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IMPACT OF YOUTUBE ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORS AND ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The emergence of social media platforms has revolutionized the way people communicate, access information, and interact with each other. YouTube, in particular, has become a ubiquitous source of entertainment and information for people of all ages, including children. With the increasing availability of smartphones and other mobile devices, children now have access to YouTube content at their fingertips, anytime and anywhere. This has raised concerns among parents, educators, and researchers about the potential impact of YouTube on children's behaviors and activities. This paper reviews the literature on the impact of YouTube on children's behaviors and activities, focusing on the effects of YouTube on their social, cognitive, and physical development. A systematic review of relevant studies was conducted, and the findings were synthesized and analyzed to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge in this field. The review found that YouTube has a profound impact on children's behaviors and activities, both positive and negative. On the positive side, YouTube provides children with a vast array of educational and informative content that can enhance their cognitive development and learning. Additionally, YouTube offers opportunities for children to connect with peers and engage in social interactions that promote their social development. On the negative side, YouTube exposure has been associated with a range of negative outcomes, including increased aggression, decreased physical activity, and reduced academic performance. Exposure to inappropriate content, such as violent or sexualized content, has also been linked to negative psychological effects, including anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the review found that the impact of YouTube on children's behaviors and activities varies depending on several factors, including the type of content, the child's age, and their level of parental supervision. Children who are younger and have less parental supervision are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of YouTube exposure. To mitigate the negative effects of YouTube exposure, several strategies have been suggested, including parental mediation, media literacy education, and content regulation. Parental mediation involves actively monitoring and regulating children's access to YouTube content, while media literacy education focuses on equipping children with the skills to critically evaluate and analyze media messages. Content regulation involves enforcing policies and guidelines that restrict access to inappropriate content.

Keywords: Inappropriate Content. Children, Inappropriate Behaviour

Introduction

Social media is a platform that empowers users to participate in activities and events related to its content as a means of communicating with their peers, including other users in the system and society, to express their own opinions by combining them to create their content.

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In today's era, parents are increasingly proficient in using innovative technology and are comfortable with various programs and online platforms in which their children and adolescents are engaging. However, some parents may find it challenging to connect with their digitally-savvy children online for various reasons. One of these reasons is a lack of fundamental understanding of these new forms of socialization that are crucial to their children's lives. These parents often lack the technical skills necessary to keep pace with their children in the rapidly-evolving online landscape. As a result, they may struggle to communicate effectively with their children or monitor their online activities, leading to potential disconnects and misunderstandings between parents and their children. It is crucial for parents to continuously educate themselves about these emerging technologies and their impact on their children's lives to ensure that they can effectively support and guide them in their digital endeavors (Rideout, et., al., 2010).

Digital media devices have become an integral part of modern life, occupying a significant portion of people's daily routines. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive examination of their applications and impacts. Specifically, individuals, especially parents, need to be aware of the positive and negative effects that these technologies have on children (Common Sense Media, 2009). While social media provides children with new opportunities to communicate and practice social skills, it is important to recognize that not all social skills are developed through digital media. Despite the potential benefits, when children spend the majority of their time communicating through devices, they may lack crucial face-to-face social skills. Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between utilizing digital media tools and cultivating in-person social skills to ensure well-rounded development in children (Bélanger, 2006).

Background

Generation Z has grown up in a world heavily reliant on digital technology, necessitating the acquisition of digital skills to keep up. Today's children are particularly proficient in using mobile phone applications to access various social media platforms. The 21st century has witnessed rapid developments in innovation, expanded networking, and communication. As a result, people have had to develop digital skills to navigate this rapidly changing information era (Strasburger, et., al.,2010). Continuous advancements in digital technology have made it imperative to acquire technical abilities to stay abreast of the latest tools and techniques. The younger generation, in particular, excels at using digital media for communication and socialization, emphasizing the importance of providing them with proper guidance and education to ensure responsible and effective use of these tools (Uhls, et., al., 2014).

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The upward trend of internet usage, which began in the 1990s, continues to prevail today, and social media stands out as one of the primary driving forces behind this trend. Social media enables individuals to engage in socialization with greater ease and convenience, thereby reducing the resources required for social activities. This contributes to the sustained growth of internet usage as a vertical trend. As social media platforms continue to evolve and adapt to users' needs, more people are likely to join the digital landscape, resulting in further expansion of the internet and its associated technologies. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of social media on society and to use these platforms responsibly to ensure their continued growth and development (DiMaggio, 2001).

According to the 2017 We Are Social report (We Are Social, 2017), approximately 50% of the world's population, or 3.77 billion people, utilize the internet, while 37% of the global population, or 2.8 billion individuals, use social media. Furthermore, 66% of the world's population, or 4.92 billion people, are mobile users, of which 2.56 million are social media users. In light of these statistics, many families are concerned about the potential risks associated with their children's social media use, including who they interact with, how they communicate, and what content they view and share online. These concerns have prompted many parents to seek ways to monitor and regulate their children's online activity to ensure their safety and well-being.

Children learn best through observation, meaning that the behavior, frequency, and purpose of social media usage by family members and those in their environment serve as a model for them. When parents, grandparents, and others in the family use social media in a positive manner, children are more likely to spend a normal amount of time in the virtual environment and avoid exposure to harmful content and dangerous individuals. Moreover, if the family is a conscious user of social media, the child may also be positively influenced. However, it is important to note that there may be an increase in risks, and children should be guided toward real-world physical environments rather than social media. Adolescents are at greater risk when using social media than most adults realize, with most risks falling into the following categories: peer-to-peer interactions, exposure to inappropriate content, lack of understanding of online privacy issues, and influence from third-party advertising groups.

Problem Statement

In today's digital age, children's exposure to social media and online platforms has become ubiquitous. With the rise of platforms like YouTube and the pervasive influence of social media, children are spending increasing amounts of time in the virtual world. While these digital spaces offer opportunities for learning, entertainment, and social interaction, they also raise concerns about their impact on children's behavior, well-being, and development. Parents and caregivers are often left grappling with questions about the consequences of this digital exposure and how to navigate the challenges it presents (Board, 2001).

The problem at hand is the need to comprehensively understand the effects of YouTube and social media on children, both positive and negative, and to provide insights into how parents and guardians can support their children's healthy digital engagement

(Cheng, et., al., 2019). This issue is of paramount importance as it directly affects the well-being and development of the younger generation in an increasingly digital society.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of YouTube on children's behavior, including their cognitive, emotional, and social development?

2. How does the use of social media influence children's activities and interactions both online and offline?

3. What are the changes observed in children's behavior as a result of exposure to YouTube, and are these changes predominantly positive or negative?

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the impact of YouTube on children.

- To examine how social media is affecting children's activities.

- To investigate changes in children's behavior due to exposure to YouTube, whether these changes are positive or negative.

Hypothesis

H_1: In my opinion, the usage of YouTube by children is increasing day by day. Most children use YouTube while eating, during playtime, and study time, both for entertainment and learning purposes.

H_2: Most parents complain about their child's behavior due to social media site usage, as they tend to imitate what they see on YouTube.

H_3: Mostly children watch cartoons, funny clips, animated series, dramas, and also use it for educational purposes.

H_4: The use of technology and social media sites from such a young age negatively affects children's social lives.

H_5: Children may be distancing themselves from their parents as they spend more time on social media sites.

Literature Review

Earlier research has examined the various effects of social media on the cognitive development and behavior of children and adolescents. A plethora of topics were examined, including obesity, aggressive behavior and violence, drug use, suicide, sexual activity, and the promotion of stereotyping. Numerous articles have highlighted these findings, serving as the foundation for much of the recent research on this topic. For instance, Dietz and Strasburger's review in 1991 drew attention to these earlier findings.

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The primary aim of this investigation is to assess how social media affects the well-being of children and adolescents. To achieve this, we conducted a review of the relevant literature by searching the PsycINFO database using subject headings such as 'YouTube' and combining them with behavioral changes, whether positive or negative, in children as a result of social media use. While a few studies focused on children, the majority centered on teenagers and young adults. The most noteworthy impact of social media on young people's health was found to be on their mental well-being. However, it was also discovered that social media usage affects children's daily routines, behaviors, habits, activities, as well as their mental and physical health.

The **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** has published five well-researched policy statements pertaining to the media during the past decade:

- "Media Education" (Committee on Public Education, 1999)
- "Impact of Music Lyrics and Rock Music Videos on Children and Youth" (Committee on Communications, 1996)
- "Media Violence" (Committee on Communications, 1995c)
- "Sexuality, Contraception, and the Media" (Committee on Communications, 1995a)
- "Children, Adolescents, and Advertising" (Committee on Communications, 1995b)
- "Children, Adolescents, and Television" (Committee on Communications, 1995d)

Methodology

To investigate the impact of YouTube on children's behaviors and activities, a quantitative research methodology was employed. The research involved conducting a survey with parents selected through convenience sampling, as they are in a position to observe and report on their child's behavior and activities on a daily basis.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to parents using Google Forms, and data was collected through responses from both fathers and mothers.

The research was conducted in Karachi, Pakistan.

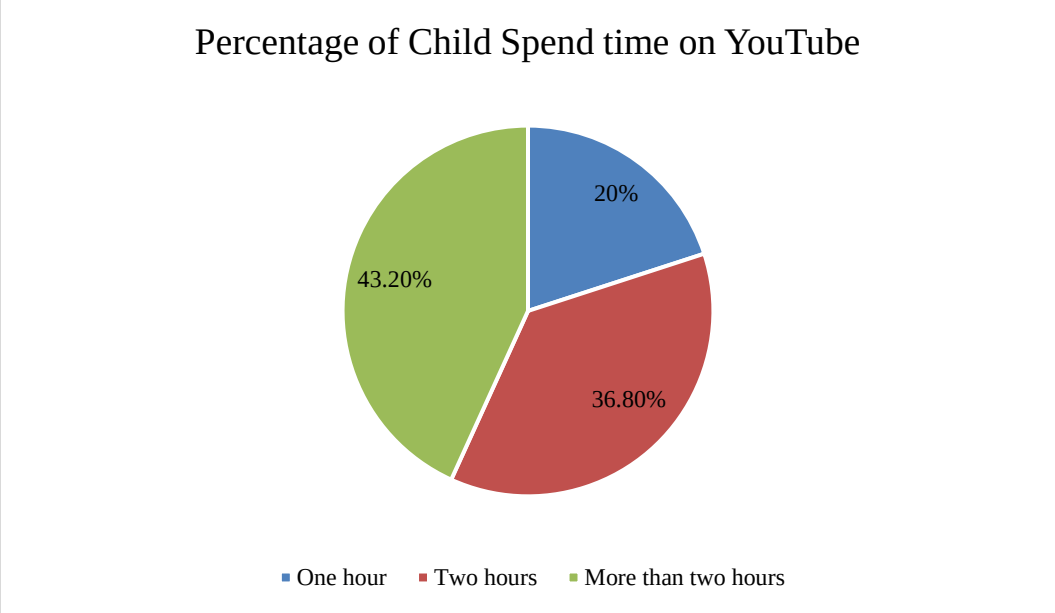
Findings:

The findings obtained through the online survey are summarized below:

A total of 126 participants filled out the survey forms, providing 126 responses in total.

Question 1: How much time does your child spend on YouTube?

- One hour: 20%
- Two hours: 36.8%
- More than two hours: 43.2%

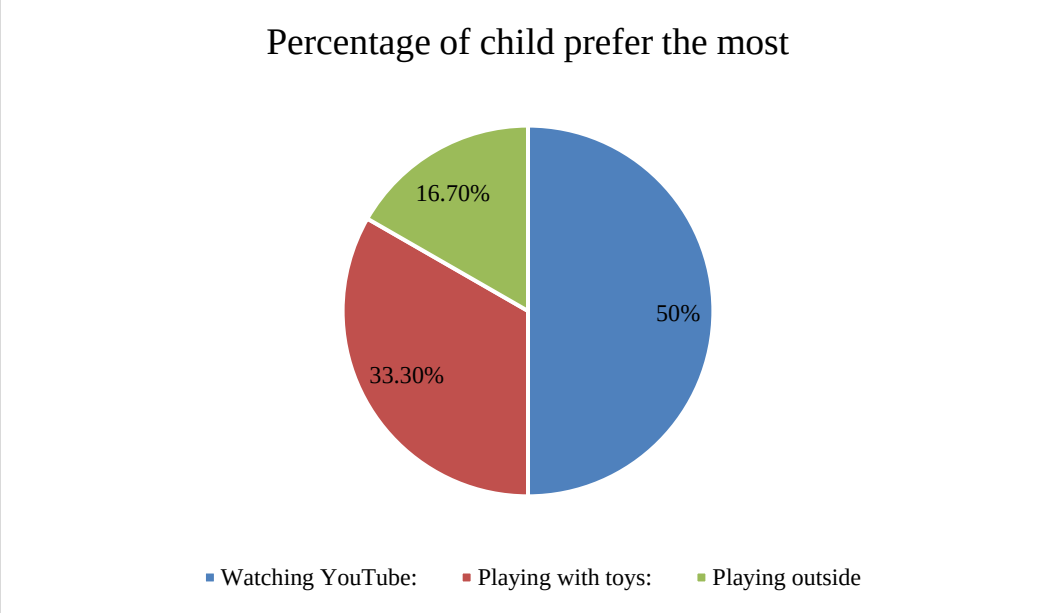


The results above indicate that the majority, specifically 43.2% of parents, reported that their children spend more than 2 hours a day on YouTube. In contrast, 36.8% of parents stated that their children spend exactly 2 hours a day on the platform, and 20% of parents mentioned that their children spend just 1 hour a day on YouTube.

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Question number 2: What does your child prefer the most?

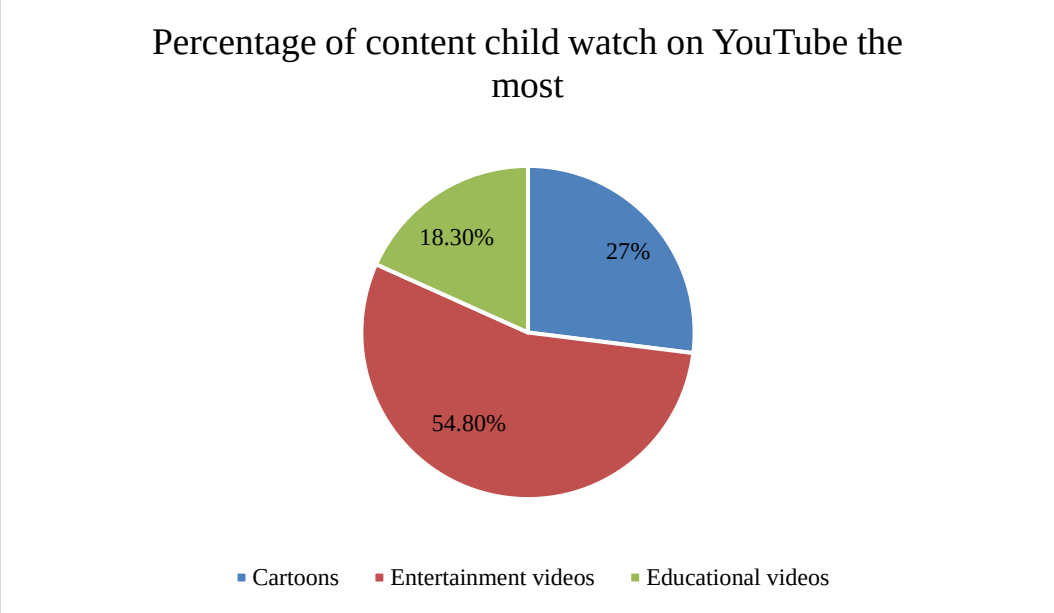
- Watching YouTube: 50%
- Playing with toys: 33.3%
- Playing outside. 16.7%



This question is inquiring about the primary preference of children, whether they prefer watching YouTube or playing with toys. According to the responses, 50% of parents indicated that their children prefer watching YouTube, while 33.3% mentioned that their children prefer playing with toys and 16.7% prefer Playing outside.

Question no 03: What content does your child watch on YouTube the most?

- Cartoons. 27%
- Entertainment videos 54.8%
- Educational videos. 18.3%



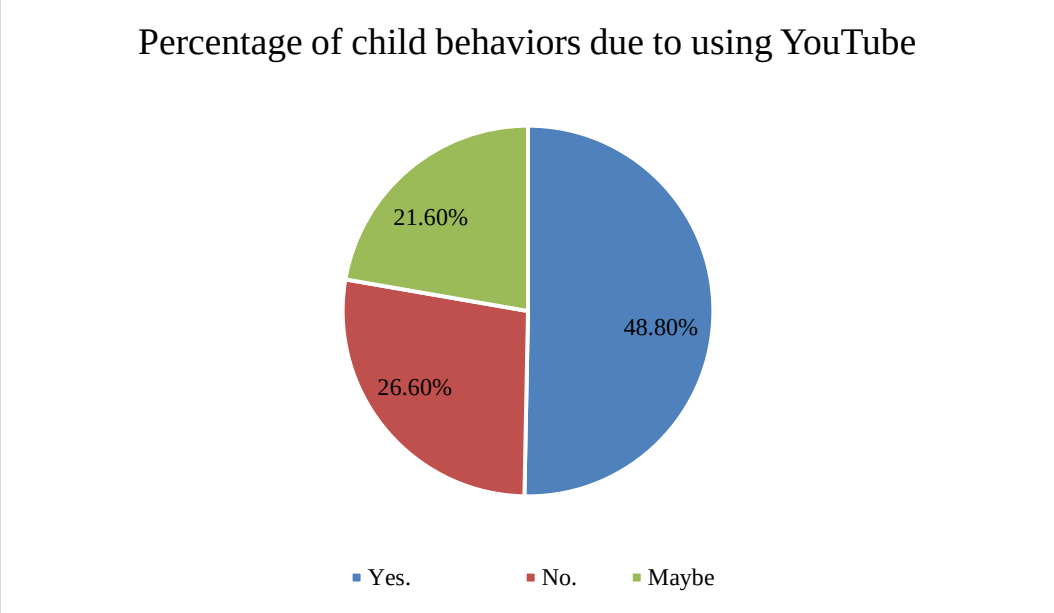
The above result reveals that the majority of children, specifically 54.8%, opt to watch entertainment videos on YouTube. In contrast, 27% of children prefer to watch cartoons, and a smaller percentage, 18.3%, favor educational videos.

This data illustrates the content preferences of children when it comes to YouTube. The highest percentage gravitates towards entertainment, followed by those who enjoy cartoons, while the lowest proportion opts for educational content.

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Question no 04: Do you feel changes in your child behaviors due to using YouTube?

- Yes. 48.8%
- No. 26.6%
- Maybe 21.6%

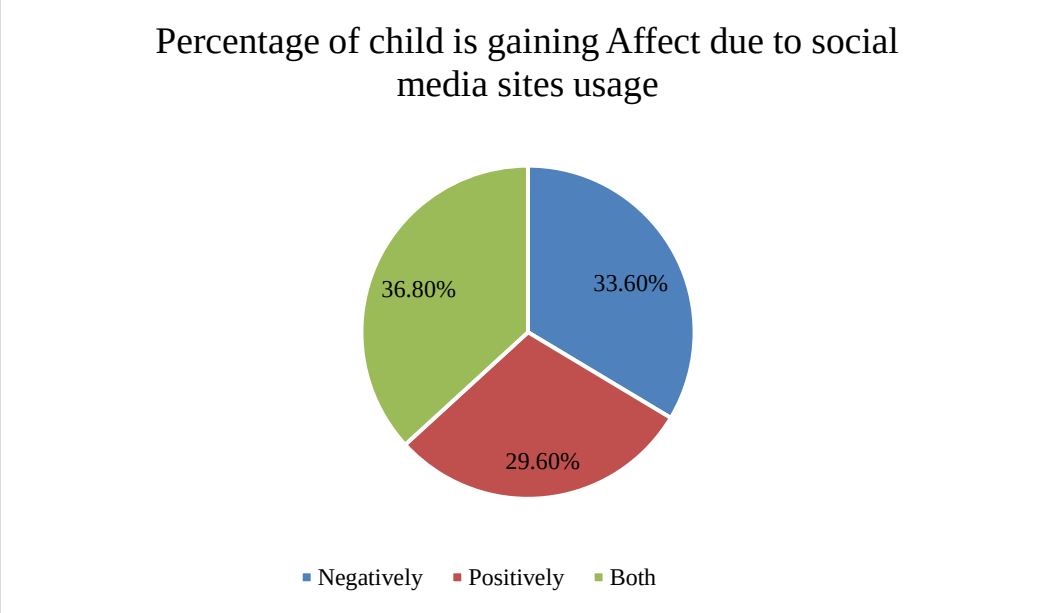


The above result indicates that the majority of parents, comprising 48.8%, observe changes in their child's behavior as a result of using YouTube. However, it's noteworthy that 29.6% of parents report no noticeable changes in their child's behavior. Additionally, 21.6% of parents express uncertainty about whether there have been any changes.

This data sheds light on the impact of YouTube on children's behavior, with a significant portion of parents noticing changes, while others do not perceive any alterations, and some are uncertain about the effects.

Question no 05: What do you think your child is gaining positively or effected negatively due to social media sites usage?

- Negatively. 33.6%
- Positively 29.6%
- Both. 36.8%



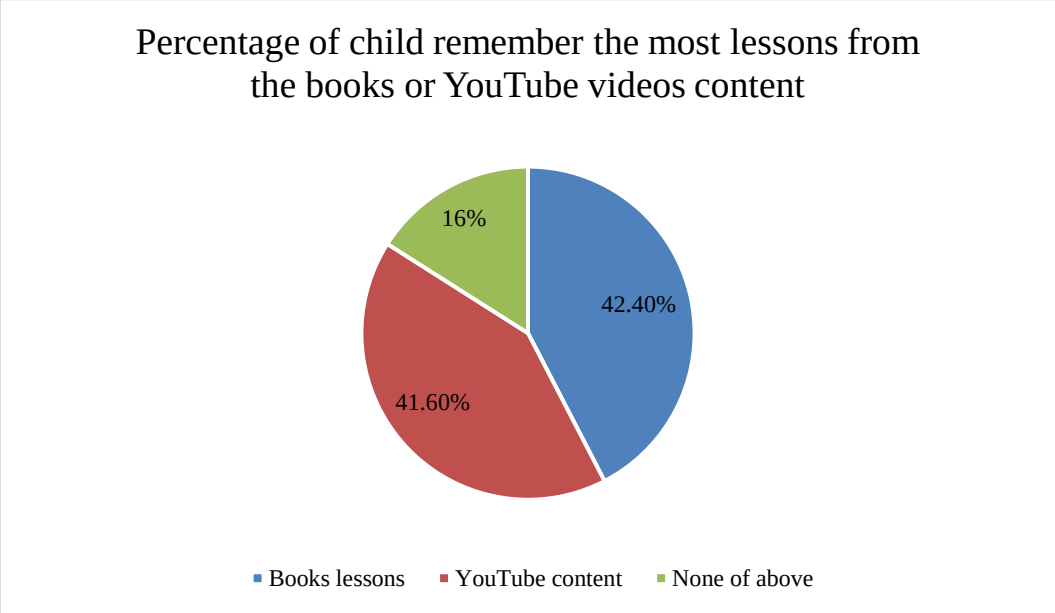
The data reveals diverse perspectives among parents regarding the impact of YouTube on their children's behavior and activities. Here's a breakdown:

- 33.6% of parents express that they observe negative effects on their child's behavior and activities.
- A minority, comprising 29.6% of parents, perceive positive or good changes.
- The majority, which accounts for 36.8% of parents, believe that YouTube has both negative and positive effects on their children's behaviors.

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Question no 06: What does your child remember the most lessons from the books or YouTube videos content?

- Books lessons 42.4%
- YouTube content 41.6%
- None of above 16%

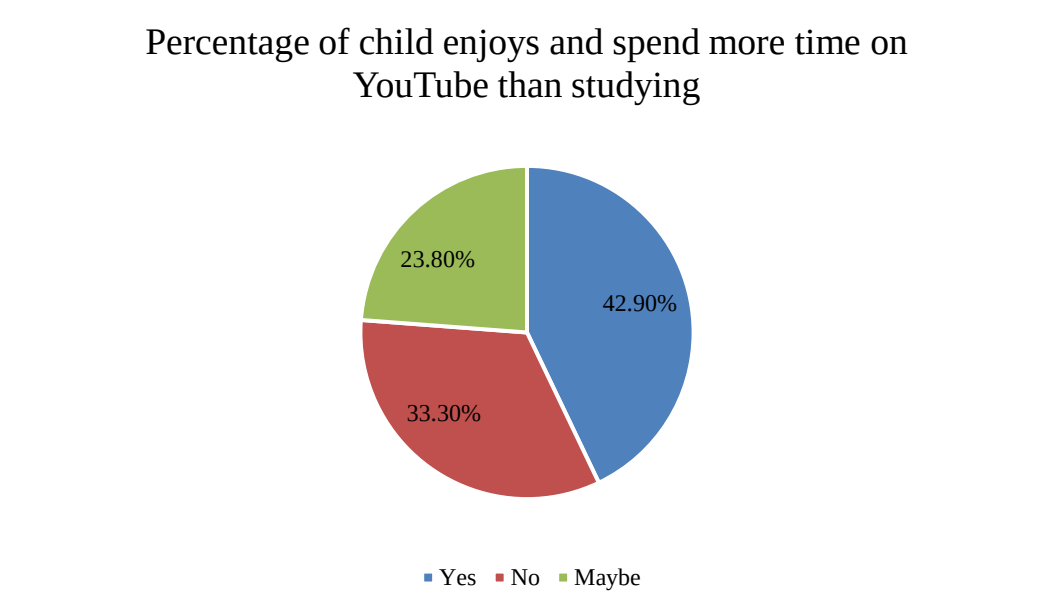


The data indicates that when it comes to what children remember the most, there is a relatively close distribution among the options:

- 42.4% of parents report that their children remember lessons from books the most.
- Slightly behind, 41.6% of parents state that their children remember content from YouTube videos the most.
- A smaller portion, 16%, mentioned that their children remember none of the above options most frequently.

Question no 07: Your child enjoys and spend more time on YouTube than studying?

- Yes. 42.9%
- No. 33.3%
- Maybe. 23.8%



The data indicates that:

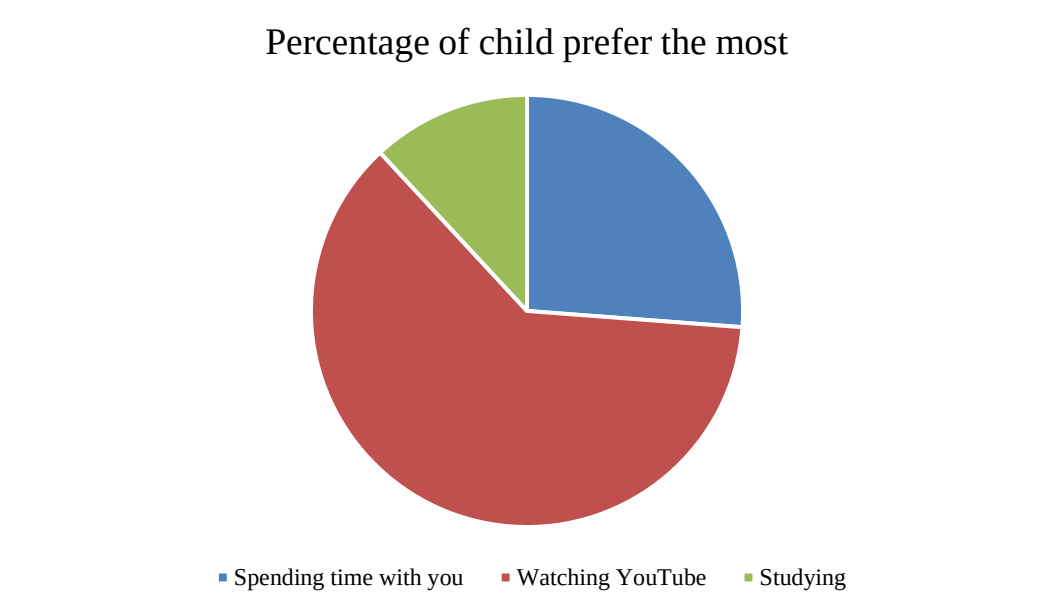
- A majority, 42.9% of children, enjoy and spend more time on YouTube than studying.
- On the other hand, 33.3% of children don't prioritize YouTube over studying, showing a more balanced approach to their activities.
- There is a smaller group, 23.8%, where parents are unsure whether their child enjoys and spends more time on YouTube than studying.

This data highlights that a significant portion of children prefer YouTube over studying, potentially indicating a challenge in maintaining a healthy balance between entertainment and education.

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Question no 08: From the below list what does your child prefer the most?

- Spending time with you. 26.2%
- Watching YouTube. 61.9%
- Studying. 11.9%



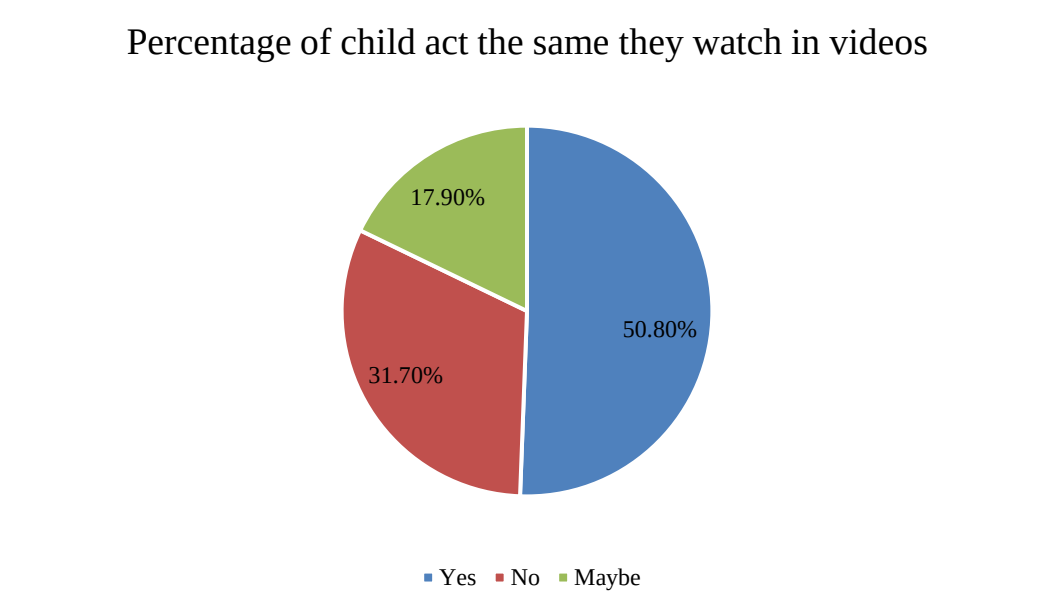
The data reveals the following preferences among children:

- The majority, 61.9% of children, prefer watching YouTube over other activities.
- A smaller percentage, 26.2%, prefer spending time with their parents.
- A minority, 11.9%, opt for studying during their free time.

This data suggests that a significant portion of children prioritize watching YouTube over spending time with their parents or studying. It highlights the need for parents to engage their children in more meaningful activities and ensure a balanced approach to their leisure time.

Question no 09: Does your child act the same they watch in videos?

- Yes 50.80%
- No 31.70%
- Maybe 17.90%



The survey results indicate the following regarding children's behavior:

- A majority, 50.8% of parents, believe that their children imitate the behavior they observe on YouTube.
- A smaller percentage, 31.7% of parents, do not think their children imitate YouTube content.
- A significant number, 17.5% of parents, remain neutral on this matter.

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Results and Discussion

The results from the survey filled out by parents clearly show that children are spending more than two hours a day on YouTube, with a majority of 43.2% of parents agreeing that their children spend more than two hours online. This excessive screen time is leading to various health issues, both physical and mental. The rays emitted from screens are adversely affecting children's eyesight. Additionally, spending extended periods on YouTube is contributing to laziness, as children are becoming less inclined to engage in indoor or outdoor play. Moreover, their education is also at risk as they prioritize YouTube over learning. When given a choice between playing outside, playing with toys, or watching YouTube, 50% of parents reported that their children prefer and enjoy watching YouTube the most. This preference for screen time is alarming, as it is hindering children from participating in physical activities, affecting their health. Children should be active, but this routine is endangering the Z generation's well-being.

Regarding the content children prefer to watch on YouTube, the majority (54.8%) of parents observed their children watching entertainment content, while the rest watched cartoons, and only a small percentage (18%) watched educational or academic videos. This suggests that children are not using YouTube for educational purposes, and their time and energy are being wasted on non-educational content. The lack of content regulation by authorities means that children watching entertainment videos on YouTube may be exposed to vulgar, explicit, or abusive content, which can have emotional and mental repercussions. Children may encounter offensive language and inappropriate material, negatively affecting their behavior. A significant portion of parents (48.8%) noticed several changes in their child's behavior and activities due to excessive online time, including changes in attitudes, style, and activities. While 36.8% of parents observed both negative and positive changes, 33.6% of parents believed their children were mostly affected negatively by being online.

In terms of what children remember the most, 41.6% of children remember content from YouTube, while 42.4% of parents stated that their children remember lessons from books. A substantial 42.9% of parents reported that their children enjoy and spend more time on YouTube watching cartoons and entertainment videos than on studying. This poses a significant threat to children's education and academic progress.

When given the choice between watching YouTube and spending quality time with their parents, a majority (61.9%) of parents agreed that their children prefer watching YouTube. This detachment from parents can negatively impact children's emotional and moral development. Additionally, 50.8% of parents reported that their children mimic the behavior they see in YouTube videos, attempting to replicate voices, languages, styles, actions, movements, fights, dances, and even shouting. They use the same words and tones in their speech.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that YouTube usage has both positive and negative effects on children, with negative impacts being more prominent. Excessive YouTube use jeopardizes their physical and mental health, exposes them to inappropriate content, and affects their education negatively. It is crucial to establish a balance between screen time and other activities and to monitor the content children access on YouTube. Parents should

limit their children's YouTube usage and encourage them to engage in physical activities, prioritize education, and spend quality time with their families. Proper checks and balances can be highly effective in safeguarding the well-being of the Z generation.

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