Perception of Parents on Children's Use of Gadgets
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ABSTRACT
This study aims to look at the different perception of the parents with their children's use of modern technology. Qualitative design was used to analyze the data gathered. Five pairs of parents were interviewed in the process of gathering, five mothers and five fathers, who have children aged 3-8 and are exposed and using technology at the present time. A set of self-made questionnaire was made to answer the research questions. This study focused on the parental perspectives, the reasons, the experiences and control of the usage of modern technology of their children. Coding was used as a tool of data analysis in this research. The findings were based on themes to understand the results better. With the perception of the parents, they simply look at technology as a learning tool and a source of entertainment for their children, but at the same time, they are aware with the negative outcome of what it can impose to them. The reason for the parents to provide their children with gadgets are for leisure and educational purposes of the children, and especially for communication, for easier access with their children. It showed that the most provided gadget by the parents was tablet/ipad. When it comes to their experiences, there were two sides of point of view, the progressive and the regressive. The parents know the benefits and, at the same time, the risk factors of the modern technology to their children.

Keywords: Parents, Children, Technology, Perception, Perspective, Reason, Experiences

Technology is a big factor in the life of human beings. In every aspect of life, technology is being used, and in every hand of a person you see is technology. Technology was once the newest technology in our homes, and then came videos and computers. Today’s children are growing up in a rapidly changing digital age that is far different from that of parents and grandparents. A variety of technologies are all around is in our homes, offices, and schools. When used wisely, technology and media can support learning and relationships. Enjoyable and engaging shared experiences that optimize the potential for children’s learning and development can support children’s relationships both with adults and their peers. Parents on the other hand can be curious and meticulous on how they will accept technology on the hands of their young offspring because it can also lead other kinds of technology to be a bad impact to their own children, that can also lead to negative lifestyle for the children. (Ribble, 2009)

Technology Today
In the past century, we have witnessed a rapid development and change in technology incomparable to any other age in human history. Human dependence on technology has increased tremendously as we use a variety of technologies to help us accomplish different tasks in life (Ramey, 2012). It was also suggested that we should embrace modern technology and
learn how to use them. Having said that, it is logical to assume that technology will be forever changing and improving. It may be of an importance to us, human beings, that we should keep ourselves updated with technologies changes and uses because modern technology, all those gizmos and gadgets, have already wormed its way into daily culture.

**Positive Perspective towards Technology**

Having technology as part of our daily lives, there are bound to have many different viewpoints and perspectives on the uses and importance of modern technology. Some views may be positive, some may be negative. Walker (2014) gives a quick overview on some of the positive and negative effects it that technology has brought with its rise. She mentions that technology is useful because it has enabled us to maintain and strengthen relationships by easily being able to communicate with them no matter where you are. Technology has also been able to provide education, medication and other important aspects of life to that some people have trouble getting. Even on the side of video games and gaming consoles that are popular today, Jackson, et al (2012) said that video game playing predicted of all measures of creativity. Regardless of gender or race, greater videogame playing was associated with greater creativity. Type of videogame (e.g., violent, interpersonal) was unrelated to video game effects on creativity. Gender but not race differences were obtained in the amount and type of videogame playing, but not in creativity.

**Negative Perspective towards Technology**

Aside from the positive views mentioned, negative points were also given regarding the use of modern technology. She pointed out that some people have invested so much time and have immersed themselves so much in using technology that they have no clue on what to do if they did not have any piece of technology near them (Walker, 2014). Another negative view is the study of Strasburg, et al (2010), he stated that media can provide information about safe health practices and can foster social connectedness. However, recent evidences raises concerns about media’s effect on aggression, sexual behavior, substance use, disordered eating, and academic difficulties. Plowman et al (2010) said that although they report evidence of some parental disquiet about the role of technology in children’s lives, they illustrate some of the complexities in families’ attitudes to, and uses of, technology and conclude that it is not perceived by parents to be the threat to modern childhood that is claimed. Another study made by Vandewater, et al (2007) he said that the majority of children fell aged 3 to 6 fell within the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines, but 70% of 0 to 2-year-olds did not. Which means that most of the 0-2-year-olds has been using technology beyond the policy or guidelines of what the AAP has made, and they are more evident to what the harmful effects of media can bring upon to the children.

**Technology on Children**

Although these points cater to the daily applications adults have on technology. Children and younger generations may have different perspectives because they, themselves, have grown up in a world where modern technology is already present unlike older generations, in which they have adopted the use of modern technology. Sherry Turkle (2015) explains the cost of too-much technology in stark terms: Our children can’t engage in conversation, or experience solitude, making it very hard for them to be empathetic. “In one experiment, many student subjects opted to give themselves mild electric shocks rather than sit alone with their thoughts,” she noted. Aside from this, in a study conducted by Mckenny (2010), it was found that children aged 4-7 showed positive reactions to the use of computers. Although, a form of bias could have been at play here since children mentioned they use computers for games, which basically means they have fun while using the computer. That is why Greenfield (2009) said that, informal education therefore requires a balanced media diet using each technology's specific strengths in order to develop a complete profile of cognitive skills.
Synthesis

Some studies like Vandewater, et al (2007) said that the majority of children aged 3 to 6 fell within the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines, but 70% of 0- to 2-year-olds did not. Plowman, et al (2010) said that, although they report evidence of some parental disquiet about the role of technology in children’s lives, they illustrate some of the complexities in families’ attitudes to, and uses of, technology and conclude that it is not perceived by parents to be the threat to modern childhood that is claimed. Jackson, et al (2012) said that video game playing predicted all measures of creativity. Regardless of gender or race, greater videogame playing was associated with greater creativity. Type of videogame (e.g., violent, interpersonal) was unrelated to video game effects on creativity. In terms of health, Strasburg, et al (2010) stated that, studies have shown that media can provide information about safe health practices and can foster social connectedness. However, recent evidence raises concerns about media’s effects on aggression, sexual behavior, substance use, disordered eating, and academic difficulties. In terms of education, Greenfield (2009) said that, informal education therefore requires a balanced media diet using each technology’s specific strengths in order to develop a complete profile of cognitive skills.

There had been a lot of research already pertaining to the perception of parents on the children’s use of technology on children, through education, creativity, learning, etc. Technology to children has been studied in order for the researcher to know what it can do to the young generations, it can be either positive or negative. The study explores the following questions: (1) What is the perception of parents in children’s use of modern technology/gadgets? (2) What are the reasons for the parents to provide their children with gadgets? (3) How do parents monitor/control their children with the use of gadgets? And (4) what are the experiences of parents with having modern technology being introduced to their children?

Method

Research Design

Qualitative design was used. In-depth type of interview was used on gathering data of this research because it will involve conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation. This method was used by the researcher because it provides detailed information about the parents’ thoughts and behaviors on their experience and perception on the given issue or research question.

Participants and Sampling

The researcher interviewed ten participants consisting of parents, male and female, ranging with the age of 20 and above. The target population were parents who have children, aged 2-8, who are introduced to technology at an early age and have been using it at the present time, and also have been using the different kinds of technology most of the time. Purposive sampling was used by the researcher because the subjects will be having the same characteristics. The researcher treated the participants with the principle of social responsibility in order to contribute with the human welfare and to be in accordance with the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association.

Instruments

The researcher prepared a self made set of questions that was used and served as a guide in the interview. An example of the questions are: “What is your perception on children’s use of gadgets?”, “How do you discipline your children on their use of technology?” and “What are your experiences with having modern technology being used by your child?”. These are some of the questions that were asked with follow-up questions. In collecting the data, voice recorder was used in the process of the interview and a pen and paper for taking notes during the interview.
Procedure

First, the researcher searched in their village and other relatives or friends to find possible participants who will accept the permission for having an interview with them for the research. After that the participants were contacted and part of the message that was sent to the participants is the the content of the interview that will be done and some procedures for them to be ready.

Then, the researcher went to the houses of the participants to ensure confidentiality and a comfortable setting for the interview. Before the interview was held, the researcher debriefed and explained the content of the interview and also the importance and reason of the research. After that, the parents were then interviewed, a mother and a father at the same time, and both having an own perspective or answer with the questions. While the interview is being held, recording and note-taking is also being done by the researcher.

Lastly, the researcher gave gratitude to the parents for participating in the research, and asked if they would want any updates or to be kept in touch if the research is finished. And then the researcher analyzed the gathered data.

Data Analysis

The researcher used coding as a tool for analyzing gathered qualitative information. Coding is the process of organizing and sorting data. Codes serve as a way to label, compile and organize a data. (Center for Evaluation and Research, 2015) It allowed the researcher to summarize and synthesize what is happening in the data. In linking data collection and interpreting the data, coding becomes the basis for developing the analysis. Analytical coding was also used for making categories for the new ideas or concepts that was found in the data transcript.

Results and Discussion

The researcher interviewed 5 pairs of parents (mother and father). The data gathered by the researcher is grouped by research questions, followed by the answers of the participants. All of which has children 2-8, and those children are exposed to different kinds of technology and have been using it at the present time.

The perception of parents in the use of modern technology/gadgets

For this research question, based on the results of the participants, the researcher has found a corresponding theme on the answers.

Technology as a learning tool and source of entertainment

Parents #2

Mother: "...For me, nakakatulong siya”, “...okay lang naman sakin na gumagamit ng gadget anak ko kahit bata pa, kasi eto na generation ngayon, makakagamit talaga sila ng ganyan. And nakakatulong rin siya kasi nagaya ng ipad, nanonood kasi ng educational videos anak ko, yung 4 year old.”

Parents #4

Mother: “okay naman sakin, nakakatuwa kasi na ang bata bata pa pero galing nila gumamit ng tablet, dun nga kay ate nakikidudot lang siya nung una eh, ngayon marunong ng pumunta sa kung ano anong app eh, pero kalikot lang talaga ginagawa niya nung tima na yun. Ngayon lagi siyang nanonood ng mga video, yung mga abc, mga 123, natututo naman siya kasi pag pinapabilang mo siya, nakikisabay siya. pero yung abc kinakanta na niya, pero hindi buo tapos hindi pa tama yung ibang letters.”

The participants considered technology or the gadgets as a way for developing a child or see it as an advantage for their children to learn new things quickly and efficiently. Above are only some of the responses of the participants. Some of these parents mentioned that they used certain gadgets for teaching the child through videos and also at the same time as a source of entertainment. as Ramey (2012) stated that we should embrace modern technology and learn
how to use them. And when used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development. (Technology and Interactive Media as Tools, 2012)

However other participants also have a kind of negative perspective, and is aware with the risk factor that comes with the use of technology. Some are mentioned below:

Parents #1
Father: “...yung hindi lang maganda about sa masyadong pag gamit ng mga gadget is nawawala yung mga larong physical tulad ng patintero kaya sayang din naman para sa kabataan ngayon.”

Parents #2
Father: “...nab bother lang ako minsan kasi tutok nalag ta siya sa tablet.” “...ayoko lang na bababad rin naman sila sa mga gadget na yan kasi baka naaagad yung mata niya”

Parents #3
Mother: “Ako personally ayoko silang nakababad talaga, sakin kasi distraction talagang tulad sa pangalan ko, instead na nag focus siyang mag aral, nakikita ko naglalaro nang siya, oh nag facebook. Kay bunso naman, nakakahiram lagi kay kuya ng tablet, naglalaro nang siya ng mga minecraft at candy crush, pero ang galing nga na marunong na si bunso diyan, kaso puro laro naman hahaha.”

Parents #5
Mother: “...Kaso si Rita kasi, parang nag babago ugali niya sa kakagamit niya nag computer at cellphone, matigas na yung ulo, nag dadabog pag hindi nakakagamit, hindi masyado nag aaral. Hay nako sa ngayon ayoko muna sakyan niya yung gamit niya. sa School kasi may nangyari eh, nag make up siya ng story na sa bahay, siya lang walang gadget, lahat meron. kaya ayun, nanguha siya ng gadget ng iba, kaya na under probation siya, kaya ngayon strict ako kay Rita, nag babago ugali niya, character niya, matigas ang ulo hahay. Okay sakin ang gadgets na yan, yung computer kasi instant na ang lahat, nakaka bibit nga eh, pero yung dinulot lang sakanya, im dissapointed sakin, pati narin sa kuya niya.”

The reason why these parents have somewhat negative views is related to the previous studies that have shown negative effects on children that spend too much time using gadgets. As stated by Walker (2014) some people have invested so much time and have immersed themselves so much in using technology that they have no clue on what to do if they did not have any piece of technology near them. And a study by Mckenny’s (2010), it was found that children aged 4-7 showed positive reactions to the use of computers. Although, a form of bias could have been at play here since children mentioned they use computers for games, which basically means they have fun while using the computer.

Although their may seem to be mixed feeling with the the role of technology, it is clearly seen that technology is perceived as a learning tool and a source of entertainment.

The reasons for the parents to provide their children with gadgets

For this research questions, based on the results of the participants, the researcher has found a corresponding theme on the answers.

Leisure and Educational

Parents #1
Mother: “Well ako, gusto ko talaga na masaya yung aking mga anak. Hindi naman sa spinospoil ko sila.”

Parents #4
Mother: “Binilihan namin siya ng ipad para may sarili na siyang pang nood ng mga video taka para di siya makulit kasi grabe ang kulit niya ngayon. pag pinapanood mo siya diyan lang yan, di gagalaw yan. Pero kasi may natutuunan rin naman siya sa mga pinapanood niya.”

Parents #5
Mother: “Minsan kailangan niya gamitin for homework, kagaya ng mga pictures na kailangan iprint, mga pang decorations para sa project niya, hinahanap niya sa internet. Yun lang sana yung reason sa pag gamit niya ng internet.”

**Communication**

Parents #1
Mother: “And isa pa is for communication talaga. Syempre para madali ng hanapin at contactin sila.”

The parents mostly reasoned out that technology is provided so it can help them educationally and at the same time for entertainment. For some parents, they used it educationally, by letting them watch some educational videos focusing on different kinds of basic learning ideas for children, and it is also for school matters. Other parents provided the certain gadget to the children through games and apps for their entertainment. Going back to the study by Mckenny’s (2010), although sounds biased, it is a given fact that the children showed positive reactions towards using the computer, it just goes to show that the use of games and apps on different gadgets really does entertain the younger generations.

One parent added that the reason they provided gadgets for their child is so that they can have easier access to communication. As mentioned by Walker (2012) technology is useful because it has enabled us to maintain and strengthen relationships by easily being able to communicate with them no matter where you are.

**Provided Gadgets by Parents**

Parents #1 provided their children with tablets, and phones, etc.
Parents #2 provided their child with Ipad
Parents #3 did not provide their child with gadgets, but is allowed to use them (tablet and phone.
Parents #4 provided their child with tablet
Parents #5 provided their child with a computer

The researcher found that the gadgets that are mostly provided by the parents to their children are tablets.

**How parents monitor/control their children with the use of gadgets**

For this research questions, based on the results of the participants, the researcher has found a corresponding theme on the answers.

**Time management**

Parents #1
Mother: “Well ang gusto namin is sana sa weekend lang nila ginagamit mga gadget. “
Parents #2
Mother: “Sabi ko nga kanina ako ang may hawak ng ipad niya. Pinapagamit ko naman siya araw-araw, pero with moderation. Pag kailangan niya ng matulog or mag pahinga, kinukuha ko na sakantiya. Siguro sa isang araw nakaka 3-4 hours siya ng pag gamit. Pero minsan na hahayaan ko siyang mag babad rin, pero bihira lang yun. “
Parents #3
Father: “ako gusto ko lang rin talaga weekends para hindi nagugulo mga natutunan niya sa school.”
Parents #4
Mother: “Pag alam kong sobra na pinapatigil ko na siya, pinapatulog ko, oh kaya pag kakain na tigil muna. sumusunod naman siya, makulit lang talaga siya pag hindi gamit yung tablet.”
Based from these answers, the researcher sees that the parents have different ways of moderating or monitoring the use of technology for their children, although their methods are different from each other, their idea all comes down to time management. Whether it be the weekend, a certain number of hours, or just not to reach to a certain extent that it is too much, where in the child is allowed to use modern technology.

A reason on why the parents want to moderate the use of modern technology for their children could be explained by a statement from Turkle (2015). She explains that the cost of too-much technology in stark terms: Our children can’t engage in conversation, or experience solitude, making it very hard for them to be empathetic. As stated by Greenfield (2009), informal education therefore requires a balanced media diet using each technology’s specific strengths in order to develop a complete profile of cognitive skills. This means, in order for a child to grow and develop certain social and cognitive aspects, the use of certain technology should have time management and moderation.

The experiences of parents with having modern technology being introduced to their children?

Based on the results, the researcher has found two themes for this.

**Progressive**

Parents #2
Mother: “So far okay naman, natutuwa naman ako minsan kasi natututo talaga siya”, “…Pero for me okay siya, natutulungan yung anak kong matuto kahit bata pa siya.”
Father: “…Pero, nakakatuwa rin kasi natututo siya sa mga pinapanood niya eh, pag natuturuan mo, ang dali matuto kasi parang naging base yung pag nood niya kaya ganun, kagaya ng mga kulay, sa pag bilang. Kaya okay rin.”

Parents #4
Mother: “Okay naman lately, kasi natututo talaga siya sa kaka nood niya ng mga video, ngayon nakikisabay siya sa pag kanta sa mga pinapanood niya.”

The researcher came up with a theme of progressiveness, is because the parents shared experiences wherein the use of technology was beneficial to the children in terms of technology being a substitute tool. Studies show that the effective use of technology and media are active, hands-in, engaging, and empowering; give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to ease the accomplishments of tasks; and are sued as one of many options to support children’s learning. (Technology and Interactive Media as Tools, 2012) It just means that children who focused more on the learning aspect of technology show more progress on the child’s cognitive skills.

**Regressive**

Parents #1
Father: “I think the worst we had with matthew is nagkaroon siya ng tantrums, nag tampo siya. I confiscated the ipad.”.
“…So, I confiscated it from him. *looks to wife (see hindi ako maawain palagi no) So kinumpiska ko then nag lock siya sa cr and umiyak siya di niya matatapos game niya.”

Parents #2
Mother: “nabbother lang ako minsan kung gano siya ka tutok sa ipad. Tska napapansin ko lang rin is medyo na sspoil siyang gumamit kasi pag kinkuha mo sakaniya nag tatampo siya or iiyak pa minsan, pero basta na disiplina siya ng tama, okay na yun.”
Father: “Yun lang ayoko sakaniya pag lagi niyang nagagamit yung Ipad nga, pag kinuha mo sakaniya nag dadabog nga.”

Parents #3
Mother: “makulit lang talaga kasi pag hindi napapahiram, nag dadabog siya oh kaya iiyak oh mag tatempo. pero hinahayaan ko lang kasi pag nasanay yung bata na binibigay mo yung gusto..."
eh na sspoil. Okay lang naman sakin talaga, ayoko lang nababad yun lang, kasi parang kinakain ng internet oh games na yan yung mga utak ng mga bata, gusto ko moderation lang.”

Father: “Ako sa panganay ko ako naiinis when it comes to sa mga gadgets niya eh, tuwing may kailangan siyang gawin oh kaya may kailangan kang pagawin eh hindi kumikilos kagad, laging delayed na, tamad na, dahil nakatutok sakaniyang ipad oh laptop, facebook ng facebook. Tama ka nga, sinisipsip na yung utak. (looks to the mother)”

Parents #5

Mother: “Yun nga, masama loob ko at dissapointed ako at nag kaka ganyan si Rita lately dahil lang sa mga computer na yan. Okay lang siya talaga sakin, kaso yun nga, nahuli ko siya, nag sinungaling siya sakin. Nagbabago ang bata pag na hahayaang gumamit lang ng gadgets. Tapos bumababa pa grades niya sa school, may mga bagsak pa nga siya eh.”

Aside from the progressive experiences of the parents from their children, they also shared that there have been regressive qualities as well. These qualities include children being dependent/addicted to technology, throwing tantrums if they are deprived of using it, change of character and attitude because of technology. Some parents also shared that their children showed lower performance in school and academic related activities. A study stated that media can provide information about safe health practices and can foster social connectedness. However, recent evidence raises concerns about media’s effects on aggression, sexual behavior, substance use, disordered eating, and academic difficulties. (Strasburg, et al 2010)

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is a given fact that technology plays a big role in our daily lives, and can help us in almost anything, but the use of modern technology has been very controversial for younger generations because of both its positive and negative effects. It would have to come down to the parents on how they would moderate the use of modern technology for their children. In the shared responses from the parents, it was, therefore, concluded that the perspective of the parents are composed of having technology as a “learning tool and a source of entertainment”, wherein the parents see it as a way for their child to develop social skills and at the same time to keep their children occupied and satisfied with the recreational past time. Most parents reasoned that the use of modern technology is for their children’s leisure and education. Another reason is so that parents can easily communicate with their children. In monitoring their children’s use of gadgets, the parents developed time management as the basic disciplinary action wherein the child would be able to use their gadgets. Some parents prefer over the weekend while others set out a certain amount of time of allowed usage of it. Also, when it comes to the experiences of the parents, there are two sides in understanding the effects of modern technology. The researcher found that the parents see the use of technology as both progressive and regressive. It is progressive because the parents empirically see their child slowly improve in terms of cognitive and social skills from their exposure of technology. However, even with the child’s progression, the parents has also shared experiences it which they think has regressed in terms of behavior and academics. Some parents also had negative perspectives with the role of technology for their children. They believe that spending too much time on using gadgets is a distraction from other important duties, such as studying for school, hindrance to physical activities and alike. And they are also aware with the harmful effects of too much use of gadgets. The researcher found that the parents’ perception on gadgets is that they are aware of the benefits, but at the same time they are also aware with the risk factors that technology can bring up on their child.

To further the study, the researcher looks at the different factors that were not present in this research paper. The researcher recommends that experimentation and a quantitative analysis should be conducted to further validate some effects that technology may have on these children. Also the researcher believes that to strengthen the implications of the perception of modern technology, the children’s perspective should also be given attention to broaden insight. The researcher also recommends that parents should be interviewed separately as there may be
extraneous variable at play when parents are interviewed together. And lastly, the researcher recommends further studies, wherein the focus of the research is a comparison of effects between children who are exposed regularly to modern technology and to children who are not exposed.

References: