# NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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**ABSTRACT:** *Technology has been evolving since the foundation of the world, from the mastery of fire by man to supercomputers, the electronics and nuclear weapons of the twenty first century and the most recent includes the print, telephone and the internet. These recent technologies have improved communications on a global scale in various areas such as advanced economy, development of destructive weapons, unwanted by-products, and privacy encroachment. Questions have been raised on whether technology improves the society or worsens its existence. This paper investigated the opinion of people on the age range who mostly use modern technology about the negative effects of technology on Nigerian society. The study used questionnaire to gather data from students of higher institution in Rivers State. These students come from different states of the federation, thus making the sample representative of Nigerian society. It was discovered that the problem is technological addiction which leads to isolated generation, over reliance, and obsession. This paper argued that over usage of modern technology or inappropriate usage yields negative effects on the user and advised that users should be self-disciplined when using them.*

**KEYWORDS:** Negative effect, Addiction, Technology, Social Network, Internet, Mobile Phone

## INTRODUCTION

According to Wikipedia (n.d), technology is defined as the making, modification, usage, and knowledge of tools, machines, techniques, crafts, systems, methods of organization, in order to solve problems, improve pre-existing solutions to problems, achieve goals or perform specific tasks. It explains it further as the collection of such tools, machinery, modifications, arrangements and procedures. Bennett (2011) simplified it as a collective description or portrays the advancements, abilities, creations, undertakings, views, and knowledge of a singular group of persons, the human-kind. Technology has evolved from the mastery of fire by man to super computers, the electronics, and nuclear weapons of this generation. Technology has proven to be convenient to people irrespective of their locations. The rapid development of technology has been penetrating almost all sectors of the society and makes any resistance almost impossible. No one will deny the numerous benefits that accrue from social network such as Facebook, which is an instant hit site that launches individuals into the world beyond imagination. It helps resolve lost contacts as long as the name exists in the internet world, telling people about others and providing updates about important events in one's life. People have met their marriage partners online while others used the technology for educational interactions, educating and enlightening one another on academic, social and moral issues. It has positive impacts though; its overuse leads to addiction. Like all other addictions, people who are addicted to technology spend less time with loved ones and are cut off from their environment. Some see it as solution to boredom disregarding other activities such as visiting places of interest, parks, window shopping, or reading. It has affected the social well-being of this generation such that face-to-face communication is no longer necessary. They prefer online chat, text messaging, or mobile phone conversation to visiting irrespective of their

locations. Personal appearance to ceremonies and festivals are likely to disappear in near future because people prefer to login and following the events online. People may lose the interest of watching games live like football because many people are gluing to television and internet from their rooms instead of going to stadium.

According to Business Dictionary, Mobile phone or cell phone as it is generally called in the US is a small wireless device that has at least the same functions of a standard wired telephone but is smaller and can be carried about. In Wiki (n.d.) it was defined as a device that can make and receive telephone calls over a radio link while moving around a wide geographical area. They have more functions than traditional telephones and works with battery that needs periodical charging. The mobile phone which brought relief to instant communication and innovation in telephone system has created lots of negative impacts to the society. The art of written communication is on the verge of being lost. New language has been devised for writing a text message because text message on early generations of mobile phones takes on average a total of 160 words, e.g., *"Tx for Thanks, 4m for from"* etc. Unfortunately most people cannot differentiate when to write these text message short hands, thus they migrate into important or official document. The blocking of ear while listening to music on mobile phone with earpiece prevents boredom as they say but it is cutting off the person from the environment.. There has been talk that mobile phones may pose health risks to some, if not all users. Because these phones emit electromagnetic radiation, many think extended use can cause cancer. Medical health reports have noted the harmful effects of microwave radiation of hours of mobile phone chatting on the brain, but a more serious issue is the effect on sleeping patterns of youngsters. Other anomalies in behavioural patterns, such as irritability, lack of patience and abruptness, sometimes affect heavy users of mobile phones. With newer mobile phones being all-in-one entertainment devices, young users tend to get immersed in their mobile phones for hours on end. Family interaction becomes limited, and negative consequences happen over time. (Dutta, 2012)

Social network as it is called brought about relationship chain showing that people are connected one way or the other (everybody is everybody's friend); but the privacy of one's life does not exist any longer. On Facebook for instance, you can view the profile of your friend's friend even though you don't know him/her personally, thereby putting the life of people at risk. Research has shown that people are different from their online persona. People have been victims of fraud through the social network. One of such problems is abuse of privacy. It links people up to each other though, information posted on social network are rarely secured or personal. It is meant for public consumption; hence people unconsciously broadcast their personal data, which capricious individuals pick up and use against their wish. Some hack private information and use them fraudulently or for blackmailing the owner. Some of our youths have become victims of the social network, like the Cynthia incident for instant. Some have entered into a disappointing relationship while others have made commitments that are difficult to exit.

Internet is information highway with unlimited amount of information and services about everything in the universe. Youths copy foreign attitude as a result of the internet, with this shocking exposure they developed destructive behaviours and are involved in violence actions. People can be located with just a phone number since all phone users are on the internet; nobody is hiding. Those working from home using the internet can become isolated and loose contact with other people they would have met in normal working environment. Unscrupulous people use it to spread indecent images, false information, and carry out illegal activities. As

result of many people using the internet as a way of shopping contact with others may be lost and this will also result in the closure of markets and high street shops in the future. The village communities may lose their culture and interactions with other villages thus a terrible economic and social effect on many communities. There is need for people to be aware of the pitfalls of over using the internet and its implications for economic and social life. People who use the internet and work from home can become very isolated and loose contact with other people they would have met in a normal working environment. One of the negative connotations of internet is that people say whatever they want to say without suffering the consequences. Therefore, expressions that are difficult to make during face-to-face communication can easily be said online. This paper raises awareness on the adverse effects of technology on society and concludes that over usage is the main issue, leading to addiction.

## METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was grouped into four research questions each having five or six questions using open-ended questions. Participants were full-time students and workers aged below 50 years each of which has good knowledge and use modern technology. They were asked to observe how people around them use the four mentioned technology in their daily activities before completing the questionnaire. Although 65 questionnaires were disseminated only 42 were properly completed and returned. The returned questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 20.0, in which one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to test the hypothesis that there are negative effects of technology on the society for statistical significance of 0.05 level.

### Results

The participants in this survey consist of 42 persons with demographics as indicated in Table 1 and depicted in Figure 1. Coincidentally 21 male participants and 21 female participants returned the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Gender and Age Range of the Participants**

|  |  | Gender | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Male | Female | Total |
| Age Range | below 20 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|  | 20 - 30 | 13 | 10 | 23 |
|  | 31 - 40 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
|  | 41 and Above | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Total |  | 21 | 21 | 42 |
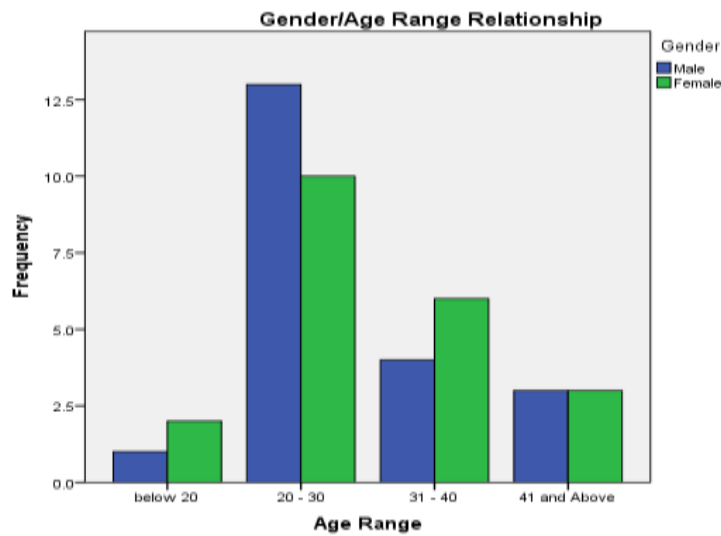
**Figure 1: Relationship between Age Range and Gender**

**Table 2: ANOVA**

| Variables | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Social Network | 15 | 41.527 | 4.519 | .000 |
| | 26 | 9.190 | | |
| Internet | 13 | 25.669 | 2.491 | .021 |
| | 28 | 10.307 | | |
| Mobile Phone | 13 | 48.625 | 2.785 | .011 |
| | 28 | 17.459 | | |
| IPods | 13 | 27.601 | 2.738 | .012 |
| | 28 | 10.081 | | |

As shown in Table 2, there was a significant difference in the negative effect of technology to the society based on the usage of social network given F = 4.52, MSE = 9.19, p < 0.05. There was a significant difference in the negative effect of technology to the society based on the usage of Internet given F = 2.49, MSE = 10.307, p < 0.05. There was a significant difference in the negative effect of technology to the society based on the usage of mobile phone given F = 2.79, MSE = 17.459, p < 0.05. There was a significant difference in the negative effect of technology to the society based on the usage of IPods given F = 2.74, MSE = 10.081, p < 0.05.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .884[a] | .781 | .764 | 2.54102 |
| 2 | .740[b] | .548 | .512 | 3.20165 |
| 3 | .803[c] | .645 | .617 | 2.40958 |
| 4 | .859[d] | .738 | .718 | 2.10164 |

  a. Predictors: (Constant), IPods, SocialNetwork, Internet
  b.  Predictors: (Constant), IPods, Internet, MobilePhone
  c. Predictors: (Constant), MobilePhone, SocialNetwork, IPods
  d. Predictors: (Constant), Internet, SocialNetwork, MobilePhone


A stepwise regression computation of Table 4 was used to examine the relationship between independent variables that were significant in predicting the negative effects of technology on the society predicted from the use of questions related to mobile phone, IPods, social network, and Internet. These independent variables have vast impact in the prediction of the negative effects of technology on Nigerian society. A positive relationship was indicated between negative impact of technology and usage of mobile phone ($\beta = 0.468$), surfing the internet group ($\beta = 0.304$), engagement in social network ($\beta = 0.326$), listening to music and watching films (IPods, $\beta = 0.335$).  The result shows that mobile phones have more negative effects on society as it distracts and diverts attentions.

**Table 4: Final model for equation**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.311 | 1.792 | | 1.289 | .205 | | |
| | MobilePhone | 1.418 | .116 | .468 | 12.243 | .000 | .294 | 3.403 |
| | SocialNetwork | 1.125 | .105 | .326 | 10.759 | .000 | .469 | 2.133 |
| | Internet | 1.236 | .136 | .304 | 9.073 | .000 | .383 | 2.614 |
| | IPods | 1.169 | 0.125 | .335 | 11.607 | .000 | .262 | 3.220 |

 a. Dependent Variable: NegTechnology

The negative impact of mobile phones achieves the highest positive beta values of $\beta = 0.468$ followed by IPods ($\beta = 0.335$).

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics**

|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SocialNetwork | 42 | 23.1667 | 4.58479 | 21.020 |
| Internet | 42 | 17.4286 | 3.89586 | 15.178 |
| MobilePhone | 42 | 21.3095 | 5.22885 | 27.341 |
| IPods | 42 | 18.2143 | 3.95422 | 15.636 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 42 |  |  |  |

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to determine if independent variables (mobile phone, IPods, Internet, Social network) had a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable (negative effects of technology). Moreover, open-ended questions allowed us to investigate the negative effects of technology by examining the effects of mobile phone, IPods, Internet, and social network on Nigeria society. The finding is an encouraging development that showed that many people understand that technology usage has negative effects despite the benefits. Surprisingly, the responses from the questions indicate that people uses these facilities irrespective of the negative impacts they have, concluding that misuse, over usage and addiction are the major reasons that gives adverse effects. In public transport, everybody is on the phone; texting, chatting, navigating, surfing the net, or listening to music. Dutta (2012) said that being fixated on checking text messages, playing games, checking email, or calling friends and relatives can often make a user a slave to the crutches of technology and detract them from other fun and engaging real-world activities. Nobody cares about the scenery of the country side that was the main attraction of the previous generations as they travel. Social network has contributed to academic laziness. It consumes valuable time that would have been used for useful study. It has affected this generation grammatically and their written communication is poor. Social network is an environment where grammatical construction is neither screened. They resort to shorthand writings and jargons that depict both laziness and academic emptiness. Unfortunately these jargons and shorthand writing are migrating to official documents. Otter (2006) spoke about people saying whatever they want on the internet without minding the consequences because they believed that they can hardly get caught or be persecuted. Internet accommodates all sorts of information whether reliable, fictitious, or lies. One needs to be careful when accessing the internet because most sites are unaccredited and may contain incorrect, misleading, or falsified information, which will lead to wrong conclusions. Internet addiction makes people to abandon their real world life and engross in virtual world thereby neglecting their families, responsibilities, jobs, environments, and friends, even themselves, which could result in death after spending long uninterrupted hours on the internet. For instance, on 9th October 2002, Gamesport news reported that a 24-year old South Korean man died after 86 hours of straight gaming. Nigerians are not left out in this long-hour on the internet; playing games or watching films. These addicts spend most of their time on the internet instead of making friends or talking to human being.

## CONCLUSION

It is true that technology brings innovation into our society but every development comes with its own negative impacts. Technology was designed for us to use, learn from, bridge our communication, improve our standard of living, and make our life easier to manage; and not to enslave or incapacitate us. Technology influences the current degeneracy of morality, criminality, and violence. In order to reduce these negative impacts, excessive usage should be discouraged. More research is needed to look at the impact of each of these mentioned technological systems on the society and how it affects the culture.

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