spent more time since infancy in front of a television set than with their parents or in the classroom. Other influencers are radio, CDs and music video that tend to influence the lives of many adolescents nowadays. According to Arnett, [7], the functions of media for adolescents include:

- **Entertainment:** Adolescents often use media simply for entertainment and an enjoyable diversion from everyday concerns.
- **Information:** Adolescents use media to obtain information, especially about topics that their parents may be reluctant to discuss in the home, such as sexuality.

- **Sensation:** Adolescents tend to be higher in sensation seeking than adults are; certain media provide intense and novel stimulation that appeals to adolescents.
- **Coping:** Adolescents use media to relieve anxiety and unhappiness. Two of the most frequently endorsed coping responses of adolescents are “listen to music” and “watch TV”.
- **Gender-role Modeling:** Media present models of female and male gender roles; these media images of females and males can influence adolescent's gender attitudes and behaviour.
- **Youth Culture Identification:** Media use give many adolescents a sense of being connected to a larger peer network and culture, which is united by the kinds of values and interest conveyed through adolescent oriented media.

It was discovered by Roberts, Henriksen and Foehr, [6] that as youth progress through adolescence, television viewing decreases, music listening and computer use increase and media use is more likely to take place in adolescents' bedroom. However, as adolescents become older, they are more likely to use media alone or with friends or siblings, indicating increasing independence from parents and the importance of peers.

Television's Functions: Television has been called a lot of things, not all of them good. Depending on one's point of view, it is a "window to the world", the "one-eye monster", or a "vast wasteland". In Nigeria, there are some religious organizations that bar and ban their members from watching television because they think one cannot censor what you want to watch but you watch what are presented. Television may take adolescents away from the printed media and books. From a study carried out by Huston, Siegle and Brenner, [8], it was found that children who read books and the printed media watched television less than those who did not. It was argued that television trains individuals to become passive learners. Rarely does television require active responses from the observers except on special programmes like "The Governor Explains" that come up ones a month in Ekiti State when observers/listener are expected to phone the Governor and he will explain the issues raised by the different observers to the public. It was also argued that television train individuals to become passive learners. Heavy television use may produce not only a passive learner, but a passive lifestyle. In a study by Anderson and others [9], they discovered that heavy TV viewing was connected with obesity in adolescent girls.

Television can deceive. It can teach adolescents that problems are easily resolved and that everything turns out all right in the end. For examples, it takes only about 30-60 minutes for detectives to sort through a complex array of clues and discover the killer and they always find the killer. However, there are some positive aspects of television's influence on adolescents [10]. It presents adolescents with a world that is different from the one in which they live. This means that, through television, adolescents are exposed to a wider variety of views and knowledge than when they are informed only by their parents, teachers and peers.

The Media and Music: Anyone who has been around adolescents very long knows that many of them spend huge amount of time listening to music on the radio, playing CDs or tapes of their favourite music and watching music videos on television. Approximately two-thirds of all records and tapes are purchased by the 10 to 24 year old age group. And one-third of the nation's radio stations aim their broadcast rock music at adolescent listeners, Santrock [11].

Music tends to meet a number of personal and social needs for adolescents [5]. The most important personal needs are mood control and silence filling. Popular music's social functions range from providing a party atmosphere to expressing rebellion against authority. However, the latter function is not as common as popular stereotypes suggest.

Technology, Computers and the Internet: Culture involves change and nowhere is that change greater than in the technological revolution today's adolescents are experiencing with increased use of computers and internet [12]. If adolescents are to be adequately prepared for tomorrow's jobs, technology needs to become an integral part of their lives [13]. Today's adolescents are using computers to communicate the way their parents used pen, postage stamps and telephones for example the use of facebook. However, the new information society still relies on some basic non-technological competencies that adolescents need to develop good communication skills, the ability to solve problems, thinking deeply, thinking creatively and having positive attitudes.

The Internet: The internet is the core of computer-mediated communication. The internet system is worldwide and connects millions of computer networks, providing an incredible array of information adolescents can access [5]. And because of its fluid capacities, the internet has more up-to-date information than books. Youths throughout the world are increasingly using the internet, despite substantial variation in use in different countries around the world and in socioeconomic groups. The question is: what do adolescents do when they are online? E-mail is the most frequent activity they engage in and more than 70 percent of the adolescents who go online connect with a chat room [14].

E-mail (Electronic Mail): This is another valuable way that the internet can be used. Messages can be sent to and received from individuals as well as large number of people. The information children and adolescents have access to on the internet has been largely unregulated. Adolescents can access adult sexual materials, instructions for making bombs and other information that is inappropriate for them. Information on the internet is not well organized for regulated, indicating a critical need for adolescents to develop the navigational and evaluative skills to sort through complex information [11]. It was observed by Tarpley, [15] that:

- of the 1,000 most visited sites, 10 percent are adult sex oriented.
- Forty-four percent of adolescents have viewed an adult internet site.
- Twenty-five percent of adolescents have visited an internet site that promotes hate groups
- Twelve percent have visited an internet site where they can obtain information about how to purchase a gun.

In conclusion, the internet holds a great deal of potential for increasing adolescents' educational opportunities. However, the internet also has limitations and dangers. The internet is a technology that needs parents to monitor and regulate adolescents' use of it.

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