



Uncovering The Role Of Electronic Media In Shaping Health And Social Interactions Of Children: Insights From District Firozabad Of Uttar Pradesh

Anshu Sharma^{1*}, Dr.Damini Biloria¹

^{1,2}Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India.
E-mail: anshuo483@gmail.com. E-mail: damini1orajput@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Electronic media has become an integral component of daily routines, significantly influencing the lives of modern children. This study, conducted in District Firozabad of Uttar Pradesh, investigates the extensive role electronic media plays in the lives of children and its impact on various aspects of their well-being. This study found that children are introduced to electronic media, especially through television viewership, from a very young age. Spending numerous hours engaged in video games, cartoons, and movies, children often develop addictive behaviors. The study reveals a substantial influence on health of children, as their participation in physical activities reduces due to increased electronic media consumption. Furthermore, the promotion of predominantly unhealthy food choices on electronic media platforms contributes to negative health outcomes. The research also underlines the profound influence of electronic media on the social lives of children, affecting their preferences, demands, and exposure to violence through different media sources. Findings of this study emphasize the significant and multifaceted impact of electronic media on the health, social, and socio-psychological aspects of the lives of children.

Keywords: Children, electronic media, health, violence, communication, gadgets.

Introduction:

In contemporary times electronic media has been an important part of the daily activities of people with an influence on the life of people in several aspects. Children are exposed to electronic media from an early age when they learn things and adopt them in their lives. Children in their age of physical, mental, and social development are influenced by electronic media which is been used as the main source of communication in modern days with dominating every sector that needs to be communicated. The exposure to electronic media for children at an early age starts from watching television which they get access to at an early age when parents find it easy to stabilize their children which becomes an addictive attraction for the children. In India, it has been reported that those children who are exposed to violence shown in media are poor in their school performances and have an inimical impact on social and psychological adjustments (Ray M, Malhi P, 2006). As per a US survey, children spend more than 6 hours of their daily time using media (National Kaiser Family Foundation US, 2009). Exposure to electronic media becomes an important part of the children with watching television to playing video games on mobile phones and PCs. Internet surfing and social media in later childhood find a dominating place in the daily activities of children.

Excessive social media use can lead to mental health issues, especially depression, with behavior and posts on social media acting as potential signs of depressive tendencies. The psychological challenges, including depression and isolation, may make individuals more susceptible to recruitment by terrorist groups, viewing social media as a tool for radicalization. For children and teenagers, excessive social media use can adversely affect academic performance, prompting the recommendation for parents to closely monitor and regulate social media activities of their children. If misused, social media can contribute to various societal issues such

as depression, anxiety, catfishing, bullying, terrorism, and criminal activities. (Damota, M. D., & Uninversity, M. W. 2019). This excessive exposure to electronic media on children leaves negative effects on children as it disrupts the daily routine of children which would have been important for their overall development. The excessive use of electronic media gadgets impacts the physical and mental health of children. The children are socialized with the influence of different groups virtually and they develop different traits which are sometimes not sanctioned as per the norms of their society. Children who make use of electronic media or other products communicated through electronic media develop aggressive behaviors and in the absence of these gadgets become violent in the family. This phenomenon is further supported by (Yılmaz, S., & Pamuk, M. 2023) study investigates the impact of social media and game addictions on adolescent-parent conflict, using a sample of 686 high school students in Eskişehir. Data was collected through a personal information form and scales, employing a predictive correlational research design. The results indicate that both social media and game addictions significantly predict adolescent-parent conflict, with positive correlations observed between these addictions and conflict. Social media addiction, in particular, explains a substantial portion of the variance in adolescent-parent conflict. Similar studies in the literature have also identified positive relationships between social media or game addiction and parent conflict. Present research highlights the significant predictive roles of social media and game addictions in adolescent-parent conflict.

Socio-psychological impacts of electronic media

Electronic media gadgets and their medium of communication attract the younger generation with the adoption of different market strategies and trends. Children in their early childhood are fond of watching television and in later childhood are indulged in social media interacting with different peer groups and being influenced by different cultures and personalities. This use of electronic media has social and psychological impacts on children. A study conducted by (Yılmaz, S., & Pamuk, M. (2023) explains video game addicts, particularly males, exhibit higher levels of aggression and loneliness compared to non-addicts. Pathological video game addiction is identified as a predictor for both loneliness and aggressive behavior. The study found that video game addicts consistently scored higher on measures of loneliness and aggression than non-addicts, with male pathological gamers showing elevated scores on video game addiction, loneliness, and aggression scales. Overall, the results support the hypothesis that pathological video gaming is associated with increased aggression and loneliness. Children who are addicted to television face social and psychological issues. Television viewership and spending time watching videos and playing games make children isolated from family and friends. Those children who spend more time watching television usually spend very little time with family (Vandewater, Bickham, and Lee, 2006). Social isolation affects the mental health of children who are busy watching television and playing games. Isolation is sometimes replaced with bad company as in later childhood; the use of social media provides new and vast networks that are beyond the reach and control of their parents. The children learn different attitudes and behaviours through different videos and shows communicated via electronic media. In the concept of developmental psychology, it is believed that children are not able to differentiate between reality and what they watch. They adopt what they learn from electronic media communications, and this can lead to violence and crime for children who are not mature enough to differentiate the life and culture in which they live and what they learn from electronic media communication technology. The use of electronic media needs gadgets and sources which cannot always be accessible or affordable for the family and it can lead to violence and aggressive behavior in children. Exposure to electronic media gives easy access to sexual content and violent stuff. The study has found that sexual content in videos, music, movies, and other contents of television shows increases early sexual intercourse tendencies (Brown et al; 2006). Children who spend more time using electronic media are less likely to participate in social life which loosens their social control for them and disintegrates the process of socialization.

Health and Wellness

Electronic media impacts the health of children negatively. A child who is in front of the television screen for several hours or children who are used to playing video games face health issues as spending much time using electronic media leaves less time and interest in physical activities and has harmful effects on the eyesight of children. Physical activities are important for the body development of children and lack of physical activities among children results in obesity and other complications. The use of electronic media and obesity are associated with a twofold risk of obesity with the use of electronic media for several hours (N Stettler et al; 2004). The children adopt the fiction and get influenced by different actors which they like by watching television, movies, videos, or advertisements in which the promotion of alcohol or smoking can be seen. The link between television advertisements leads to a positive association with the consumption of alcohol (JW Grube, E Waiters, 2005). Smoking habits and intoxication lead to harmful effects and addiction to harmful drugs. Smoking addiction starts for more than half of the adolescents who are addicted to smoking are initiated after watching television and movies showing smoking (JD Sargent, et al; 2005). Food intake habits are influenced by using electronic media. The food items are advertised attractively to increase consumption which will lead to an increase in the production of food items. The link between advertisements and food consumption and production is evident (JL Wiecha et al; 2006). The food items which are presented in advertisements cannot be believed to be nutritious. In advertisements communicated through electronic media most of the time, junk foods are promoted which leads to harmful effects on the health of children consuming these

products. Children who consume junk food replaced with nutritious food develop food habits that impede the proper nourishment and development of their bodies.

Objectives of the study:

The objective of this study is to determine the influence of electronic media on children. The purpose of this study was to look at the socio-psychological aspects of lives of children that are influenced by electronic media, as well as the detrimental impacts it has on their health.

Methodology:

Sampling serves as a method to selectively choose individuals or a subset of the community, given the challenges associated with researching the entire population, which demands considerable time, financial resources, and effort. In overcoming these obstacles, the researcher opted for a sampling approach. Specifically, convenience sampling was employed for data collection in the region of Uttar Pradesh, where 120 students aged 6 to 14, engaged in television viewing, were selected as the sample of this study. This study falls under the jurisdiction of the state of Uttar Pradesh. To gather data from the selected participants, a semi-structured, open-ended interview schedule was utilized. The questions were designed with consideration for the sensitivity of the issue and the objectivity of the subject matter, aiming to elicit comprehensive information across various aspects of data collection. The interview schedule was bifurcated into two sections: the first part encompassed demographic details such as age, gender, health, education, and family background, while the second part focused on addressing the objectives of the study.

Name of the Block	Name of the School
Firozabad	Composite school Rehna
Tundla	Composite school Banna

Table 1.1: Selected Schools and Blocks

Results:

The data has shown the significant impact of electronic media on children. Exposure to electronic media in children is for a long time and a part of their daily routine. The children use electronic media for watching movies, cartoons, and videos and for playing games in their leisure time. Exposure to electronic media has become part of lives among children. They spend most of their time on electronic media which impacts their health and also gives them less time to study which is likely to impact their academic performance also.

Table 1.2 Exposure to Electronic Media

Exposure to Electronic Media (Television/Cartoons/Videos/Movies/ games)	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour a day	9	7.5
Less than 2 hours a day	14	11.6
Almost 3 hours a day	52	43.33
More than 3 hours a day	45	37.5

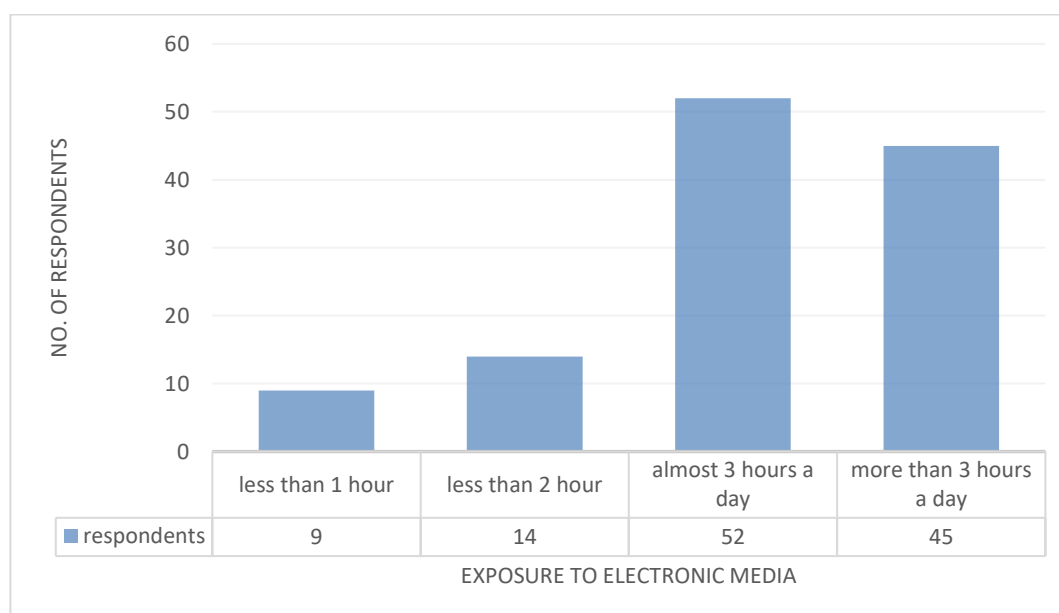


Figure 1.1 Graphical representation of Exposure to Electronic Media (Source: Primary Data)

The collected data reveals a noticeable exposure of children to electronic media. A significant portion of their time is dedicated to watching television, movies, cartoons, and other preferred videos. The children express a keen interest in online video games, engaging in prolonged playing sessions. Surprisingly, over 80% of the sampled group indicates that children spend a minimum of three hours or more daily on electronic media activities. This early and extensive exposure often results in addiction, with children frequently allocating a substantial portion of their leisure time to electronic media, contributing to their isolation from society and detrimental effects on their health. Consequently, children spend less time interacting with friends, as they remain engrossed in electronic media pursuits.

Table 1.3 Daily activities liked by children.

Daily activities liked by children	Respondents	Percentage
Watching television	35	29.16
Playing video games	59	49.16
Playing with friends outside	19	15.83
Other Physical activities	7	5.83

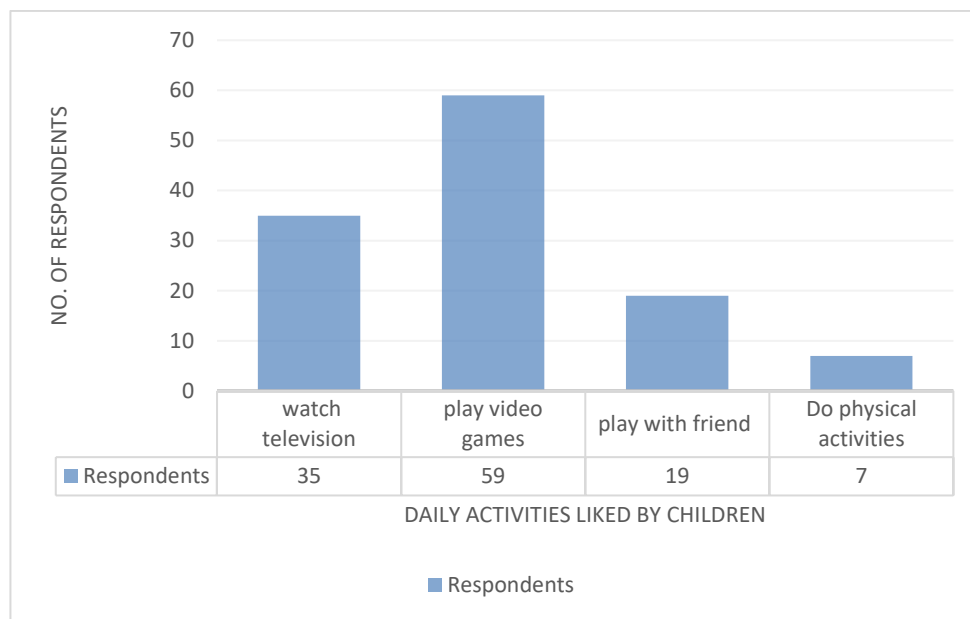


Figure 1.2 Graphical Representation of Daily activities liked by children. (Source: Primary Data)

Children are predominantly occupied with watching television and exhibit a preference for playing video games rather than engaging in outdoor activities with friends. The considerable time invested in electronic media activities reduces their availability for outdoor play and social interactions. According to the gathered data, children express a strong inclination toward watching television and participating in video games. This pattern of behavior is anticipated to have adverse effects on their health, given their predominant engagement with electronic media, thereby influencing their overall well-being negatively.

Table 1.4 Food Liked by Children

Food Liked by Children	Respondents	Percentage
Foods watched on electronic media	67	55.83
Home Food	29	24.16
Other	24	20.00

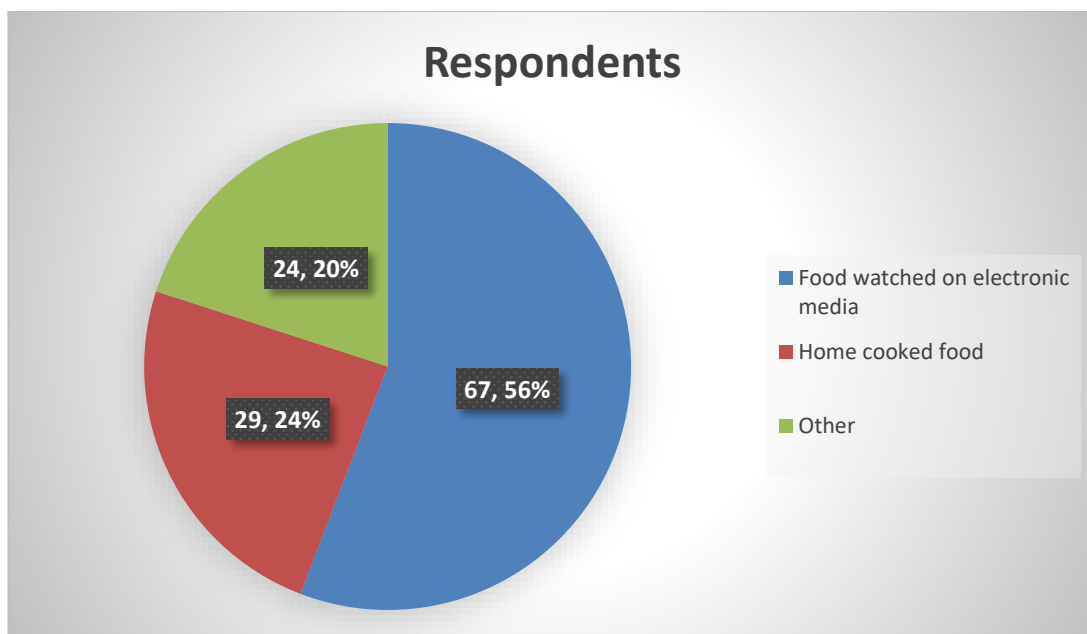


Figure 1.3 Graphical Representation of Food Liked by Children. (Source: primary data)

Electronic media significantly shapes food preferences of children, with over half of the surveyed individuals expressing a liking for foods featured in electronic media presentations. These preferences often lean towards unhealthy and non-nutritious junk foods, neglecting the essential nutritional requirements for their growth. The allure of electronic media also contributes to a decrease in their participation in physical activities, resulting in adverse health impacts on children. Children tend to emulate what they see on electronic media, influenced by the scenes and actions depicted in various content. This influence extends into their formative years, impacting their learning experiences. Survey respondents indicate a fondness for scenes from different movies, including action sequences, expressing a desire to replicate and incorporate them into their own lives. Moreover, the influence of movies and television content has the potential to promote violence among children.

Table 1.5 Mostly watched/liked.

Mostly watched/Liked	Respondents	Percentage
Actions scenes	33	27.5
Dance/Music videos	20	16.66
Inspiring Stories	05	4.16
Horror	04	3.33
Cartoons	21	17.5
Comedy	15	12.5
Online Education	17	14.16
Others	05	4.16

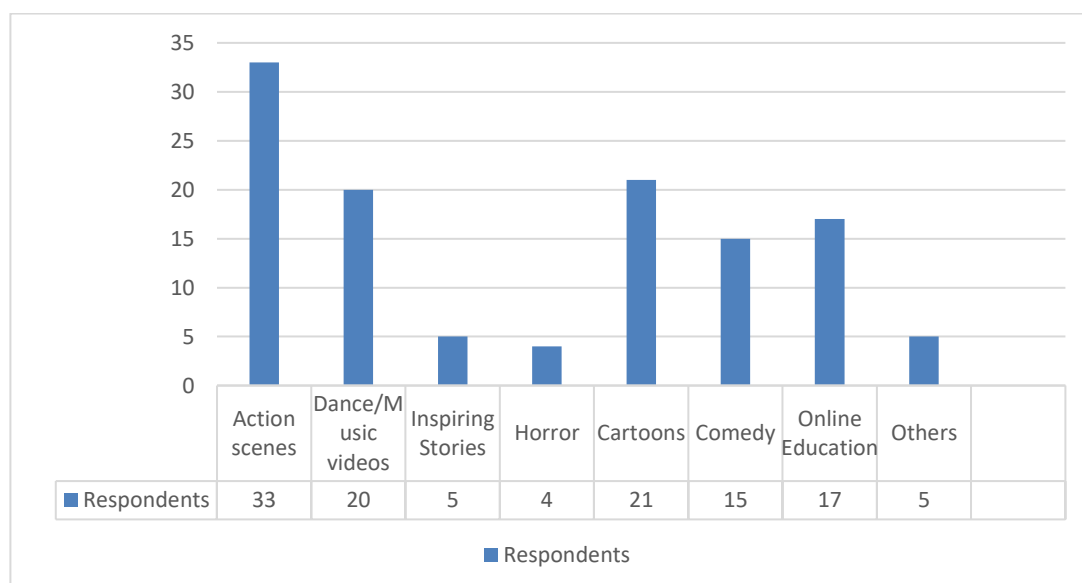


Figure 1.4 Graphical Representation of Mostly watched/liked (Source: Primary Data)

The majority of respondents expressed a preference for viewing action scenes and music videos, particularly those featuring dance, via electronic media. However, the portrayal of violence in action scenes can have a negative impact on children, especially those who may not fully grasp the distinction between fiction and reality. This exposure contributes to the promotion of violent behavior among children. Music videos, at times, showcase nudity, and several instances depict scenes involving violence and alcohol consumption, further exacerbating adverse effects on children. The addictive nature of various electronic media sources becomes evident, with children exhibiting a strong need for these platforms at any cost. This dependency often puts a strain on parents who may not always be able to afford the latest electronic gadgets. Consequently, children may resort to demanding new mobile phones, computers, etc., leading to heightened levels of aggression.

Table 1.6 Satisfied/Dissatisfied with the sources of electronic media they/their family own

Satisfied/ Dissatisfied with the sources of electronic media they/ their family own	Respondents	Percentage
Have enough sources available	7	5.83
Need better phone/computer/Television etc.	72	60
Need more gadgets	41	34.16

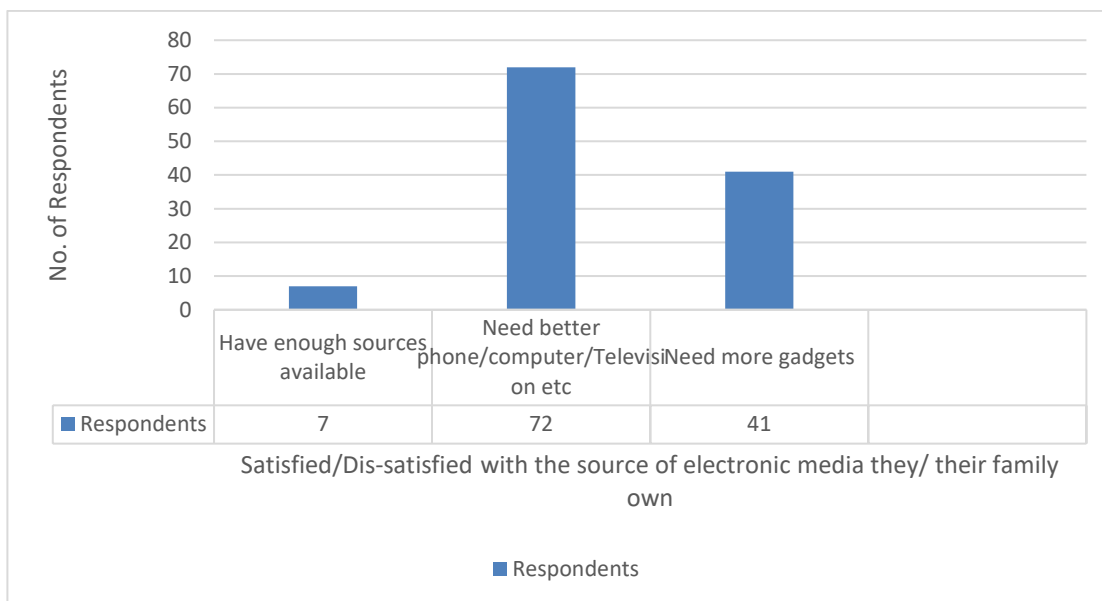


Figure 1.5 Graphical Representation of Satisfied/Dissatisfied with the sources of electronic media they/their family own (Source: Primary Data)

Children express a desire for enhanced electronic media options and an increased number of gadgets, a demand that may exceed the financial means of their parents. The acquisition of additional electronic media sources becomes a costly endeavor for families. Primarily, children engage with electronic media for gaming and movie-watching, resulting in repercussions for their academic performance. The addictive nature of these activities often leads to a diminished allocation of time for studying, adversely affecting the academic pursuits of children.

Table 1.7 Mobile phones/Computer used for

Mobile phones/Computer used for	Respondents	Percentage
Gaming	63	52.5
Videos/Movies	27	22.5
Online Education	23	19.16
Others	7	5.83

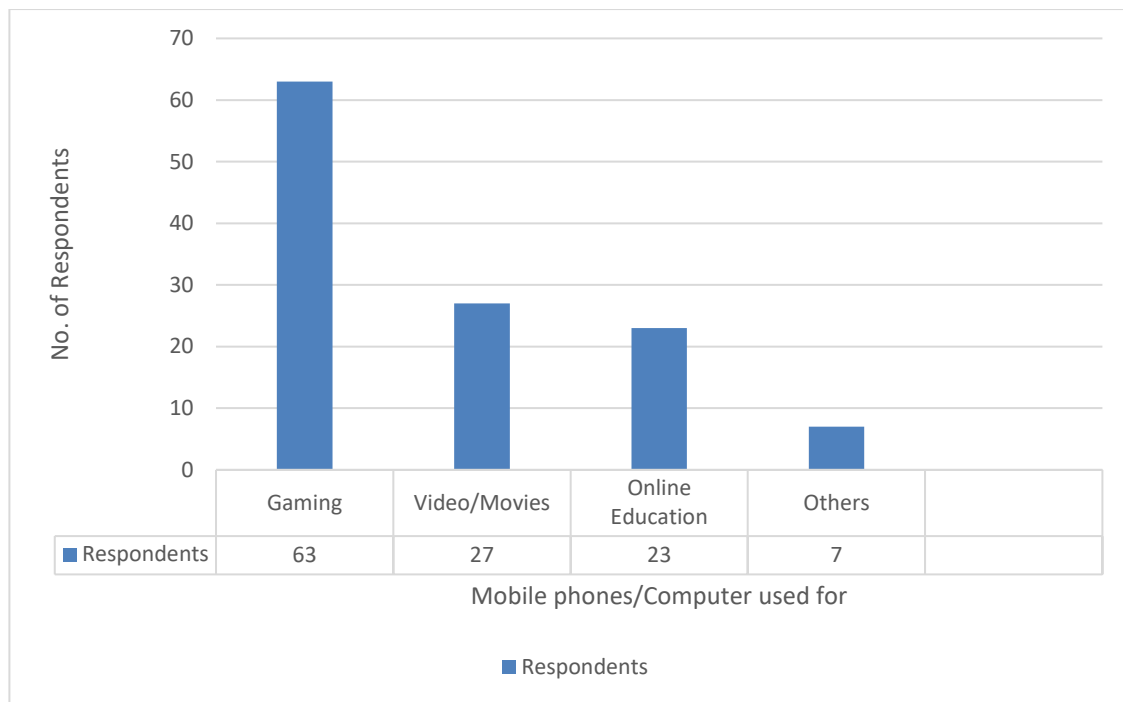


Figure 1.6 Graphical Representation of Mobile phones/Computer used for (Source: Primary Data)

Over half of the surveyed children indicated a preference for utilizing mobile phones and computers primarily for gaming, while approximately 22.5 percent reported using electronic media for video and movie consumption. Data analysis revealed prolonged exposure of children to electronic media, with a notable inclination for spending extended periods on these platforms. The findings underscore desire of children for increased electronic media sources, highlighting the significant impact on their social lives and health.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

Exposure to electronic media commences early in a life of children, and a substantial portion of their time is devoted to its consumption. This heavy reliance on electronic media detracts from the importance and time allocated to physical activities, posing a threat to overall health of children. The requisite physical activities crucial for proper body development are often neglected due to the pervasive routine of electronic media interactions in lives of children. Leisure time is predominantly spent by children on activities such as watching television, movies, playing video games, and internet surfing. Television exerts a significant influence on children, shaping their preferences and behaviors, which may not always align with societal norms, potentially leading to deviance and aggressive tendencies.

Moreover, the dietary choices of children are undergoing a transformation influenced by electronic media communications. Advertisements and presentations of food items contribute to liking and consumption of children for unhealthy, nutrient-deficient junk foods. Parents play a pivotal role in managing exposure of their children to electronic media, as the initiation of television exposure often stems from parental decisions. Parental control over electronic media gadgets and their usage is crucial, and initiatives introduced by the government and other organizations can raise awareness for the betterment of children.

Promoting engagement in sports activities is essential for enhancing physical health. Parents need to exercise control over access to electronic media of their children and educate them about its potential negative impacts. Allocating more time for family activities and creating awareness about the detrimental effects of excessive electronic media consumption are imperative steps to mitigate its adverse consequences on children.

Declarations

Ethnic Approval: The study does not involve any radioactive element or exposure to any laboratory. The work is entirely a social study, therefore, there is no need for ethical approval.

Funding: The present study does not receive funding support from any organization.

Competing Interests: There is no competing interest in this study because the entire work is original.

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