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POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ELECTRONIC GADGETS ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINDS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: This article provides a scientific analysis of the impact of electronic gadgets on young people's minds, worldview, cognitive processes, educational activities, and social relationships in the context of globalization. It examines the opportunities offered by digital technologies for accessing information, independent learning, foreign language acquisition, and the development of digital competencies. At the same time, it explores potential negative factors, including information overload, divided attention, sleep disturbances, cyberbullying, misinformation, and social comparison. The analysis demonstrates that the effects of electronic gadgets are determined not only by the duration of use but also by the purpose of use, the content encountered in digital environments, individual characteristics, and family and educational contexts. The article concludes with recommendations for improving digital literacy among young people, promoting responsible use of electronic gadgets, and creating a safer digital environment.

Keywords: globalization, young people, electronic gadgets, digital environment, digital literacy, thinking, information culture, cyberbullying, social media, media literacy.

1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, globalization has been closely associated with the rapid development of information and communication technologies. Smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other electronic devices have transformed the ways in which people access information, communicate, learn, and participate in social life. For young people in particular, the digital environment has become not only a source of information but also an important space in which knowledge, values, interests, and social attitudes are formed.

The widespread use of electronic gadgets enables young people to stay informed about scientific, cultural, and social developments worldwide. However, increased access to information does not automatically lead to the ability to understand it correctly, evaluate it critically, or apply it effectively in practice. Young people therefore need to develop the skills required to select information, verify sources, and use digital tools purposefully.[1][UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight. *Childhood in a Digital World: Screen Time, Digital Skills and Mental Health*. Florence: UNICEF, June 2025. https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/childhood-digital-world pp. 3–4]

Therefore, the issue should not be understood simply in terms of the availability of electronic devices, but rather in terms of how and under what circumstances they are used.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that young people's engagement with digital environments influences their learning methods, information-processing habits, time management, and patterns of social interaction. Consequently, the positive and negative effects of electronic gadgets should be examined not from a one-sided perspective, but through an analysis of interconnected social, psychological, and educational factors.

The aim of the study is to identify the mechanisms through which electronic gadgets influence young people's minds and activities in the context of globalization, comparatively analyze their potential benefits and risks, and develop recommendations for their responsible use.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explain the role of electronic gadgets in developing young people's worldviews and digital competencies.
2. To analyze the relationship between information consumption in digital environments, attention, independent thinking, and educational activities.
3. To examine risks associated with cyberbullying, harmful content, misinformation, and digital habits.
4. To develop practical recommendations for young people, parents, educational institutions, and digital platforms.

2. Methods

This article is based on comparative analysis, a review of scientific sources, content analysis, and logical synthesis. The principal sources include UNICEF's 2025 report on the digital environment, digital skills, and mental health, as well as a policy brief published in 2025 by the WHO Regional Office for Europe concerning the influence of digital determinants on young people's mental well-being.

The UNICEF report examines the relationship between digital technology use, digital skills, and mental health using international evidence. It notes that there is insufficient clear evidence to establish that screen time alone directly causes harm to children's mental health, whereas experiences such as online violence and cyberbullying are consistently associated with negative outcomes.

The policy brief of the WHO Regional Office for Europe emphasizes that the relationship between digital technologies and young people's mental well-being is complex and bidirectional. Technology use may be associated with positive outcomes in some circumstances and with risks in others[2] [World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. *Addressing the Digital Determinants of Youth Mental Health and Well-being: Policy Brief*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2025. https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12187-51959-79685/pp.14].

The analysis groups the effects of electronic gadgets into the following areas:

- Education and learning;

- Information processing and critical thinking;
- Social interaction and values;
- Mental well-being and digital safety;
- Time management and everyday activities.

Methodological limitation: This article is based on a review of existing sources. No dedicated survey, experiment, or statistical measurement was conducted among young people in Uzbekistan. Therefore, the findings of international studies should not be assumed to apply equally to all young people in Uzbekistan.

3. Results

3.1. Positive Effects of Electronic Gadgets

First, expanded educational opportunities. Electronic gadgets enable young people to access electronic books, video lectures, open educational platforms, and online courses. Whereas obtaining a particular book or accessing an expert previously might have required considerable time and financial resources, today many sources are accessible through the internet. This is particularly important for young people who seek to pursue independent learning.

However, rapid access to information should not be equated with the acquisition of in-depth knowledge. If students rely exclusively on short videos or ready-made answers, their opportunities to analyze topics independently may be limited. Conversely, when gadgets are used to search for information, compare different sources, prepare notes, and apply acquired knowledge in practice, they can improve the effectiveness of learning.

Second, the development of digital skills. Purposeful use of electronic devices can help young people develop skills in information retrieval, file management, digital communication, information presentation, and internet safety. This finding highlights an important point: completely excluding young people from digital environments may also restrict their opportunities to develop digital skills. Therefore, an appropriate approach is not to reject technology altogether, but to teach young people how to use it safely and purposefully.

Third, opportunities for global information exchange and intercultural communication. The internet allows young people to explore the history, languages, cultures, and social experiences of other countries. For example, watching educational videos in foreign languages, participating in international competitions, and exchanging knowledge with peers from different countries can broaden their worldviews.

At the same time, exposure to global information should be balanced with an understanding of national languages, history, and cultural heritage. While learning about other cultures, young people should also be encouraged to understand, critically reflect on, and consciously appreciate their own cultural values.

Fourth, creativity and self-expression. Electronic gadgets enable young people to create videos, develop graphic designs, learn programming, write texts, produce music, and participate in various

projects. Such activities differ from passive information consumption: young people do not merely view existing content but also create new products, solve problems, and express their ideas.

For this reason, the positive effects of gadget use should be evaluated not only by screen time but also by the type of activity being performed.

3.2. Negative Effects of Electronic Gadgets and Their Mechanisms

First, divided attention and interruptions in learning. Frequent switching between notifications, short videos, and social media may make it more difficult for students to concentrate on a single task for an extended period. For example, when a student responds to every notification while studying, the learning process is repeatedly interrupted. Under such conditions, more time may be required for coherent reasoning, understanding the subject, and consolidating information in memory.

The main issue is not necessarily the device itself, but the way it is used. Reading an electronic textbook or completing an exercise in an educational application is not equivalent to checking multiple notifications while performing the same task. Therefore, assessments of educational outcomes should consider task complexity, the purpose of device use, and the presence of distractions.

Second, difficulties in critically evaluating information. The internet contains reliable scientific information alongside unverified claims, false information, and manipulative content. If young people draw conclusions based on headlines or popularity without checking the original sources, they may develop inaccurate perceptions.

This issue is particularly important in the context of globalization because information circulates across different languages, cultural environments, and competing interests. Digital literacy should therefore extend beyond knowing how to operate a device. It should also include identifying sources, distinguishing evidence from opinion, comparing multiple independent sources, and avoiding the spread of suspicious information.

Third, mental well-being and online risks. Cyberbullying, abusive comments, threatening messages, and harmful content may contribute to anxiety, social pressure, or a reduced sense of safety among young people. UNICEF's 2025 report indicates that experiences such as online bullying and sexual violence are negatively associated with children's mental health.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe also emphasizes that the effects of digital technologies are not uniform and that some young people may be more vulnerable to online risks than others. Therefore, negative outcomes cannot be explained solely by the amount of time spent using digital devices. The nature of the content, an individual's mental state, the level of social support, and the quality of online relationships are also important factors.

Fourth, social comparison and the influence on values. Social media often presents carefully selected, edited, or particularly attractive aspects of people's lives. Young users may compare these portrayals with other people's everyday experiences and consequently form inaccurate judgments about their own abilities and achievements. Constant exposure to popular content may also encourage the adoption of particular styles, consumption habits, or social attitudes under peer or social pressure.

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Nevertheless, social media does not always have negative effects. It can also help young people find supportive communities, demonstrate their creative abilities, and exchange useful experiences. Therefore, analysis should focus not only on the platform itself but also on the content, relationships, and experiences associated with its use.

Fifth, disruption of daily routines and sleep. Uncontrolled use of gadgets in the evening may reduce time available for rest. If online activities regularly displace sleep, physical activity, homework, or family interaction, the balance of everyday life may be disrupted. Consequently, the effects of gadget use should be assessed not only by the time spent on screens but also by which other activities are displaced.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Positive and Negative Effects

The effects of electronic gadgets on young people can be compared using the following criteria:

Analytical criterion	**Positive opportunities**	**Potential negative consequences**
Education	Electronic resources and independent learning	Distraction and excessive reliance on ready-made answers
Thinking	Information retrieval and source comparison	Trust in unverified information
Communication	Sharing knowledge and experiences remotely	Cyberbullying and interpersonal conflicts
Worldview	Exposure to other cultures	The influence of stereotypes and manipulative content
Creativity	Creation of digital products	Excessive passive content consumption
Daily routine	Tools for time management	Reduced sleep and offline activities

The table demonstrates that the same technology can produce different outcomes under different circumstances. For example, using a smartphone to learn a foreign language may provide educational benefits, whereas constantly checking notifications on the same device may interrupt the learning process. Therefore, it is more scientifically appropriate to analyze the purpose, content, and consequences of gadget use than to classify electronic devices as inherently positive or negative.

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that the relationship between electronic gadgets and young people's minds cannot be explained by a single factor. Technology creates opportunities for acquiring knowledge and communicating with others, but its outcomes depend on users' digital literacy, personal habits, and surrounding environment.

The first important issue is the distinction between screen time and the content of use. UNICEF's report notes that there is insufficient clear evidence to conclude that screen time alone directly harms children's mental health. At the same time, evidence indicates negative effects associated with online bullying and other harmful experiences This suggests that evaluating gadget use solely in terms of

hours is insufficient. Although duration is an important indicator, content, purpose, daily routines, and personal experiences should also be considered.

The second issue concerns digital opportunities and inequality. Not all young people have equal access to reliable internet connections, modern devices, and digital educational resources. These differences may affect their opportunities to obtain information, develop digital skills, and participate in education. Therefore, the social impact of digital transformation should be assessed not only by the number of devices available but also by how equitably opportunities for meaningful use are distributed.

The third issue is the role of families and educational institutions. Regulating gadget use solely through prohibitions does not fully develop young people's ability to regulate their own behavior or critically evaluate information. A more effective approach involves parents and teachers maintaining open communication with young people, explaining digital risks, and establishing purposeful rules for device use together.

The fourth issue is the balance between individual responsibility and platform responsibility. Online safety should not be treated as the sole responsibility of young users. Digital platforms play an important role in reducing harmful content, protecting privacy, providing accessible reporting mechanisms for cyberbullying, and implementing safety measures appropriate for younger users. The WHO Regional Office for Europe also emphasizes the need for coordinated action by governments, the technology sector, and society to support young people's well-being in digital environments[3] [World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. *Addressing the Digital Determinants of Young People's Mental Health and Well-being: Web Annex—Findings from an Evidence Review and Policy Mapping*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2025. https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12187-51959-79851 pp.17-18]

In Uzbekistan, further local research is needed to investigate these issues. In particular, studies could examine the purposes of gadget use among different age groups, the balance between educational and recreational activities, sleep patterns, digital literacy, and exposure to online risks. Such evidence would help adapt broader international findings to the country's educational and social context.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The review of existing sources confirms that electronic gadgets have multifaceted effects on young people's minds and activities in the context of globalization. They create broad opportunities for learning, developing digital skills, accessing international information, and engaging in creative activities. At the same time, risks include distracting information flows, cyberbullying, harmful content, misinformation, and disruption of daily routines.

The main conclusion is that the effects of electronic gadgets are not determined solely by the duration of use. The purpose of use, quality of content, young people's digital literacy, family support, and the safety of the online environment are also important. Therefore, fostering a culture of conscious, balanced, and safe technology use is likely to be more effective than imposing an absolute prohibition on gadgets.

The following practical recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen media and digital literacy in educational institutions. Students should be taught to verify information sources, identify false information, protect personal data, and follow appropriate standards of online communication.
2. Develop purposeful gadget-use habits. It is advisable to allocate separate periods for studying, resting, and social interaction, limit unnecessary notifications, and reduce distracting activities before bedtime.
3. Improve parents' knowledge of digital education. Parents should act not merely as figures who impose restrictions, but as partners who provide guidance and teach young people to use technology safely.
4. Improve mechanisms for preventing cyberbullying. Educational institutions should establish safe reporting procedures, provide support to affected students, and conduct preventive awareness activities.
5. Expand local scientific research. Representative surveys should be conducted among young people in Uzbekistan to investigate gadget-use patterns, digital skills, and potential risks.
6. Promote equal access to digital opportunities. Supporting young people who have limited access to educational resources can help reduce digital inequality.

In conclusion, successful participation by young people in the digital environment under conditions of globalization depends not merely on possessing modern gadgets, but on using them in accordance with the principles of critical thinking, personal responsibility, and information security. Expanding the positive opportunities offered by digital technologies while reducing their potential negative effects requires cooperation among families, educational institutions, government bodies, and digital platforms.

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