*Capstone Research*

**The Implications of the Controversies Surrounding Internet Use x Personality:**

**A Contextual and Thematic Analysis**

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**Abstract**

People are constantly evolving and changing as technology and the world surrounding is progressing. Personality is a fluid matter, so a person cannot be defined based off one interaction or instance and therefore, the effect of technology is not a constant. Some areas of observation I plan to digest in my findings are the effects of technology, specifically the internet, through different age groups. I will observe the relationship between internet use and personality effects throughout different scopes and its unique implications on various groups of people. This further opens to a greater question - what are the controversies surrounding personality types and internet addiction?

There are many assumptions and opinions surrounding the topic of internet addiction – whether it’s real, how it effects people, if it should be treated with medications, and so on. While there are many opinions and beliefs on the matter, In order to debate the controversies it is necessary to explore more into the field of personality types and internet use.

**Introduction**

To discuss the controversies surrounding personality types and internet addiction it is necessary to define both realms of focus. Psychology provides concrete definitions of personality through the five factors of extraversion, openness, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness. These five factors provide the tools necessary to develop a persona in which is constantly evolving. There are many theorized correlations and causations of how each of these factors play a part in different kinds of internet use and that is where each main topic will be introduced on the broad and never-ending internet and the possibility of which personality traits relate to them.

**Introduction : Personality x Internet Use**

First, to analyze this generic question- what exactly are we compromised of?- a big part of the way we behave and make decisions comes from the type of person we are, which can be defined as personality. There are five parts to personality that are critically examined. The five factor personality traits, otherwise known as the Big Five (Goldberg, 1981), are made up of extraversion, openness, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness. This spectrum of traits classifies human behavior and can therefore, be applied to the relationship between internet use and personality as follows:

Extraversion is the exact opposite of introversion. An introverted person is likely to stay reserved and to themselves. They enjoy spending time alone, while an extraverted person is more sociable and outgoing. On one hand an introverted person is more likely to use the internet more because they may feel safer online where they don’t have to necessarily be surrounded by people yet are still connecting with others. They also may enjoy internet use as a distraction or alternative to being with others and going out in the real world and doing things. On the other hand, an extraverted person may become addicted to the internet through social media. They may enjoy sharing and posting everything they do and constantly feel the need of others’ approval. It is also fair that both extraverted and introverted people are inclined to use communication apps – extraverted people are due to a more outgoing behavior – introverted people are due to shy behaviors so they are able to create a dual persona online.

The openness trait refers to a person’s openness for experience. It expresses their sense of curiosity and appreciation for new pursuits that they may not be familiar with or used to. People who score low in this category tend to be more conservative. They are not as openminded to new ideas and perspectives so are more avoidant when searching for new things. The internet is a database full of unlimited possibilities so it can be correlated that more open people are likely to seek out new information on the internet.

Agreeableness reflects how friendly a person is and how cooperative they are with others. This personality trait represents someone who is easy to get along with and someone that does not argue a lot. Disagreeable people are more likely to be unkind and less harmonic socially.

Neuroticism is theorized to play a large part in a person’s online presence. Neuroticism is defined by feelings of anxiety, anger, distress, and depression. It includes a variety of emotions that many people suffer with in the present. One controversy still debated is whether the internet usage is causing neurotic behavior or if neurotic behavior influences people to use the internet more. Regardless, people who test high in this category often tend to have a high amount of online presence. The hypothesis behind it shows that people who are emotionally unstable seek refuge and comfort from the internet as a source of support in many ways. This can be from numerous internet uses. One can be from communication with others that may help them feel better. Another is online therapy. Or it can also be addictive online behaviors that may help them cope with the reality of their life. The correlation between the time spent on the internet is often representative of an addiction because it is something done everyday for an excessive amount of time, past necessity. The risk of addictive behavior is highly increased when one is emotionally unstable which brings to the conclusion that neuroticism relates to the amount of internet usage. However, it is not to say that *all* people with anxiety, anger, distress, and depression are heavy internet users, but the relation does exist none the less.

Similarly, conscientiousness also plays a large role in the high usage because it has to do with self-discipline. People with self-discipline are unlikely to have an addiction and people who have a high conscientious trait are not careless and impulsive. If an individual is organized and able to discipline themselves, they can account for the amount of time they spend online. This trait reflects reasonable behavior which is why is important to realize that a low score in conscientiousness correlates for a high use of internet. Therefore, those who are conscientious are less likely to form an addiction. While it is still debated on whether internet use is an actual addiction or not, the increase and high amounts of time on the internet is accounted for.

These five aspects of a person’s personality are not the only thing that defines them. However, it helps generalize in cases where necessary for research in that it “provides a basic description of individual differences in personality traits” (Mccrae). They aid in evaluating high scores in a certain area and low scores in another. Each trait defines what is “psychologically healthy” depending on the values scored from certain personality tests. It gives a more objective view, to an otherwise descriptive approach. The aspects then can allow for other indications of behavior and in this specific case, the internet.

**Introduction : Internet Addiction**

The rise of the internet sparked the usage and obsession of technology. The constant need to fill each day with cellphones, social media, and distractions is all derived from the internet, so much so that it is now heavily being debated whether internet addiction is a real illness or not. Some believe it is like any other addiction and is difficult to stop while others believe it is just a habitual activity that should not be treated as a true addiction.

Internet addiction is a heavily debated topic by many pharmaceutical companies in order to profit off the ideal that treatment is needed to aid in stopping it. Some believe it is a behavioral addiction and others believe it as a substance, or chemical addiction. Specifically, two scholars, Mark Griffiths and Kimberly Young have debated the two ideals, respectively.

Mark Griffiths, a psychologist focusing in the field of behavioral addictions, named Internet Addiction as a behavioral issue rather than a chemical one. Like other disorders such as gambling, Griffiths believes that internet addiction is a chosen habit. The things that people are addicted to are the components of it and how it makes them feel. According to Griffith “the internet provides an augmented yet limited perspective of reality to users and allows them feelings of belongingness that may be psychologically and physiologically compensating for the lack of social rewards in their real lives” (Griffiths). As Griffith’s conceptualization, epidemiology, etiology, and course of internet related disorders are thoroughly analyzed through a systematic lens, it is clear from his view the act of constantly being on the internet is not from being addicted to it, but rather from the ideal of being addicted to the feeling it brings. Yet, isn’t that exactly what an addiction is? A chemical addiction is simply something that you can get addicted to such as alcohol or drugs based on the way it makes you feel. It isn’t as if people enjoy the taste of the drug or alcohol, but rather the feeling it brings them after. The euphoria, adrenaline, and overall enjoyment of that small moment of whatever it is they are looking for is what addicts, specifically chemical addicts, are yearning for.

As an opposing argument to Griffith’s, Kimberly Young concluded from her study that “Internet itself is not addictive, however specific applications appeared to play a significant role in the development of pathological Internet use”(Chou, Hsiao). An article debating these sides, “Behavioral Addictions: Do They Exist”, attempts to discuss the question of whether this addiction is chemical or behavioral and whether a behavioral addiction “counts” and deserves the proper use of the word addiction. It delves into the approach of the scientist and how they take interest in “behavior of the brain’s reward circuitry” (Holden). Essentially addiction is a matter of the brain’s chemical pleasure system. Neurons feed the brain to tell it “this is the thing I like, continue doing it”. The debate is not whether people are using the internet too much or not, but rather a discussion on what components of the excessive usage is enticing people to do so.

Regardless of whether it is a “real” issue in pharmaceutical companies, or whether it is a behavioral addiction or chemical, Internet Addiction is a very “real” subject because it is being heavily debated. The fact that it is debated shows that there is some truth in its existence amongst society which calls for discussion. The statements of the opposing opinions, whether “right” or “wrong” simply prove that because it is being discussed it is an issue. The findings of each viewpoint aid in determining what types of feelings, according to Griffith’s perspective, and what types of internet usages, according to Young’s perspective, factor in people’s development.

Although development is a broad subject, the borders will be defined and contained within age groups. Both controversial lenses introduce a new perspective of how are *we* influenced by this issue. It is important to focus within each case study the age of the participants, which internet use is being utilized, and how that specific internet use affects a certain category of the five factors of personality. From this data of each study a general understanding of which uses of play into which trait and at what age it is most effective can be developed.

The use of the internet has wildly increased and with that so have people. People are constantly evolving and changing as technology and the world surrounding is progressing. For example, my one year old niece watches cartoons on my sister’s phone. When I was younger that was not possible, and surely enough for my sister or mother or any past generations it was different each era. So the question to arise from the study of developmental psychology is how exactly does this affect us? How does technology affect the way we develop, behave, and overall does the increasing use of the internet have anything to do with the way we are?

This paper will cover five main uses of the internet: social media, video games communication/email/texts, entertainment/tv/movies, and academic use. By generalizing these topics and breaking down their components I can reach a conclusion of what effects they have socially and personally all while keeping in mind the ages of the studies.

**Methods**

**Method 1 : Comparative Analysis of Case Studies**

The key matter in this research is to target different groups and analyze the spectrum of people involved in this study. This paper will conduct a comparative analysis already existing studies to formulate a larger scale question through these cases. Identifying each case’s gaps and comparing them to one another through qualitative means will provide a grand issue in varying populations. In this specific case, the case studies will prove to show a common misconception of focusing on the bias of the age demographic and why STS theories correspond a younger population when thinking of technology when it affects everyone. By doing so, this neglects other ages and so comparing instance from instance what different studies have concluded through their own explicit means of quantitative studies and interviews, a better understanding can be grasped in a qualitative subject matter.

**Method 2 : Thematic Analysis of Different Disciplines**

The method of conducting a thematic analysis in which will look through different disciplines and break down where they connect and disconnect. The subject will prove to be beneficial and therefore it will do so with regards to evaluating how personality is viewed to affect society based on the multitude of perspectives. Since personality is a constantly changing process, it is necessary to explore how internet use affects development of personality through the misconceptions of the world. Opposing arguments, and different categories of people that are studied will show a variety of results. Rather than focusing on one similar subject, it is important to gain an understanding from multiple studies and people. The gained viewpoints will help in eventually defining a more narrow one to start to understand the bigger questions with addiction, personality, and overall the way people behave and develop. While this method is helpful, it is still important to go through where the subject originated from by studying the textual linguistics.

**Method 3 : Internet Related Questionnaires**

The idea of wanting to analyze the different perspectives of how personality is influenced by internet use comes from the two questionnaires about personality type and internet addiction. The second method of use will be these two preexisting quizzes. The two questionnaires should be used as a reference guide throughout my thesis, but the sustainable facts will come from the individual case studies and differences in opinions of various disciplines.

Since there is an infinite amount of things that can be done on the internet, I want to not only analyze the data through methods of looking at and understanding statistics, but also figure out which uses of the internet correlate with which personalities. Specific internet uses to study for this topic can be helpful in regards to the two questionnaires. And then furthering the topic of psychology the question arises, what defines a personality type? People are constantly evolving and changing so how are we so sure that a person’s day to day activities are relatively the same each day and thus far how can we be sure that a person’s internet usage is the same each day. The paper will be a fluid analysis of multiple cases regarding a variety of internet uses and their correlation of the type of personality they contain based on what they did. From the daily actions and how a person feels one day rather than overall can change and so their internet use can easily be affected from day to day. While a difficult approach, a development can slowly form towards a substantial conclusion through the process of research, observing, and questioning everything on how the complicated human mind is implemented into behavior, interactions, and actions in the online world.

Some of the specific case studies I plan to use methods of interviews while others simply analyze data and statistics. What may arise from these studies may not necessarily answer the big question we have regarding the “affects” of internet use, but it will most likely raise even larger questions because no amount of numbers or statistics can answer the question of “why”. These are simply just opinions which cannot really be generalized. The reasoning behind things can be inexplicable, but an analysis of these things can help in formulating our own research.

**Results**

Using the proof of case studies, research, and different disciplines to analyze the work done on the five different areas of internet use the results of this will confine it within the different age groups and come to conclude about what affect age has on it.

**Results : Social Media**

Social media can be a destructive component of the internet. Like everything on the internet, nothing is every really deleted. A lot of the way we portray ourselves on social media cannot be deleted and that is something people are fond of. It becomes an obsession to make things go “viral” or keep up a perfect image. A lot of that perfect image is done on social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. There have been many studies to portray the true duality of Facebook. This alternate reality that people create can be something they picture for themselves, essentially being their ideal self. While their real self is hidden behind the computer screen. Portrayals on the internet could either be due to a lack of confidence or a representation of their own egotism according to the study “Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on Facebook) by Soraya Mehdizadeh. Mehdizadeh believes this social tool of having the ability to post about yourself has eventually created a network far from what it initially was set out to be. People begin to believe that their self worth is derived from the evaluation of others based on social media which is where psychology comes in. “Implicit self-esteem is an automatic, unconscious self-evaluation; explicit self-esteem is a more conscious, reflective evaluation” (Mehdizadeh). Human beings’ construction of their self-esteem is composed of these two balanced aspects. Yet, over time and development of the internet, people have developed as well. What started to become more important has changed and the crave and attention social media brings was increased. This narcissistic approach on the internet correlates with the agreeableness and extraversion factors in personality. The constant need to be approved is reflective of wanting to not be conflicting and therefore agreeable. But more concerningly, the extraversion trait shows a person’s outgoingness. While a person may not be extraverted in person, they could contain a dual persona and be online. Another factor may be hypothesized that the person is generally extraverted and enjoys to post a lot on their social media, hence the narcissistic factor. Mehdizadeh’s study selected undergraduate students and explored their use of Facebook. It concluded a relationship between narcissism and the Facebook activity, which evidently were positive. However, there are many attributes that go into who a person is. It’s clear that the dual persona could affect what may not be seen to the naked eye. What is important to realize is that personality is constantly changing and whether a person is by the data definition an extravert can’t define the whole person.

The basis of social media and how people have theorized its affects is surrounded by fallacies of “what people are”. But, the truth is that not one thing can define a person and who are they are. A study and journal, “Social Media Research: Theories, Constructs, and Conceptual Frameworks”, suggests and discusses a new outlook on the usage of social media. Again, like most research regarding social media, the main subject is how computer mediated interactions and implications of how people use the internet is actually a window to portray themselves. But, it also responds in that the way people interact with one another, communicate, or feel about it based on others or their own actions is a part of who they are. Whether it is verbal or nonverbal interaction, a comment or like, this part of social media is also what defines who a person is. It is not solely based off their own post, but also the way they choose to respond to others. Rather than measuring the time a person is using on the internet, this study focuses on what it is they are doing on the internet, particularly social media. Other than taking a look at just the aspect of posting a picture, tweet, or status update, it looks at the whole picture of social media – the interactions.

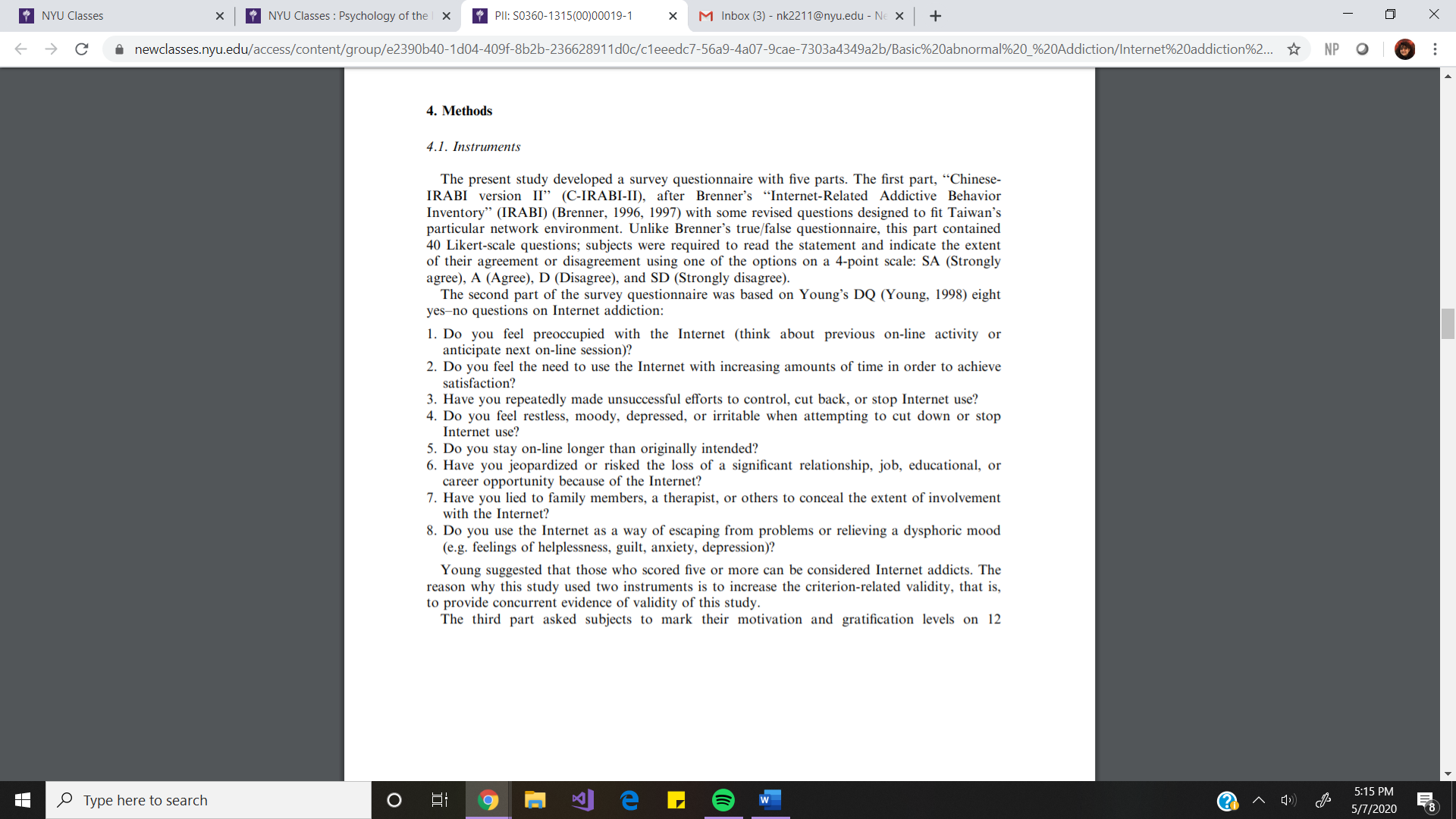
The research asks larger questions of the impact social media has. It touches on its ability to break communication barriers. That shows the ability people have on social media platforms to express themselves and communicate with others without actually having to participate in a conversation. This also shows how people’s “private lives are linked to social media” (Ngai, Tao, Moon). In the current age of the internet most people’s every movements or even just big parts of their lives like birthdays, graduations, weddings, and so on are part of their social media. It’s rare to not know someone’s birthday or a big event that just passed in their life because it is in their bio or they posted it online, respectively. The amount a person posts, likes, comments, and spends on social media can tell a lot about them, but it does not define them. These are just observations and hypotheticals.

A lot of these hypothetical theories can be analyzed through different methods and prove data that clearly shows a correlation between the two factors of social media use and relate it to a person’s five factor personality. “Predicting Individual Characteristics from Digital Traces on Social Media: A Meta-Analysis”, by a group of PhD professionals, does exactly that. The authors show a technical analysis of how characteristics can be interpreted by people’s online world. The research’s data mining method of using a search engine to go through a total of 1,677 articles to look up keywords relating to psychological words and social media is important in that it not only considers the usage of social media and the amount of it, but it also takes into consideration the different apps and platforms people are using. From coding this screening process, they generate multiple findings to form data driven graphs and models. The depictions clearly show how these statistical approaches predict the correlation of how an individual is and what social media platform they use, but it does not show what it is they do on these platforms. Delving into the matter of exactly what a person is doing on social media is important and seemingly impossible to calculate in a simple data incorporated statistic. The mathematical proof of what we do cannot be defined and that is the issue of trying to constantly depict the picture that an over usage of internet, or social media, correlates with personality factors reflected in reality. Reality is undefinable because it is constantly changing, and therefore difficult to capture in a simple number.

**Results : Video Games**

Video games have a negative connotation around them in that people believe they promote violence and aggression. However, there are many different types of video games, so an assumption of such high degree cannot be made until further research amongst each category is completed. There are said to be four different types of “gamers” according to Richard Bartle’s basic taxonomy. The first type is the Achievers. Achievers are the type of players that seek a reward. The purpose of their play is to gain the points or rewards necessary in order to level up. The second type is Explorers. Explorers wander and look around at their own pace and leisure. They dissolve themselves into the game’s world. The third type is Socializers. Socializers play the game in team and for culture. Their goal is to simply help, congratulate other gamers in success, share opinions, and essentially communicate. The final type of gamer is the Killers. Killers feed off of defeating opponents. They achieve only for competition and are fighters. Each type of gamer has their own set of personality traits and motives for playing which is what aids in reaching the relation of internet use, in this case video games, and personality development.

The American Psychological Association discusses the implications of this personality development through video games. From the title “Violent Video Games May Increase Aggression in Some but Not Others, Says New Research” it is clearly depicted that not *all* people who play video games fall within the classification of a frustrated, aggressive, desensitized gamer. The article provides examples of other video games that “serve a wide range of emotional, social, and intellectual needs” such as video games that “have been shown to help engage and treat patients, especially children, in healthcare settings” and how these “video games in mental health care settings may help young patients become more cooperative and enthusiastic” (Hamilton). This is just one example of how games are affective in helping. From this scientific research it proves to be an aid in many medical areas which is the opposite of the misnomer of a violent gamer.

A large part of the common misconception that gamers are aggressive can be based off of only one type of gamer. The game type killers are most likely to be where the violent factors lie, yet society stereotype gamers to be addicted to video games that turn them violent. The stereotype’s basis is around one type of gamer and assumes it for the rest. This is how most stereotypes develop by identifying groups, when people should be defined as individuals. Each person is different, unique, and has their own set of values which is something society doesn’t always seem to recognize and so two college students try to depict a new image for gamers by portraying the different factors involved. Assuming Internet Addiction is a true form of addiction, Chien Chou and Ming-Chun Hsiao did a case study to observe the behaviors of the Play Theory. In their study they use Kimberly Young’s internet addiction quiz to survey college student based on the amount of internet they use as shown in Figure 1 below. The quiz unveils and imposes on the survey’s validity when assessing a possible disease of addiction based on only a small set of questions.

**Fig1.** Example of Kimberly Young’s questionnaire from Internet Addiction, Usage, Gratification and Pleasure Experience: the Taiwan College Students’ Case

The two students specifically observe the ideals of the usage in gratification and pleasure. The case study focused on the age group of college students which is a huge societal misnomer. Most of the studies on internet use always tends to lean towards focusing on the youth. When in fact, the internet is used by all age groups and it should be focused on essentially everyone who has access to it. The study circled around the college students and predetermined them be either internet addicts or not. The study believed to depict the picture of internet addiction based on those who identified as internet addicts spent almost triple the number of hours on the internet compared to the non-addicts. But, the true question is – what were they doing on the internet. Chou and Hsiao note that people are lured into the internet by pleasure and gratification and the fact people find comfort in it through its various uses. They study the different uses and mainly focus on the communication factor on the internet. These factors of communicating and supporting one another correlate with the agreeableness personality factor rather than the misconception that gamers are prone to violence. This type of game play makes people more likeable and dependable, but as it is important to remember – each person is an individual and their personalities and lifestyles change. But, by showing a great part of game play is communication, related to the socializers game habits, the two college students portray the attraction of the internet in a different light.

**Results : Communication/Email/Texts**

A large part of who we are is based off the way we treat others and interact with other people. People mold society as a whole and shape each individual. A large part of the internet is associated with who the current “youth” are since they were the ones who grew up with the rise of the internet. So, they are constantly the target group to study for internet addiction. However, the internet affects us all, regardless of age which is important to recognize. Another study, based off of only the youth, “Exploring Identities Through the Internet: Youth Experience Online” by Mechthild Maczewski, explores the youth’s activity online through the method of interviews. Maczewski focuses on having a naturally flowing conversation with her participants in order to engage in an interactive discussion regarding the internet. From her study, she breaks down the internet’s attraction to three parts:

The first part is the “wowness factor”. This correlates with how constantly clicking on websites becomes addictive. An example of this is when you search one YouTube video and spiral into a sea of videos after that with no regards to time. A person can end up wasting time on pointless topics by clicking on random links that have nothing to do with what was initially searched. However, the other viewpoint of this wowness factor is that the internet is filled with absolutely everything and anything. The endless amount of information and communication opportunities is what attracts people to the internet.

The second part is the “experiences of freedom, power, and connectedness”. This is related to the feeling of acceptance online through the different experiences people face. The internet has become a safe space for a lot of people who are unable to find one in their day to day lives. The online community provides some with a feeling of togetherness through the freedom of allowing themselves to be whoever they choose to be. This breaks the barriers of isolation, yet also enables them by both “increase[ing] connectivity and promot[ing] isolation at the same time” (Maczewski). While this feeling of being free gives people power and respect, it also hides the fact that they do not feel comfortable in a place other than behind their keyboard. This shows multiple cases of different personalities whereas one cannot truly define because on the one hand someone can seem very extraverted based on communicating online, but when interacting socially in person they can show signs of neuroticism and less agreeableness. There is a multitude of possibilities when it comes to a dual personality which is why these articles and studies cannot truly capture the meaning of a singular personality based on questionnaires, interviews, and so on. A person varies online and in person and are constantly changing.

Although people are constantly changing, they are able to do so with the comfort of knowing other people are as well – which lands on the third part of Maczewski’s internet attractions. The feeling that having a connected community and empowering freedom, power, and connectedness leads to “exploring self and identities through virtual relationships”. This allows people to find other people on the internet to share their similarities and interests with one another because it can be difficult to find people within a locational radius with these commonalities. The internet allows for flexibility and multiplicity by connecting people all over the world. This ideal is a "constructed nature of reality, self, and other” (Maczewski). This ability to be able to connect with other people miles away is a testimony to how far technology has come.

Communication is a large part of who we are, but it is also a large part of what technology is. Technology’s surplus of systems produced to generate communication has evolved throughout the years which is a large part of who we have become as a society. While communication with others can affect our mood, behavior, and complexities of our personalities, it has also provided a different type of communication that is geared towards helping others. The common notion of the internet having a dual personality in showing signs of depression through the high neuroticism factors and low conscientiousness factors in real life as opposed to what is depicted online could quite possibly be a fallacy. A great amount of internet use to this current day is geared in online therapy. So the uses of internet cannot always be marked as a “bad influence”. Online therapy and these other feelings of connectedness is what makes people less likely to develop the aforementioned personality factors. And so, while the questions still remain about personality factors affecting people’s identities – such as “How will these influence conceptual models of humans and social development?” (Maczewski) and Does Internet Addiction cause depression? – it is not necessary to answer these questions, but rather to ask them. While there is no true definition of how these actions on the internet are influencing our being, it is necessary to discuss them.

**Results : Entertainment/TV/Movies**

When the word internet comes to mind, the first depiction is usually of a smart phone or a laptop and associating it with social media. However, a large part of the internet is also contained in television. Entertainment like sports and news, movies, and tv shows are constantly revolving around us whether it’s live tv, Netflix, Hulu, HBO, or any other source. The epidemic of binge watching tv shows with ten seasons in two weeks has become a norm for people. Being glued to phones is what society is now, and whether that is a good or a bad thing is up for debate. What most researchers and commentators are focused is pinpointing the youth as being obsessed with watching tv series and movies. Yet, this can be associated with any age group today because as technology progresses, we change with it and develop new habits that aren’t resembled with what someone would do a decade ago. It’s realizable that we aren’t still using phones with cords or TVs with antennas, yet society misnames using technology as a bad habit.

These consistent “bad habits” are what people believe “causes depression”. In Robert Preidt’s report, “Binge Watching TV: Sign of Depression, Loneliness?”, he names binge watching to not be a harmless addiction, but rather the linkage of loneliness and depression which is a huge claim to make without direct proof that there is a causation rather instead of a correlation. There is a big difference between those two words. It defines a huge gap in research where one thing is said to be because of another or it just so happens by coincidence that the two parallel. Preidt claims that the “more lonely and depressed people were, the more likely they were to binge-watch TV”. This is a clear example of a misuse of a correlation. While the two variables may be related, they are not a direct cause of one another. With that, he goes on to associate physical fatigue, obesity, and health problems to relate to binge-watching. He causes this huge concern of discussion where huge medical issues are due to the simple act of watching tv. While these two may be correlated, there is definitely a third factor in play, which brings me back to Mark Griffith’s view of behavioral addictions where tv would not be the thing a person is addicted to. Assuming binge-watching tv is a behavioral addiction and people simply cannot stop proceeding to do so – it is likely due to a preexisting condition of habitual addictions. This act of watching tv could possibly be due to an escape from the world, boredom of not having anything else to do, wanting to catch up on the series before it airs, or some other possible reason is still valid. There are so many reasons as to why people could be watching such a large amount of tv and it cannot simply be ridden off to being lonely and depressed.

Claiming depression involves the same factors of personality in low conscientiousness and high neuroticism, while claiming loneliness could also involve low agreeableness, low openness, and low extraversion. The aspects of depression, loneliness, and other qualities have the possibility of acquiring numerous conceivable combinations. Again, these personality factors also can’t be defined to a single person because they alter on a daily basis and actions in certain instances.

Studies that collect data on how much a household or person utilizes their TV can also have many negative effects. Surveying and questioning large groups of people is seemingly impossible or even unreliable. Many large-scale questionnaires are worded to pose a chosen outcome. These immediately negates the validity of the answers. And, while it may be argued that data doesn’t lie, collecting millions of data base off of the hours a tv is on is also unreliable because as always; there could be a multitude of explanations for a given situation, such as leaving the tv on for background noise or not really paying attention to it. Just like people’s personalities are versatile, so are the reasons of why they do things and why a certain result is the way it is.

**Results : Academic Use**

The use of the internet is not only meant for gratification, but also for necessity. The internet is at the tip of our fingers, literally. It is attached to our arms through our cell phones. If you’re stuck on something or forgot a fact it can easily be looked up on your phone within seconds. In their own way, everyone is essentially a “researcher”. The academic use of the internet is not only narrowed to scholars or college students but broadened to everyone. As stereotyped, being in college means being young or “being in your 20’s”. Yet, many college students are older, single mothers, veterans, and more. It’s important to recognize the fact that college isn’t only for ages 18-22 because not everyone goes to college immediately after graduating high school based on societal expectations and standards. Education is also a variety of things and should account all ages, older *and* even younger.

However, as the current theme of all the case studies, academic use is also narrowed in the scope of college students and the youth through a group of scholars’ study, “Internet Use and Collegiate Academic Performance Decrements: Early Findings”. The research pertains experiments only on college students in universities which shows a heavy use of internet correlates highly with impaired academic performance. However, this is a controversial issue in that the high use of the internet could also be *for* academic use and performance.

The first impairment of topic is revolved around using the internet’s “enjoyable” features to an extent where it “rots the mind” and causes issues in studying. Taking from Preidt’s thought process that watching too much tv can restrict people from doing other daily routines and this one can be related to academic issues. As the scholarly study states “although use of the Internet by students is on the rise, so are concerns for some students, heavier use of the Internet might interfere with academic achievement, conventional social interaction, and exposure to desirable cultural experiences” (Kubey, Lavin, Barrows). Each of these concerns of internet addiction are directly related to a personality factor from The Big Five. In order to succeed in academic achievement, one must contain a high amount of conscientiousness. The ability to focus and manage time is important when completing academic tasks. The conventional social interactions mentioned deals with the possible harms of communication reality that people may be more likely to talk with one another online rather than in person which has its affects in neuroticism and agreeableness alike. The exposure to desirable cultural experiences has a direct affect of the extraversion and openness factor in that people may not be willing to be open to these new experiences because they are “cooped up” inside on the internet. These concerns raise for a discussion within the community and are highly surrounding the youth.

We have made progress in the division of academics. People have the ability to multitask and both enjoy themselves online and, on the internet, while attaining to their academics. The second impairment mentioned in the study is actually due to the overuse of internet solely on academics. This means that there is also an issue in which students are excessively studying, doing work, completing assignments, and so on. This is in result to a highly competitive workspace for most students and so aren’t the same people making this accusation also the same people creating this environment? This heavy need to succeed can overwhelm and evidently arise health issues and the concern that is always being circled to in these situations is dealing with loneliness and depression.

However, proven from the studies the theme of communication seems to play a large part of aiding depression. In academic use communication is utilized both synchronously and asynchronously as clearly shown in today’s age through Zoom, Google Classroom, and other online class platforms. Keeping these lines of communication open through online classes, chatrooms, and other modes of aid for academic purposes prove to show that a person to person connection can help in changing behavior and mood which shows the benefits of the internet. Given the current outbreak of coronavirus communication seems to be the leading positive outcome of the pandemic. The thing that has remained and brought people together in a time like this is communicating with another whether than be across the hall or through technology. Technology’s progression has proven and prevented the misnomer of the drawbacks the internet seemingly causes.

**Conclusion**

Interactions with other people brings a sense of community and togetherness that is portrayed through all of the five different internet uses discussed: social media, video games, communication, entertainment, and academic use. Social media although, at first, tends to circulate around the act of “posting”, it provides a sense of communication through nonverbal and verbal realms such as a like or comment. The simple notion of doing so is similar to that of speaking them and not to mention, social media also has the ability to chat through direct messages. The platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and so on all have built in chat features to sustain conversations. Video games have that same factor as well. In fact, during the creation of video games phone lines were used to create a communication factor in the games. And following those, that factor became more popular than the actual games. Today’s video games not only have the typing feature, but it’s also common to contain a headset to converse with other players and this relationship between players, especially socializers, broke the barriers of common misconceptions of hostile players. Communication itself has its abilities of directly messaging someone through SMS and E-mail. These hold meaning behind the different types and formats of interpersonal relations. Entertainment sources like the news depict communicating to the public while tv shows and movies show exchanges with one another. Aside from these factors, during this difficult situation of having to be quarantined Netflix added the feature of “Netflix Party” where friends can chat with each other while enjoying a show or movie. Again, proving that “binge watching” can have multiple meanings and that people may be stuck in quarantine with not a lot to do so the resort is to watch tv, but this is enhanced through the new improvement. Like communicating with friends, online schooling platforms for academic use have also attempted at maintaining and savoring that sense of belongingness in classrooms. To continue school it is important that the channels of being able to speak to one another are open so that there are no feelings of disconnectedness in this calamity.

Communication has shown the impact technology has on society’s social life, especially in a time like this. But, it has also shown its growth impact and what’s important to note here is that we grow *with* technology which is why the biggest controversy throughout the conceptual analyses is that age is an important factor to consider for internet addiction. The youth are not the only ones affected by technology because we are all growing with it together and our personalities are constantly with it as well. The facet of technology that holds us all together throughout these developments is communication. Consequently, the original forms of communication by calling, texting, and video chatting have increased since the outbreak of Coronavirus in that “our internet connection has become an umbilical to the outside world. We now depend on it” (Heaven). As Will Douglas Heaven says in the recent MIT Technology Review concerning the world today, we have indeed become dependent on technology. We cling to technology and the internet now, hoping it will bring some satisfaction with news in regard to COVID-19’s possible turn around, using its abilities as a distraction from what’s going on, or just keeping in touch with loved ones. Technology has the ability to appease us in a difficult time like this which makes sense as to why we cling to it.

**Discussion**

The dependency of technology is the main cause of concern for researchers, scholars, and commentators about internet addiction. The ability to care for technology frightens to the point it become excessive. The answer of whether internet addiction is a true form of addiction or not is not imperative, but rather the discussion of it and how internet addiction can cause possible issues in societal upbringings. Sherry Turkle, a Social Studies of Science Professor in the Science, Technology, and Society Program at MIT, wrote in her book “Alone Together” the possibilities of technology’s dependence. She describes the story of Edna, an eighty-two-year-old woman that becomes attached to a robotic toy dog. This is important in that Turkle establishes her example in an elder woman, rather than relying on the example of the youth. While Turkle does talk about the youth to an extent in her literature, she also shows that technology affects al ages in Edna’s care for her AI robot as if it were a baby. Her behavior of crying when the toy cries, nourishing it, and comforting it speaks the truth of how people can tend to get overly attached with their technology. This is to the point where Edna cares for her Artificial Intelligent toy robot more than she cares for her own two-year-old great grandchild, demonstrating how we are impacted by technology. Her emotions tell a story of the impressions left on society’s social life. While Edna’s case sounds extreme and we may laugh at the idea, this is relevant to today’s public. When a laptop crashes, a phone is dropped and cracks, a smart TV is not being so “smart”, or Amazon’s Alexa is not responding to demands we rush to frustration or sadness based on the momentary disabilities of technology. Our emotions take over due to the preconceived attachments to technology that we are bounded with. A great deal of this reliance is based on automation. Turkle describes in her literature how automation leads to unhealthy behaviors of people “expect[ing] more from technology and less from each other”. This eventually changes the social spectrum of connecting with each other to connecting with our technology. Turkle suggest creating boundaries with technology in order to avoid the progressive latching.

While keeping technology as an extension of ourselves can be precarious, it is also crucial to acknowledge the purpose for it. Why do we lean on technology? What comfort does it bring that makes us cling to it? The object of its attraction as shown through the five realms of the internet studied is the communication factor. Communicating with one another is a necessity that brings everyone together regardless of distance. This form of the internet is what makes people a society. So, if we are discussing society’s dependency, we also need to discover why. The configuration of communication via the internet prevents the misconceptions believed because interactions with others is what is important, especially in a time like this.

The earliest forms of innovation have grown from talking into two cans connected by a string to what it is today. We are impacted and challenged by new creations and are constantly evolving because as the tech world grows, we do too. Nancy Baym, a communication scholar, discusses this progression from the 90’s in her book and ethnographic study, “Tune In, Log On”. She defines people and the importance of movements in discussing the assumption that the structure of a community is “instantiated and recreated in recurrent ways of acting”. The concern she shares of ordinary activities being the common practice of a community groups all people together. Now, together we do contain the similarity of actions, but again, the reasoning behind each is different. Baym’s initial assumption of practice forms the development of an individual’s identity. While as a group we favor the social norms and identify as a whole with technology, individually we shape the interactions to our own means. This is where personality is molded and constantly changing within people. What is important to notice is Baym’s use of the word “community”. A community is not only dependent on one set of people – for example the youth – but rather *everyone*.

This study concludes the findings of misconceptions weave through the main statements of these two books. The controversies discussed throughout this paper deal with the importance of society’s internet use with how it has affected both society as a whole and individually. With that, when considering society, we should *consider society*. The studies’ thematic analysis conducted for social media, video games, communication, entertainment, and academic use proved to show that when thinking of innovative devices, technology, the internet, and addiction the youth comes to mind first. Aiming at only one set of people provide for only a bias and unreliable conclusion. In addition to, believing that people can be subjected to one type of personality is narrowminded and not realistic. As most psychologists believe, we are constructed through a development process, yet fail to realize that this development varies amongst people. Through each experience people change and psychology recognizes that in massive movements, but does not enable it in its versatile daily existence. This is because, as mentioned, when technology grows and changes we also tend to and that is not restricted to large changes, but even minute every day altercations. Society is conflicted with the emergence of technology and its infinite possibilities causing a possible internet addiction and while that is harmful, it also has its benefits which tend to revolve around the communication factor. So, we discuss, does this relationship with technology pose for concern to the extent of which rises alarm? – Or do we find solace in the fact that technology provides a great amount of comfort? The adaptability of technology shows how what may have been considered an overuse of internet yesterday is different from today and so abiding by the standards of the past is not effective because we are molded by this relationship. Which brings the question that may never be answered, but is important to discuss : Are personality factors and who we become caused by technology and the internet or does technology and the internet cause our personality factors and who we become?

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