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Behavioral Problems of Digital Generation Kindergarten and Primary Grade Pupils at Wesleyan University Philippines

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Abstract

The current research utilized a descriptive research design through the survey questionnaire in data collection from 60 parents of the kindergarten and primary-grade students of Wesleyan University Philippines for the second semester of the school year 2024–2025. The research sought to know the behavioral problems of digital generation kindergarten and primary grade pupils at WUP. Analysis of the responses utilized statistical methods such as means and weighted means. Findings showed that the majority of pupils do not have serious problems with aggression or temper tantrums, which means they can control their behavior and emotions.

Excessive screen time was a significant problem, though, since it hurt children's sleep, physical activity, and ability to disconnect from their devices. Findings also indicated that excessive screen use can be associated with lower social interaction and shorter attention spans. The majority of children liked interacting on the internet, were uneasy in social situations, and could not concentrate or focus on their activities. Although conduct problems were not very common, it shows that children need more effective screen time use to aid social and cognitive development.

Keywords: Behavioral Problems, Digital Generations, Parents, Primary Grade Pupils, Wesleyan University Philippines

Introduction

Children's behavior in the current modern digital world is increasingly shaped by the technology they utilize (Haddock, Ward, Yu, & O'Dea, 2022) [4]. This trend has also been observed at Wesleyan University Philippines, where some primary grade pupils are exhibiting behavioral issues. This has led to an understanding of the impact of digital consumption on the lives of children (Marrison, 2024) [8]. This is the primary focus of the study "Behavioral Problems of Digital Generation Primary Grade Pupils at Wesleyan University Philippines." The study seeks to analyze the behavioral issues of Grade 1 to 3 pupils at Wesleyan University Philippines, looking particularly at aggressive behavior, temper tantrums, excessive screen time, digital addiction, reduced social interaction, lower attention span, and conduct concern.

Children exhibiting aggressive behavior are an accepted social problem (Ogundele, 2018) [9]. The case study asserts this is also prevalent in pupils, some of whom are incredibly verbally abusive, physically aggressive, and convinced that violent behavior is an acceptable way to handle disputes. Such disturbing behaviors can be the result of a lack of self-regulation development in screen-dominated environments (Beavington, 2021) [1]. Concurrently, crying and temper tantrums are also on the rise. Children display out-of-control rage, tossing things and engaging in behaviors that are self-defeating and certainly counterproductive to their school and life progress (Lestiani, Putrawan, & DJ, 2021) [7].

Equally concerning is the increased level of excessive screen use and digital addiction. Numerous children are using digital devices so much more than is age-appropriate that it interferes with sleep, physical activity, and general well-being. Some students even exhibit withdrawal-like behavior when they are not allowed access to devices, prefer online interaction over outside world obligations, and lie about their screen use, all clear signs of digital dependency (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2022) [3].

This behavior change has also resulted in less social interaction and a significant loss of attention span. Children are increasingly dependent on online communication and tend to feel socially anxious or isolated when in direct face-to-face interaction. Moreover, several of them are unable to sustain attention, opt for immediate rewards rather than delayed ones, and feel restless when dealing with tasks requiring sustained focus (Kiss & Linnell, 2021) [6]. These behavioral patterns, along with issues regarding conduct breaches and willful damage to other people or assets, emphasize the necessity of seriously confronting the influence of digital exposure on the overall growth of kindergarten and primary-grade pupils at Wesleyan

University Philippines.

Methodology

This research utilized a descriptive research design, utilizing a survey questionnaire to collect the needed information from the respondents (Garcia & Subia, 2019) [2]. According to Sirisilla (2023) [10], "Descriptive research design is a powerful tool used by scientists and researchers to gather information about a particular group or phenomenon. This type of research provides a detailed and accurate picture of the characteristics and behaviors of a particular population

or subject." This research collected data from 60 parents of kindergarten and primary-grade pupils at Wesleyan University Philippines. Means and weighted means were the statistical tools used in this research. This research was conducted during the second semester of the 2024-2025 school year.

Results and Discussion

1. Behavioral Problems of Digital Generations in Terms of Aggressive Behavior, Temper Tantrums, Excessive Screen Time, and Digital Addiction

Table 1: Behavioral Problems of Digital Generations (Part 1)

A. Aggressive Behavior (n=60)	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child frequently loses their temper or lashes out verbally.	2.70	Agree
2. My child has physically harmed others or threatened to do so.	2.18	Disagree
3. My child feels justified in using aggressive behavior to solve conflicts.	2.28	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.39	Disagree
B. Temper Tantrums	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child has intense anger outbursts that are difficult to control.	2.37	Disagree
2. My child throws objects or screams during episodes of frustration.	2.33	Disagree
3. My child's outbursts disrupt his/her daily activities.	2.35	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.35	Disagree
C. Excessive Screen Time	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child spends more time on devices than the normal time of use.	3.67	Strongly Agree
2. Screen time interferes with my child's sleep or physical activity.	3.03	Agree
3. My child feels anxious when he/she cannot access his/her devices.	3.22	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.31	Strongly Agree
D. Digital Addiction	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child prioritizes online activities over other activities.	3.13	Agree
2. My child lies about how much time he/she spend on devices.	2.62	Agree
3. My child cannot reduce his/her screen time despite wanting to.	2.80	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.85	Agree

Legend: 1.00 to 1.74 Strongly Disagree; 1.75 to 2.49 Disagree; 2.50 to 3.24 Agree; 3.25 to 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 1 shows that the respondents strongly agreed that the pupils have excessive screen time (Wm=3.31) and agreed that the pupils have digital addiction (Wm=2.85). The pupils also lose their temper or lash out verbally, but the respondents disagreed that the pupils have aggressive behavior (Wm=2.39) and temper tantrums (Wm=2.35). The results show that most parents do not see aggressive behavior or temper tantrums as major problems in their children. They disagreed that their child often gets angry, hurts others, or throws tantrums that affect daily life. This suggests that many children can control their emotions and can handle frustration. This finding shows that the pupils have the potential to regulate their negative emotions. According to Viaplana-Moré (2015) [11], "If children can handle their frustrations, they will be more balanced and

will be stronger to withstand the problems to be found in their adult life, thus contributing to improving self-esteem and well-being."

However, screen time and digital habits are a bigger concern. Parents agreed that their children use devices more than they should, which affects their sleep and physical activity. Some children also feel anxious without their devices and have a hard time reducing screen time. These signs point to possible digital addiction and show the need for better rules and balance when it comes to using technology.

2. Behavioral Problems of Digital Generations in Terms of Reduced Social Interaction, Lower Attention Span, and Conduct Concern

Table 2: Behavioral Problems of Digital Generations (Part 2)

E. Reduced Social Interaction (n=60)	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child prefers online communication to in-person interactions.	2.53	Agree
2. My child feels uncomfortable in social situations due to screen use habits.	2.57	Agree
3. My child has fewer close in-person friends.	2.67	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.59	Agree
F. Lower Attention Span	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child struggles to focus on tasks without frequent distractions.	3.12	Agree
2. My child prefers activities with instant rewards over long-term goals.	3.27	Strongly Agree
3. My child feels restless when tasks require sustained attention.	3.07	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.15	Agree
G. Conduct Concern	Wm	Verbal Description
1. My child frequently engages in behavior that violates rules.	2.37	Disagree
2. My child intentionally harms other kids.	2.17	Disagree
3. My child commonly destroys his/her toys or property.	2.22	Disagree
Overall Weighted Mean	2.25	Disagree

Legend: 1.00 to 1.74 Strongly Disagree; 1.75 to 2.49 Disagree; 2.50 to 3.24 Agree; 3.25 to 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 2 presents that the respondents agreed that the pupils have reduced social interaction ($W_m=2.59$) and agreed that the pupils have developed a lower attention span ($W_m=3.15$). However, they disagreed that the pupils have conduct concerns ($W_m=2.25$).

The results show that many children prefer talking online rather than in person. Parents also noticed that their children feel awkward in social settings and have fewer close friends. This suggests that too much screen time may be affecting their social skills and real-life friendships. Social skills and interaction are much-needed characteristics that need to be developed among young kids, as pointed out by Istiqomah in 2022: "Even in social interactions, someone who has good communication skills will tend to adapt more easily to anyone with whom he is in a community, which in turn will become a successful person in his life."

Parents also observed that their children have trouble focusing, like needing quick rewards, and get restless with tasks that require concentration. This may be linked to too much time spent on fast-paced digital content. On the bright side, most parents disagreed that their children often break rules or harm others, showing that serious behavior problems are not common.

Conclusion

In conclusion, most pupils do not have severe aggression or temper tantrum issues. Parents indicated that their children are capable of regulating their emotions and do not frequently hurt others or disobey. Most children, however, are engaging in excessive screen time, which is having an impact on sleeping, exercise, and the ability to take breaks from devices.

The findings also indicate that excessive screen usage might be impacting the socialization and concentration of children. Most of them prefer online communication and are uncomfortable in social settings. Parents also observed that their kids struggle to concentrate and get easily distracted. Although behavior problems are not widespread, screen time's effect on attention and social interaction is becoming a concern.

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