Emerging Digital Generations? Impacts of Child Digital Use on Mental and Socioemotional Well-Being across Two Cohorts in Ireland, 2007–2018

Engl. transl.: Emerging Digital Generations? Impacts of Child Digital Use on Mental and Socioemotional Well-Being across Two Cohorts in Ireland, 2007–2018

# Keywords

* child digital use
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## Sample

The article uses the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data. GUI is a multi-cohort longitudinal study with rich comparable data on a large sample of 9-year olds (N = 13,203).

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

# Abstract

AbstractDespite the growing body of literature on how digital technologies impact child well-being, previous research has provided little evidence on recent digital trends. This paper examines the patterns and effects of digital use on child socioemotional well-being across two cohorts of children grown up ten years apart during the ‘digital age’: the 1998 cohort (interviewed in 2007/08) and the 2008 cohort (interviewed in 2017/18). Multivariate linear regression models were conducted for these two cohorts from the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) study, a multi-cohort longitudinal study with rich comparable data on a large sample of 9-year olds (N = 13,203). Results show that (i) in 2017/18 children were more active in digital devices and social media, while in 2007/2008 children spent more time watching TV and adopted less diversified forms of media engagement; (ii) spending more than 3 daily hours on TV/digital activities was associated with significant declines in child socioemotional well-being, while such effects were stronger in 2017/18 than in 2007/08; (iii) media engagement (but not other forms of digital engagement) was associated with moderate declines in socioemotional well-being, both in 2007/08 and in 2017/18; (iv) while children’s media and digital engagement differed by the child gender and socioeconomic background, none of these variables moderated the effects of digital use on children’s socioemotional well-being, neither in 2007/08 nor in 2017/18. Overall, the study reveals persistence, but also some important changes, in recent trends on children’s digital use and its impact on socioemotional well-being in Ireland"

# Outcome

"This is the first examination of how child digital usage impacts socioemotional well-being and how these impacts have changed across recent cohorts. We find both change and persistencein how 9-years old children engage in digital technologies and how this digital involvement affects their socioemotional wellbeing. A decade of difference between two cohorts in Ireland (the 1998 cohort and the 2008
cohort) has led to significant changes in the nature of digital engagement. While the negative
effects of the quantity of child screen-based time on socioemotional well-being have become
more pervasive in the younger generation of children, the relative effect of the quality of this
digital engagement (forms of digital and screen engagement) on child well-being has
remained quite stable over the last decade in Ireland"