TO INVESTIGATE THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SPAN OF ATTENTION AMONGST YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract

The amount of information we are exposed to on a daily basis is astounding: today, we take-in five times than we did thirty-five years back. The internet era has altered people's attention spans. Human physiology has also been changed by technology. It has an impact on our memory, attention spans, and sleep cycles. The current study is an effort to explore the link between attention span and social media use among young adults. The sample size was 110 participants, and the tool used was the Everyday Life Attention Span (ELAS). According to the data, there is no significant relationship between Span of Attention and Social Media Usage among young adults.

Keywords: span of attention; social-media; young adults; everyday activities

Introduction

The impact of social media on several elements of modern life is undeniable. However, the effect it may have on the structure of the brain structure and functioning remains a subject of discussion. Human beings are forgetful; 25% of teenagers forget significant information about their close friends and relatives. A typical office worker checks their email 30 times per hour and picks up their phone over 1,500 times each week, averaging 3 hours and 16 minutes per day. This is unnecessary, yet everyone has accepted this as normal.

The amount of time spent focusing on a task before being distracted is referred to as span of attention. When attention is irresistibly distracted to another activity or experience, this is known as distractibility. The internet era has altered people's attention spans. Human physiology has also been changed by technology. It has an impact on our memory, attention spans, and sleeping patterns. This is commonly associated with neuroplasticity, or the brain's ability to modify its behavior in response to new situations. People with a short attention span may encounter problems for any length of time without being easily distracted.

The objective is to find a middle ground where impulsive media multitasking does not result in attention deficit disorder. Mindless browsing via Instagram or TikTok while watching a movie has been related to difficulty remembering things and having short attention spans. Every day, we are swamped with an overwhelming amount of data: in 2021, we will be exposed to five times as much information as we were in 1986. With our attention spans dwindling to around eight seconds in today's digital world, we've learned that the best way to consume is to skim.

Review of Literature

The Pew Research Centre published a report on today's teenagers, social media and technology working together. This is a recent paper and in it is one statistic that in particular supports Hypothesis 1. The report reads "A majority of teens - 71% - report using more than one social network site" (Pew Research, 2015, Absatz 6). The relationship to Hypothesis 1 is that if someone uses numerous social media channels, they will have a limited attention span. All social media accounts are used on a regular basis, resulting in frequent shift of attention between different online platforms. The PEW Research Center also conducted research titled "How Teens Do Research in the Digital World." This study focused on teachers' perceptions of the wide implications of today's digital ecosystem, among other things. 87% said that "Digital technology now creates a quickly distracted and short- sighted generation" (Pew Research 2014, para 26) owing to their digital technology use. This remark in the study connects with Hypothesis 1 and explicitly supports it by noting that when asked about their students' attention span, professors believed it was influenced by digital technology. Most people link digital technology with the internet, which adds to teens' short attention span. According to an Elon University paper titled "Is Generation Y Addicted to Social Media?" "Humans are now more nervous and their attention span is reduced by the over stimulation from technology" (Cabral, 2011, Absatz 9). Digital technology tends to give a wide and encompassing stimulation that has progressively engulfed our society's younger generations. To focus on the fast-moving digital environment, digital technology needs continually shifting attention spans. Over 46 stimulation is almost certainly possible, and the span of attention is likely to diminish as a result. The assertion aligns with Hypothesis 1 in that there is widespread agreement that internet-based technology has reduced human attention spans and made them weaker.

Methodology Sample

The sample in this study consists of IndianEnglish-speaking males (28) and females (82) N = 110. The age group ranged from 18 to 24 years. Simple random sampling and snowball sampling were used. In addition, participants from the urban, semi-urban, andrural sectors were taken

Socio Demographic Details

Several socio-demographic details, namelyage, gender, educational qualification, and socio-economic status were included to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-demographic background of the participants.

Tools Used

The sample was collected by using the questionnaire method. The following questionnaire was used:

- *Everyday life attention scale (ELAS)*: The questionnaire is made up of nine sketches of situations that many individuals experience on a regular basis: reading a book (Reading), watching a movie or documentary (Movie), doing an indoor activity (Activity), attending a lecture or open evening (Lecture), having a conversation (Conversation), doing an assignment/administration (Assignment), preparing a meal (Cooking), cleaning the house (Cl) (Driving). The circumstances were chosen such that one has a long duration and so requires sustained attention (about two hours of time), while the other requires some attentional effort or strategy**.**

Procedure

Consent forms were asked to be filled by the voluntary students to permit the researcher to use the results for research purposes. The participants were told that the test results would be kept private. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants, along with instructions on how to complete it. They completed the demographic information first, followed by the questionnaire. They were instructed to complete a Google form that was sent electronically. Following data collection, the questionnaire was scored using the scoring techniques provided by the scale authors. The information was entered in an Excel spreadsheet before being statistically analysed using SPSS software. To evaluate the hypotheses, appropriate statistical techniques were utilised, which assisted in the study's conclusion. The following analyses were included in the analysis plan: descriptive analyses and correlational analyses. The current investigation is entirely quantitative. SPSS software was used to analyse the

data. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Pearson correlation statistics were utilised inthe correlational design.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

	N	RANGE	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Attention_span	110	47.72	30.92	78.64	55.4975	.97420	10.21751	104.398
Social_media	110	600.00	60.00	660.00	342.5455	13.84800	145.23904	21094.379
Valid N (listwise)	110							

From the above table shows that the mean value for attention span is (M= 55.4975) with standarderror of (Std. Error= .97420) and the standard deviation for attention span is (Sd= 10.21751). Themean value for social media is (M= 342.5455) with standard error of (Std. Error= 13.84800) and the standard deviation for social media is (Sd= 145.23904).

Table 2 Correlations between the Span of Attention and social media

		Attention_Span	Social_Media
Attention_span	Pearson Correlation	1	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.667
	N	110	110
Social_Media	Pearson Correlation	.041	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.667	
	N	110	110

The above table shows the correlations between the chosen variables that are Span of Attentionand social media. From the figures shown in the table it is found that there is no relationship between the span of attention of young adults and social media.

Table 3 One-way Anova

	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1067.900	10	106.790	1.025	.428
Within Groups	10311.438	99	104.158		
Total	11379.337	109			

Attention Span

Discussion

The results of this study show that social media does not have a direct effect on span of attention of young adults. No relation was found between use of social media and attention span, this could be because, young population are aware about their priorities and necessities. They set limits for themselves when it comes to utilizing social media so that it does not interfere with their everyday routines. Since no effects were observed in young adults at this time, there may be some when they get older. We hope this review further contextualises the current findings linking the use of social media to daily life activities, while also highlighting the key areas for further research in an era ofrapid digitalisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, many critics have stated that modern communication methods interfere with our fundamental inclinations, such as memory, thinking capacity, and attention, however it appears that this is not the case. A non-significant correlation was found between span of attention and social media in this research. Though the impacts of social media use on the capacity to pay attention are not yet completely comprehended, there is joined proof from different fields that our broad connections with this original component of society could impact our insight. Further longitudinal work is required, especially in young adults. In any case, as we keep on refining our comprehension of likely unfavourable outcomes of web utilization, this moment is likewise the opportunity for inspecting how this progressive social platform can be used to deliver upgrades in mental and intellectual wellbeing. However, we would like to suggest that usage of social media should be limited and not hinder an individual's daily life activities.

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