The Mobile Phone & Its Impact In Teenagers`Daily Life

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Abstract

The mobile phone, as a medium has influenced the ways in which we can interact with other media. It is considered like a channel between traditional and new media. Its specific characteristics, social functions and also its uses may vary in different contexts and cultures. The mobile phone, has contributed in increasing the idea of personal media, and the emergence of new kinds of media behavior. According to Morley (2002), communication technologies transform and rearrange relations between the domestic and the public space. In particular, mobile communication functions to broaden the sphere of the home outside the physical household; to blur the boundaries between the public and private spheres. In this study we aim to discuss through the literature review the role of the phone in the everyday life, and to know more about the different ways and reasons why 12-15 year old teenagers, part of Municipality of Shkoder, use mobile phone. This qualitative research is based on semi structured interviews with children. The identified problems consist in: First: The children use more mobile phones in order to use the internet and social networks and this makes it really difficult for their parents to control them. This exposes more the children towards negative effect of internet usage. The second problem is that parents do not have enough knowledge on the usage of new technology. Third: Children have taken information about the risk of internet from the media or by friends and they haven't discussed about this subject at school with teachers.

Keywords: Mobile phone, mediatization, teen

Mobile phone & its social impacts in our daily life

The history of the phone shows that users will finally determine how communication technologies are used. Mobile phone has generated new

kinds of *interpersonal communication forms* and *cultures* in peoples' daily lives. (Lasen 2002, p. 7).

Mediatization is the process described above. It defines the development of the relationship between media and society.

Mediatization has been described as a process that changes the social and cultural environment (Silverstone 2003, p. 3). Fornäs also uses the concept of mediatization to refer to a quite general relationship between media, society and individual. According to them, mediatization means the increasing centrality of communications media in society and daily life (2002, p. 6).

According to Hjarvard, media cannot be separated from society and culture. Hjarvard uses the term mediazation to describe the growing role of media in society and the power of media over other institutions.

Media has become the fabric of society and coordinates the interactions of other institutions. Media has become integrated into other institutions and acquired the status of social institutions in their own right. However, media are not a uniform phenomenon; each medium has its own characteristics, and they vary in both use and content between cultures and societies. The outcomes of mediatization, then, depend on both the *context and the characteristics* of the medium or media in question (Hjarvard 2008, pp. 106,113–114).

Referring to Plant (2001) mobile communication has become as part of structure of very different societies and cultural contexts and it is used by different individuals for various kinds of purposes. In her cross cultural research on the social effects of the mobiles, that there was *no homogeneous mobile effect.* There is a great stratification of cultures and practices which demand different forms of communication and relationships, including different social groups such as workers, housewives and teenagers. (Ito et al. 2006, p. 11)

However, even though there are no universal outcomes, we may find some general major social changes associated with the mobile phone. In particular, the process of the media landscape *individualization* has taken a step forward with mobile phones (see Castells et al. 2004). Individualism in relation to media use also needs to be separated from narcissism and egoism, and the end of collective ideals. (Maffesoli 1996, pp. 9–10)

It does not simply mean that the social contacts would be replaced with social isolation. Within youth and family communication contexts, for instance, it refers to *new means of social interaction*, which is often more peer group than family focused (Livingstone 2002, p. 158–159). Regarding the *family relationships*, teenagers tend to experience mobile technologies as 'liberating' (Oksman & Turtiainen 2004; Ito 2004; Ito et al. 2006) because they are able to communicate with their peers without direct parental control.

However, parents also use mobile phone communication to control their children in various ways (see Oksman & Turtiainen 2004, pp. 325–326; Ito 2004).

The mobile phone is not just an individualizing, empowering and liberating agent alone; it can also be used as a means of *social control and supervision*, both in public and in private life.

Many researchers have suggested that the public self and private self will become blurred and less solid as a result of the mobile phone use, or at least there is less differentiation between private and public (García-Montes et al. 2006, p.69; Fortunati 2005b; Ling 2004; Geser 2004). This kind of double spatial existence, being mentally in two spaces at the same time, may also cause *contradictions in everyday life*. Paradoxically, the mobile phone is used to both increase personal liberty from one's instant communities and as an important means of *social inclusion*.

Referring to personal, social and public communication, in our society it has become *more 'democratized'* and 'individualized' with mobile phones – in other words, it has become *more horizontal*. Clearly, the institutions that previously controlled and guided people's lives have lost some of their power and are losing their capacity to control the flow of communication by their members (García-Montes et al. 2006, p. 69)

Use of mobile phone & teenagers

One of the major themes that has appeared in mobile phone studies in different countries and areas of the world is the deep connection between mobile communication and youth cultures (Castells et al. 2004, p. 3).

In our country, where the computer and internet is considered by children a very interesting entertainment device because here are absent the national policies for the protection of children from internet use, the consequences of such spontaneous use and without rules can derive many social problems, unknown before. Therefore, it is very necessary to undertake researches on new media effects in Albanian context.

Actually, NGO Word Vision Albania (Study Word Vision 2014) is studying on this matter and contributing on a draft law preparation to provide the security during internet to all children in Albania. The target of this initiative, aims that by means of this draft law create the possibilities to protect the children from internet use risks. Thus, some of their proposals have to do with the establishment of protective software (protective filters) in home and school, and to this children who use the internet connection of internet centers it has to be equipped by a special hole, just for children where are also provided protective filters. Moreover, even to the cell phones it is aimed the development of protective software, one of the recently most used technologies to navigate in the internet by children.

Methodology
Research design
This paper is based on findings that will emerge from the developed questionnaire developed and part of this research will be the information extracted from secondary data, analogue studies conducted in other countries with regard to this research.

History of research– description of used stages
First stage: Evidencing of information and other related studies on this field.
Second stage: Redaction of questionnaire.
Third stage: Conducting of questionnaire
Fourth stage: Collection of data by means of the questionnaire.
Fifth stage: Elaboration and data analyzing

The research used method
For the implementation of this research and study, will be used a non probable favorable sample (Bob Matthews & Liz Ross pg. 164), relevant to the studies limited in time and sources. In this case the simple will be taken from e suitable context) children communitarian center). The research will be based in findings resulted from the questionnaire instrument the children included in this study will be of ages 12- 15 years old, children who are participants of the Don Bosko Orator in Shkodër. The reason to select this category of sample consists as follows:

1) the questionnaire will be realized with children of ages 12-15 years, as this category represents the age when, according to European studies in this field, are internet regular users and because this age category is considered to be more vulnerable regarding to the impact of internet negative effects. Furthermore, the favorable sample offers the possibility of participants' selection through some common characteristics, as in our case is the age and residence (commune Shkoder).

2) These categories of research are generally conducted in schools, but we choose to conduct this research into the Don Bosko Oratory premises because the following reasons:

This is a place where are offered services to this age category and here are also present other social categories of this age-group. This is why the sample will be easily accessible and sufficiently representative.

Also, realizing this questionnaire in these premises will be included in the study even the category of the children who do not attend school but are internet users.

Target

To know the way the internet is used by children who will be part of this study.

Study objectives

To be acquainted with the equipment most commonly used by children in the study, to navigate the Internet

To be acquainted with the reasons of Internet use by children involved in this study.

To be acquainted with the capabilities of social networking use by children part of this study

To acquainted with the risks facing children who are part of this study, during internet use.

To be acquainted to the role of parents as educators of their children skills to use the internet.

Hypothesis

The dangerous situations children will be faced with as internet users, influenced by the ease of internet access

1) What are the ways these category of children use to internet access?

2) What are some reason these category of children is using internet?

3) Do the children know the risks they would be faced with during internet access?
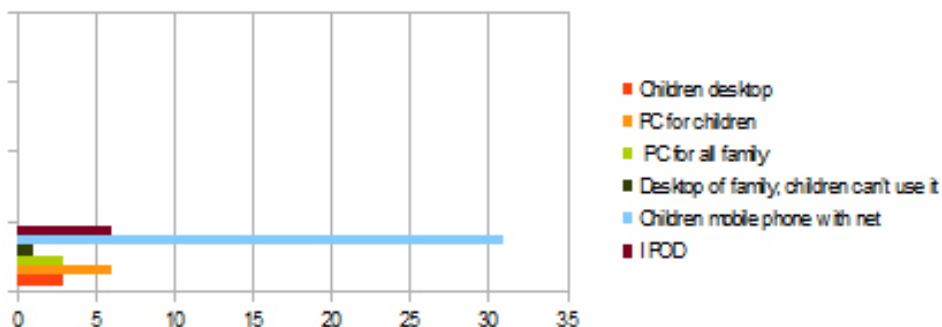
4) Do the children, part of this study, communicate to their parents over their activity in internet?

The reason we choose this hypothesis: In our country, there have been very few studies related to this age-group internet access and top the risks this category may be faced with. Meanwhile in other European countries there have been a large number of studies on the use of internet by children of this age-group.

Data analysis

Part of our study was 50 adolescents of age-group 12-15 years, of which 21 girls and 29 boys. These children attend regularly of Don Bosko Oratory. The age was the unique selective criterion for these adolescents.
Girls = 21; Boys = 29; Total = 50

Legend:
- Children desktop
- PC for children
- PC for all family
- Desktop of family, children can't use it
- Children mobile phone with net
- I POD

Discussions

During the data analysis, it resulted that this category of children consider internet as one of their most common daily activity. The use of social networks, especially Facebook, YouTube videos and use of internet to their homework is the most attended activities.

Two of the main problems emerged from this short-study are:

The use of ***internet on cell phone and the inability of parents to protect their children from dangerous situations*** they could be faced with during internet navigation.

The fact that majority of children use internet on their cell phones, confirms there is a large freedom concerning the children internet navigation. This make them more uncontrollable from their parents as the cell phone are a very private communication device, and for the parents are very difficult the establishment of rules on internet uses.

Furthermore, form this study resulted that parents do not have good knowledge on internet use, as provided by children answers of question 16, but also amplified by answers of question 22, resulting that the activities of parents with their children on internet are very rare. This is because they do not have good knowledge on internet use. While in relation with the problems that could be noticed by children in confrontation with dangerous situation during the internet access, they believe in their parents to overcome these situations and communicate with them. All this proves another data, lack of other social actors who would deal to the children advice and protection experiencing dangerous situations during their navigation into internet. Thus, the school (teachers and social worker or psychologist) is not considered as support actor of problem resolving, problems faced by children navigating at internet.

It was noticed a freedom or a sharpened lack of rules for the adolescent internet users , as a result of Internet use from mobile phones and lack of control by adults towards these children as in family environments as well as those of the school and elsewhere. So the

hypothesis set on this study "***The dangerous situations the children are faced with during internet use, are influenced by the ease of internet access"***, is completely confirmed.

The children can freely access to the internet, due to their cell phones and lack of parents' control because of their ignorance on safe internet use, and also favored by lack of national policies regarding to these issues. Therefore the children as users of internet a are exposed to any dangerous situation of virtual world.

Conclusion

The most know social effects of mobile phone in our day life are: mediatization, individualization, new means of social interaction, social control, and social inclusion.

The internet access is mostly realized by means of **cell phones** and being private communication devices, the control from parents of internet use is very difficult.

The reasons of Internet use by children have mainly do with the communication in social networks, video games and for school purposes.

For the children users of internet the internet navigation is a common of their activity, but not withstanding this they recognize some of the dangerous situations of virtual world, a part of which they learned from their personal experience, or from their friends, internet information and television. The parents, teachers and social workers or psychologists, had a very small impact on this aspect.

Considering the study results is noticed the inability of parents to use internet, and also of insufficient knowledge in this field and especially to the risks their children may be faced with during their internet access by mobile phone. However, the children continue to consider their parents as their unique supporters, when they are faced with dangerous situations of virtual world.

Recommendations

Parents, teachers, social workers or psychologists need to know the social effects of mobile phone and also need to increase their knowledge on safe use of internet by children, and coordination between these actors relating to this issue; protection of children.

Development of social and school activity to reinforce the collaborative strategies between the children, parents, teachers and social workers or psychologists related to the overcome of dangerous situations during internet navigation of children.

The national policy as trading of filter software, especially to the cell phones, that can be easily bought and installed by parents on their children's cell phone devices, as one of the manners to protect them.

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