ARTICLE

Adolescents and technologies: walking the tightrope

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Abstract

This survey study explores the impact of social media usage and its ensuing addiction on the well-being of adolescents aged 13 to 18 in Brazil, as well as their practice of cyberbullying. As a component of a comprehensive international survey, a questionnaire was administered to a convenience sampling of students enrolled in public and private educational institutions. The results indicate that adolescents use social media extensively and for long periods of time. A significant group of them are negatively impacted in their study and work activities. Addiction affects a significant proportion, and deprivation causes malaise. The internet has emerged as a platform for the perpetration of cyberbullying by a substantial proportion of teenage users. Thus, in combination with peer pressure, the Internet is a powerful competitor to institutions such as school and family in the area of Education. However, a small proportion of parents and guardians are involved in guiding or controlling social media use.

Keywords: Adolescence. Teenage Years. Technology. Technological Dependence. School Violence. Cyberbullying.

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1 Introduction

Technologies are not limited to direct application; rather, they involve simultaneous and interconnected transformations of society and culture. Similarly, the employment of chipped and polished stone axes, in conjunction with metallurgy, is frequently regarded as a critical dividing line in the periodization of prehistory. In the hands of humans, these technologies have precipitated profound changes in the modalities of work, production, and the establishment of novel relationships between nature and humanity, as well as between human beings. In a similar manner, the Industrial Revolution is also divided into periods according to the energy utilized. The energy sources include steam, oil, electricity, and digitalization.

The focal point of this article is adolescence, a social construct that emerged in urban-industrial societies that have abolished child labor, at least in theory, and are progressively extending the duration of schooling. Social media developed in such a way as to entangle people and, in the contrast of light and dark, make it possible both to facilitate study and communication over compressed distances and times, and to develop compulsive and uncontrolled behavior. In this scenario, adolescence seems to be walking on a tightrope, which tends to lead to falls. From a reductionist standpoint, adolescence can be regarded as a preparatory period for adulthood, however, it can also be considered a period characterized by its own goals (Gomes, 2013). Designed to generate the most prolonged use, technologies serve a variety of purposes, from cultures of peace to cultures of violence. This paper presents the findings of an international survey that examined the use of social media by adolescents and the degree to which they are dependent on these platforms.

2 Theoretical map: complexity

Technology was a relevant focus for Weber (1968), associated with rational-legal domination and bureaucracy. According to him, science and technology focus on the notion of increasing rationalization, disenchanting the world and replacing value-oriented action with instrumental rationality and impersonal structures. Science tells us what we want and can do, not what we should do. This is why the progressively rationalized world generates void. With their dignity and individual freedom curbed, human beings become a cog in an iron cage. This concept locates the meaninglessness of the world and the surveillance society (Zuboff, 2021). Now, in the fourth industrial revolution, through consumer culture, the iron cage can structure our daily lives with political and economic devices capable of exerting social coercion. Indeed, in the transition from solid to liquid modernity (Bauman, 2001), as science

and technology permeate institutions, the old justifications are disrupted, and the void leads students to seek out charismatic leaders –including teachers, rather than bureaucratic leaders (Dubet, 2013). Communicating with students is made easier by their own brilliance and understanding of youth cultures. In contrast to pure rationality, affectivity and dialog are of great importance in the relationship between educators and students (Lira; Gomes, 2018), so that the school moves away from the ideal type of bureaucracy.

Han (2022) also sheds light on other issues, such as when new technologies – including artificial intelligence and robotization – reach new breakthroughs and impacts. The author characterizes infocracy as a form of domination. The plethora of networked information is processed by algorithms and artificial intelligence, determining social, economic and political processes controlled by oligarchies capable of catalyzing data for surveillance, control, and increasingly fine-tuned prognosis of psychopolitical behavior, i.e. from product advertising to the choice of candidates in elections. Networks lead to passivity, like the television-viewer duo. The visual is more relevant than the textual, while speed, dromocracy, or the mastery of speed, minimizes time for reflection: the faster, the better (Virilio, 2009). In teaching, we move quickly from ready-made formulas to applications, with no time to find out how they were conceived.

In a time of rapid change, adolescents get involved with the newest technologies. Among other factors, adolescence resulted from the extension of life expectancy (in prehistoric times women could be grandmothers in their 20s). As a result, a lucrative consumer market has sprung up for this age group. These transformations are marked in time and space by puberty, which involves a biopsychosocial revolution. Like a vortex within a vortex, these are drastic changes in the midst of a whirlwind of social change. Adolescents move from the passive voice to the active voice: from heteronomy to autonomy, protagonism and subjectivity. Therefore, adolescence is brought together and divided according to technologies, which provide them with transient environments of colors, sounds, figures, and fast movements that are not conducive to concentration. It is no wonder that children and teenagers get bored in classes where there exists only the teacher, the chalkboard and the textbook: their concentration is short-lived. They are subjected to difficult situations when it comes to controlling technology and they need to react to the aggressions that their colleagues carry out with hidden hands. There are influencers who are set up as models for "followers", like masters and slaves, acting in consumer society, with fashions, products, and trends to be followed. Peer pressure (social coercion) is exercised by these means much more effectively than by the family and school. The feeling of freedom is actually false. People are encouraged to show off and state their opinions,

which allows their profiles to be identified. Popularity among peers is expressed by the number of clicks and likes. Thus, those in the internet fishbowl have to respond to the behavioral expectations of others.

Adolescents' appropriation of time is a strategic milestone in achieving autonomy, but this happens in today's fast-paced world where we live like hamsters on a wheel that spins faster and faster as a result of the triad of growth, acceleration, and densification of innovations (Rosa, 2019). This imperative constitutes the iron cage of growing bureaucratization (Weber, 1968). This is the context in which groups of teenagers live, subject to the pressures of the achievement-oriented school, where they are urged to learn more in the same amount of time in order to climb higher and higher in school evaluations. In addition, the demands of peer groups require them to fit into the hierarchy of adolescent society, becoming winners or losers. In the bubble of their bedrooms, they live in a parallel universe with exciting sensations such as living other lives without real consequences, assuming avatars, practicing sexting, imposing and suffering cyberbullying, receiving and practicing bullying, and surfing the dark Internet. Many parents consider the silence of the bedroom to be a sign of safety, while in fact there is a whirlwind unfolding there (Gomes, 2012).

There is light and darkness in technology. On the one hand, they are a means of socialization, bringing people together in space and time. Technologies can open new avenues for better research and learning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was an alternative to closed schools and it mitigated loneliness (Sousa *et al*., 2024; Gomes; Sousa, 2023). Furthermore, technology helps students in their academic works in presential Education. However, aggression and intimidation have been transferred to technological media, giving rise to cyberbullying, with greater pervasiveness and consequences made possible by the shadow of anonymity. It also harbors the dynamics of the aggressor-victim-witness triangle (Olweus, 1998; Evangelio *et al*., 2022), similar trends in perpetration and victimization, such as the majority of male aggressors and the majority of female victims. The features of victimization due to physical characteristics, skin and hair color, being overweight, being an immigrant, using different dialect expressions, health conditions, less ability to defend oneself, social isolation, previous victimization, previous sexual assault, impulsiveness, and others are also recurring (Amado *et al*., 2009; Vieira *et al*., 2016; Zhu *et al*., 2021).

Especially in early adolescence, peer pressure is intense in the sense of behavioral singularization, rejecting diversity. It starts in elementary school

and peaks in early adolescence (Olweus, 1998; Abramovay, 2006; Cillessen; Schwartz; Mayeux, 2011). Cyberbullying affected one in two 11-18 year olds in 11 European countries, six in ten 13-17 year olds in the United States and one in three primary school students in South Africa (UNESCO, 2021). Online sexual violence affected around a quarter of the public surveyed. The amount of time spent online has become a risk factor with greater scope and public impact than face-to-face bullying. The results include psychological distress, self-harm, suicidal ideation and practices, low self-esteem, eating disorders, difficulties with social relationships, and others. As protective factors, social integration into groups, parental support, lower levels of family conflict, school environment, cooperative learning, teaching personal and social responsibility, among others, tend to prevent victimization (Zhu *et al*., 2021; Evangelio *et al*., 2022). In relation to screen addiction, socialization difficulties and introversion, habit formation and disconnection anxiety (fear of disconnecting and losing information) can lead to compulsive behavior at various ages.

In relation to surveys and reviews of surveys set in Brazil, TIC Kids Online Brasil (Centro Regional…, 2024) revealed a growing number of internet users between the ages of 9 and 17, and starting at an increasingly younger age: 93% or 24.5 million young people were users in 2024. Urban areas, people of higher socioeconomic status, the Southeast and South regions, and private school students were the most favored. The main means of accessing the media, in increasing proportions, was the cell phone, while the less well-off young people had to go to internet cafes. Eighty-two percent did research for schoolwork, while 88% listened to music.

Other studies show forms and consequences of media use that are in part similar to those found in international studies. The risks are similar, such as contact with pedophiles and offenders in general. The risks of addiction are also high, causing depression and anxiety, with media time linked to mental illness. The consequences of cyberbullying are consistent in most parts of the world: victims are more likely to consider suicide, use addictive substances, and suffer from anxiety and depression (Pordeus; Mesquita; Pordeus, 2022). Certain personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, being overweight and being female, are also more targeted for aggression. It should be remembered that adolescence is a period of subjectivation, autonomy, and the search for recognition and integration into the peer group and into other peer groups, in which horizontal socialization, among peers, takes precedence over vertical, intergenerational socialization, according to Coleman's (1963) classic study on adolescent society.

From this selective review of the literature, we can conclude that information technology is both a consequence of and a factor in globalization. Its benefits and difficulties need to be contextualized according to society and culture, but there is a global convergence on the risks and problems it creates; moreover new forms of escapism as a means of evading quotidian challenges and inhabiting the cyber realm.

3 Methodology

The general objective of this international and comparative research is to examine the impact of social media use and addiction on the well-being and practice of cyberbullying among adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 in different countries. The specific objectives for this article are: 1) characterize the use of social media; 2) verify the existence of media addiction among adolescents and its effects on their well-being and self-esteem; 3) characterize cyberbullying practices, if applicable; 4) verify the variations in behavior and effects according to socio-demographic characteristics and the role of the family in terms of their involvement and monitoring of media use in order to prevent its effects.

The project, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Aleksander Veraksa, received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Lomonosov Moscow State University's Department of Psychology (Opinion No. 2023/37, dated April 3, 2023). The questionnaire, with minor adaptations, has 121 items. Adolescence is distinguished between initial and late periods. The predominant feature of the former is pluralization, i.e., the integration of peers to the group values, attitudes and behaviors, whereas in late adolescence prevails individualization (Barrère, 2011; Cyllessen; Schwartz; Mayeux, 2011; Liu *et al*., 2022). Therefore, the sample is composed of two age groups approximately of the same size, respectively of 13–15 years and 16–18 years, counting on almost the same number of female and male students.

In the Brazilian Education system, according to the Unesco International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), these age groups should be in ISCED 2 (lower secondary school) or school years 6 to 9, corresponding to the 11–14/15-year age group, and ISCED 3 (higher secondary school) or school years 10 to 12. The sample used in Brazil is convenience sampling. Five educational institutions were selected for the administration of the questionnaires: two public, two private and one private religious social project. The choice of these types of schools intended to encompass socioeconomic and ethnic diversities of families and students in an unequal country. As it is notorious in international literature, American countries depended on African and originary people's

slavery for their colonial exploitation, reflecting on their social stratification (Hasenbalg; Silva, 1990; Wilkerson, 2020). As public schools are free, while private ones are paid, the spectrum of students is diversified.

The institutions were chosen on the basis of their public known data and opinions of an expert pool so that they represent approximately the regional panorama. There was no random choice either of schools or students.

Public Institution No. 1 is located in an area of the Brazilian capital that is very active in commerce and services. Its Human Development Index (HDI) is high, and its per capita income corresponds to 84% of the average income of the Federal District[1]. It has 780 ISCED 3 students and almost 70 teachers.

Public Institution No. 2 is located in the metropolitan region of a large capital city in northeastern Brazil, one of the country's most disadvantaged regions. Municipal HDI was 0.675 in 2010, lower than that of the state. The selected school has unsatisfactory physical facilities, but the teaching staff is highly qualified and dedicated.

The two private institutions (4 and 5) are religious and accept students of all religions and no religion. One is located in the center of the capital, and the other is in a region considered to have a medium-high per capita income (in 2018, 71% of the Federal District's average per capita income, the highest in the country[2]). Both are guided by the pedagogy of a 19th-century Catholic leader in Italy who worked with disadvantaged youth during the Industrial Revolution (Caliman, 2009).

In addition to these educational institutions, the research was also applied to a socio-educational project run by the Order of St. John Bosco (Institution No. 3), which introduces teenagers and young people who need to earn their own income to work, accompanies them and promotes their success as apprentices.

The questionnaire was administered to classes in the school years corresponding to the age established in the research. In general, there was one class for grade in the morning shift. If there was more than one class in a given year, only one was drawn. All the students present in classrooms, with due authorization by parents or responsible, filled out the instrument. Refusal rate was very low. Students

[1] District Household Sample Survey, 2021. Available at: Apresentacao_Oeste.pdf. Accessed on Jan 29, 2025.

[2] Available at: https://www.ipe.df.gov.br/pdad-2018/. Accessed on: Jan 30, 2025.

were very interested and almost all of them obtained the above-mentioned form. Therefore, the data is not representative of a city, a region or even a country, as it is an exploratory research, i.e., research on poorly understood themes, in particular in their regions, to obtain insights and constitute a basis for other research projects, surveys or naturalistic projects. The sample reached 536 respondents, more than double the minimum of 200 participants for the international project (Table 1).

Table 1 – Distribution of respondents by age group and gender

Age	Gender	%
13–15 years	Feminine	17.9
	Masculine	15,8
	Subtotal	33.8
16–18 years	Feminine	31.4
	Masculine	34.8
	Subtotal	66.2

Source: The authors (2025)

The aim was to achieve a relative balance in each cell, although the enrollments of these schools were concentrated in secondary Education (15–17 years old with no school failure). In total, girls accounted for 49.3% of the total and boys 50.7%.

4 Data analysis

4.1 Apartheid at school

The most striking divider between public and private schools was skin color, a legacy of a slave-owning country (Table 2). Private schools are socioeconomically selective for being paid, although they do offer social grants. Free public schools, on the other hand, welcome the less well-off.

Table 2 – Pupils by skin color according to type of school

Type of Schools	White Pupils (%)	Non-White Pupils (%)
Public Schools	24.2	75.8
Private Schools	58.8	41.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: The authors (2025)

In addition to parental Education level, the survey asked respondents what socioeconomic level they identified with. Due to subjective factors, there is a tendency to overestimate this status (Table 3). Even so, public schools are more inclusive in this respect. The social pyramid is tapered at the top and bottom.

Table 3 – Distribution of the respondents according to the socio-economic level with which they identify, by type of school

Socioeconomic Status	Type of Schools	%	Total
High	Public Schools	2.6	7.6
	Private Schools	5.0	
Medium-high	Public Schools	17.2	35.2
	Private Schools	18.0	
Medium-low	Public Schools	39.5	51.7
	Private Schools	12.2	
Low	Public Schools	8.4	10.1
	Private Schools	1.7	

Source: The authors (2025)

4.2 Technology as a body organ

Regardless of social class, almost all of the young people surveyed were connected to the internet, a parallel world that could be mistaken for the real world. They find it difficult to operate without it. And therefore they walk a tightrope that can lead to addiction and access to inappropriate, even illegal, content. The most used social networks were WhatsApp (25.0%), Instagram (24.1%), TikTok (20.2%), YouTube (19.7%), and X Twitter (7.8%), according to multiple answers. Rapid communication through oral and written words to one or more recipients, images, and others was characteristic of relational dynamics and an expression of the aforementioned dromocracy and acceleration. This is indicated by the responses on the uses and topics covered and posted (Table 4).

Table 4 – Uses and topics dealt with and posted on the internet often and very often. Consolidation of multiple answers

Uses and Themes	Items	Often and very often (%)
Uses	Sending messages	71.9
	Talk	46.7
	Exchange photos	7.1
	Search information	48.7
	Doing schoolwork	*55.7*
	Play	41.6
	See movies	51.2
Topics discussed and posted	Humor	37.1
	Politics	15.2
	Science and technology	12.3
	Fashion and trends	36.0
	Private life	53.0
	Motivation	21.3
	Music and art	47.6
	Work and study	*47.4*
	Sports	54.1
	Religion	16.9

Source: The authors (2025)

The main uses were linked to socialization and playfulness. The messages are written, which leads to reading and writing, and it is too early to draw conclusions, let alone catastrophic ones, about technologies (Crystal, 2010). Films were more frequent than games, which in turn were outnumbered by schoolwork by a significant percentage, which is something not found in other studies. The most frequent topic was sport, followed by private life, supposedly discussing life problems, dating, family relations and so on. Next came music and art and, in fourth place, work and study, the latter accounting for almost 50%. Mass culture was certainly present in many areas, such as sport, music and art. Science and technology, politics and religion came last, in that order. It is worth remembering that 21.1 percent of respondents said they did not have a religion.

These multiple uses required many hours on the internet, especially on weekends, which for many became a time of confinement, without going out, playing sports,

or other alternatives. On working days, 58.1% used it for four or more hours a day. Added to the legal minimum of four teaching hours per day, plus time for transportation and other activities, this meant that the day could extend into the night. On weekends, use was concentrated at more than six hours for around half of the respondents. When added to the group using four to six hours, this aggregate encompasses almost three quarters of respondents (Table 4).

High exposure to the internet is a factor in vulnerability to violence, along with a strong presence on social networks. Blaya (2018) and Bruggeman, Van Hiel, Van Guido and Van Dongen (2019) found that longer-term users are almost twice as likely to suffer from malaise. The risk increases with age and the use of platforms where erotic images can be found, as well as contact with strangers and access to hateful content, prejudice, aggression and suicide (Staksrud; Ólafsson; Livingstone, 2013). With respect to age, a curvilinear relationship is observed, that is, it peaks in the first part of adolescence, with lower levels thereafter (Olweus, 1998; Herrera-López, 2017). However, there was a strong correlation between cyberbullying and behavioral problems at school, such as in-person bullying. This group of young victims has seen more suspensions and arrests, and even the use of weapons in schools to intimidate or fight back against aggressors. On the other hand, victims of bullying tend to be both aggressors and victims of cyberbullying. Internet literacy plays an unclear role: it is rejected by Staksrud, Ólafsson and Livingstone (2013), but they found a relationship between lower digital literacy and higher risks. The literature also indicates that cyberaggressors tend to have relational problems with colleagues in offline life, fewer friends and less popularity and acceptance among their peers. In addition, they engage in risky online behaviors, including heavy use, seeking sensation, and meeting strangers.

Table 5 – Hours of Internet Use on Weekdays and Weekends, in Hours per Day, Excluding Online Classes - Note: consolidation of all educational institutions

Daily hours	Working days (%)	Weekends (%)
Less than 1 h	1.7	2.6
1-2 h	10.2	5.6
2-4 h	29.8	20.5
4-6 h	32.9	27.7
More than 6 h	25.5	43.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: The authors (2025)

In fact, one question focused on indicators of addiction to social networks using a scale, which aggregated the answers "often" and "very often" in Table 6. The percentages refer to the answers in terms of the total for each item.

Table 6 – Addiction Scale for Social Networks

Questions	%
Have spent a lot of time thinking about or planning the use of social networks	36.1
Have felt the need to use social media more and more	34.1
Have used social media to forget about personal problems	**54.4**
Have tried unsuccessfully to reduce the use of social networks	23.8
Have used social media so much that their work/studying was hampered	**23.6**
Became restless or upset when banned from using social media	26.6

Source: The authors (2025)

The connection to social networks appears to be intense, with responses ranging from almost a quarter to more than half, underscoring their role in forgetting personal problems, a phenomenon often referred to as "escapism". Since the internet is profit-driven, it is interested in captivating users for as long as possible, using a wide range of resources that vary over time (Prioste, 2020). Therefore, as in other parts of the world, this research data reveal that technology has serious consequences on adolescents' development, including study and work.

The "attractions" offered by social media include remote aggression, anonymity and the ability to reach a large number of people over a long period of time, which contrasts with in-person bullying. Table 7 shows the frequencies reported by victims and aggressors. Here we also add up frequencies ("more than once a week" + "more or less once a week") to characterize repetitiveness (Olweus, 1998).

Table 7 – Actions reported by victims of aggression, committed once a week and more than once a week, as percentages of the number of respondents and respective absolute numbers - Note: The total number of respondents ranged from 512 to 538, numbers on which percentages were calculated

Actions from the perspective of victimization	**%**
Someone said negative things or called me unfavorable names in online messages	**13.3** (n = 71)
Someone said negative things about me to other people online or by text message	**14.1** (n = 76)
Someone threatened me by text or message online.	4.2 (n = 22)
Someone hacked into my account and stole personal information	6.2 (n = 13)
Someone hacked into my account and pretended to be me	3.2 (n = 16)
Someone created a fake account, pretending to be me	4.2 (n = 11)
Someone posted personal information about me online	2.3 (n = 24)
Someone has posted embarrassing videos or photos of me	4.4 (n = 9)
Someone has altered photos or videos I've posted online	1.8 (n = 9)
I've been excluded or ignored by other people in social media sites or chat rooms	13.9 (n = 74)
Someone spread rumors about me on the internet	7.9 (n = 42)
Total of actions (n)	367

Source: The authors (2025)

The extant literature on the subject suggests a positive correlation between the degree of societal violence and the intensity of aggression. This assertion is equally applicable to individualistic societies (Blaya, 2018). The addictive use of social networks and video games has been associated with symptoms of psychiatric disorders (Andreassen *et al*., 2016), including depression, which is prevalent among both aggressors and victims. An asymmetrical power dynamic is established between the aggressors and the victims. On the one hand, there are adolescents with poor interpersonal relationships and low levels of social competence. These individuals also often experience social anxiety, loneliness, and moral disconnection. In such cases, the victims are often not integrated into influential groups that protect their members (Herrera-López *et al*., 2017). The role of family support and the internalization of familial norms is also a significant factor.

Conversely, the aggression exhibited is delineated in Table 8, encompassing the categories "once a week" and "more than once a week."

Table 8 – Reported acts of aggression, measured in percentages of the number of respondents and in absolute numbers, with the frequency of these acts categorized as once a week or less and more than once a week - Note: The total number of respondents ranged from 533 to 538, numbers on which the percentages were calculated

Declared actions	%
I said nasty things to someone or called them names, using text messages or online	**11.3** (n = 60)
I threatened someone via text messages or online	2.3 (n = 12)
I hacked into someone's account and extracted personal information	1.6 (n = 8)
I hacked into someone's account and pretended to be the account holder	3.1 (n = 16)
I created a fake account, pretending to be someone else	2.0 (n = 11)
I posted personal information about someone online	1.9 (n = 10)
I posted embarrassing videos or photos of someone online	2.2 (n = 11)
I altered photos or videos that someone else had posted online	2.2 (n = 11)
I deleted or ignored someone on a social network or in a chat room	**13.0** (n = 69)
I spread rumors about someone on the internet	3.1 (n = 16)
Total of actions (n)	224

Source: The authors (2025)

Once again, the most frequent actions were offenses broadcasted on networks or by text message and exclusion from social relationships, i.e. the so-called "ghosting" applied to victims. In contrast, a minority reported having committed serious online aggression, such as hacking into accounts, creating fake accounts, posting embarrassing photos or videos and altering photos. Apparently, the actions of this minority represent a threat to the whole school and could, if the victims report it, lead to police investigations and legal action.

When comparing the total number of actions reported by victims and aggressors, the former is 61.0% higher than the latter, which may be due to under-reporting of aggression and/or aggression against more than one person, i.e. there may be polyvictimization by aggressors. In fact, the average was 1.6 acts reported per victim. School brings along dramas that unfold through serious aggressive behavior. This can lead to traumatic consequences for the victims. This underscores the necessity of prevention, in conjunction with monitoring and the associated sanctions. In this regard, it is imperative to address students who exhibit aggressive behaviors as well as those who are victimized. This involves examination of the

underlying issues in each category. In the face of sanctions, the desacralization of the school and the decline of contemporary institutions (Dubet, 2013) prompt to considering the risks of delegating functions to other institutions, such as the police (or transplanting their own cultures to the latter), and thus further diminishing the school's role in Education (Prairat, 2021).

4.3 Parental involvement

Such serious issues cannot be ignored by parents and guardians. This research also examined the extent to which parents can assume joint responsibility for the prevention and guidance of their child students. Table 9 shows how often the group of adolescents relies on their parents and guardians.

Table 9 – Guidance and control actions taken frequently and very frequently by parents and guardians regarding the internet. Note: The percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents

When you use the internet, do your parents or guardians do any of these things?	%
Explain how to use the internet safely	**16.4**
Explain to you why some content on the internet is good or bad	12.6
Help you when you can't do or find something	**17.8**
Help when someone bothers you on the internet	**14.5**
Use controls or other means to block or filter certain types of content	10.7
Use controls or other means to monitor their internet use or see the apps you use	9.0
Determine how long you can use the internet	9.0

Source: The authors (2025)

These answers indicate that less than a fifth of parents and guardians were frequently involved. The first four actions are guiding and reach the highest values, while the last three are controlling and range between 9 and 10%. Therefore, few parents and guardians had the means and knowledge to accompany their offspring on the often tortuous paths of the virtual world. On the other side is the parental desertion: 62.1% were never or rarely explained how to use the internet safely. The same absence appears in relation to explanations on why internet content is good or bad and 87.9% rarely or never received help when something upsets them on the web. As the perception of family support and intra-family norms were found to be relevant protective factors, it is likely that a large number of

adolescents suffer violence in silence, especially boys, out of shame for feeling addicted. The cost of this desertion, which has to do with parents' struggles with new technologies, includes addiction to social networks, exposure to inappropriate content, and pupils being targeted by criminals, whether working alone or in groups (Trumello *et al*., 2021). Adolescence is a period characterized by the pursuit of autonomy, separation from familial structures, the establishment of personal privacy, and experimentation with self-identity. This stage provides a conducive environment for engaging in risky behaviors. In circumstances where the socio-economic level is conducive, the connected pupil's room functions as a metaphorical space for a supposedly successful self-conquest (Ramos, 2022).

5 Conclusion: what kind of world is this?

This parallel world exerts a profound influence on the Education of both adolescents and children. This lucrative business has been a source of fascination for many, creating billionaires and attracting a stream of users for an extended period. Its appeal lies in its dynamism and the variety of its offerings, including spectacles comparable to Roman circuses. Mobile phones are even used in class breaks to talk to classmates sitting meters away in front of an empty sports pitch, according to the researchers live testimony. Thus, we have a long teenage connection time, signs of internet addiction and little parental involvement. This time is largely used for violence, as a high proportion of teenagers are perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying.

Society needs to be aware that there is an arena in which the traditional educational agents, school and family, are competing against the strong pressures of adolescent societies and the internet. For a call to action, this project will lift a wisp of this thick cloud. This is a conversation for future articles.

Despite the technology's benefits, forementioned in the text, difficulties are so serious that Unesco recommended the control of electronic devices and some countries, Brazil among them, prohibited the use of mobile phones at schools.

Adolescentes e tecnologias: andando na corda bamba

Resumo

Esta pesquisa explora os impactos do uso das redes sociais e sua respectiva adição sobre o bem-estar de adolescentes de 13 a 18 anos no Brasil, bem como a prática de cyberbullying. Como parte de uma pesquisa internacional, um questionário foi aplicado a uma amostra de conveniência de estudantes de escolas públicas e particulares. Os resultados indicam que as.os adolescentes utilizam as mídias extensamente e por longos períodos. Um grupo significativo sofre efeitos negativos no estudo e no trabalho. A adição afeta expressiva proporção de respondentes, enquanto a privação das mídias lhes causa mal-estar. A internet emergiu como meio de praticar cyberbullying por parte de uma proporção substancial de usuários. Assim, junto com a pressão de colegas, a internet é uma poderosa competidora de instituições educativas, como a escola e a família. Lamentavelmente, pequena parte de pais e responsáveis se envolve na orientação ou controle do uso de mídias sociais.

Palavras-chave: *Adolescência. Tecnologia. Dependência tecnológica. Violência Escolar. Cyberbullying.*

Adolescentes y tecnologías: caminando en la cuerda floja

Resumen

Esta investigación tiene en mira los impactos del uso de las redes sociales y su respectiva adicción sobre el bien estar y la practica de cyberbullying por adolescentes de 13-18 años. Parte de un proyecto internacional, fue aplicado un cuestionario a un muestreo de conveniencia de estudiantes de establecimientos públicos y privados. Los resultados constatan que la adolescencia usa las redes sociales por largo tiempo, con efectos negativos sobre el estudio y trabajo. La dependencia toca a una parte importante, que, con la privación, sufre del mal estar. La internet sirve a la amplia práctica del cyberbullying. Así, la internet, asociada a la coerción social de grupos de colegas, disputa poderosamente la arena educativa con instituciones como la escuela y la familia. Sin embargo, una pequeña fracción de padres y responsables se involucra en la orientación y control del uso de las redes.

Palabras clave: *Adolescencia. Tecnología. Dependencia Tecnológica. Violencia Escolar. Cyberbullying.*

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