THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: A CASE-BASED ANALYSIS FOR MODERN POLICY INTERVENTION IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

Preliminary scientific announcement

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Sažetak

The exponential rise of digital technologies has redefined how Pakistani youth interact, learn, and express themselves—but it has also opened new avenues for deviant behavior. Similarly, it examines cases of cybercrimes committed by children through the application of control balance theory to explain the breach of social controls in cyberspace. An examination of how technology shapes deviant sexual conduct among adolescents by also taking a glance at this relationship between exposure to explicit content and rape intent. In this case, the technology usage trend that has been rising for the last two decades among underage children opens avenues for accidentally committing criminal offenses. These cases help formulate specific strategies that are meant to curb internet-induced juvenile offenders in Pakistan. The proposed policy recommendations involve regulation, boosting digital literacy, and education to install a safe e-environment among the youth. Therefore, it is safe for us to conclude that this study will help deepen our understanding of the relationship between technology and juvenile delinquency problems while giving some practical advice for social policymakers to react preventively. These suggested laws seek to create an online environment that guarantees the safety of teenagers in cyberspace.

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INTRODUCTION

The intricate tapestry of contemporary Pakistani society finds itself intricately woven with the thread of technological innovation, fundamentally reshaping the landscape of daily life (Patton, 2000). The advent of the twenty-first century has witnessed an unparalleled surge in the adoption of digital technologies, with smartphones becoming ubiquitous and internet connectivity permeating even the remotest corners of the nation (Chu, 2017). The youth, in particular, stands at the forefront of this digital revolution, seamlessly integrating technology into their daily routines and social interactions (Coz, 2015). Mobile devices are no longer mere communication tools; they have become extensions of personal identity, channels for socialization, and gateways to a vast digital universe (Tsao, 2011). The omnipresence of digital platforms, from social media networks to online gaming communities, underscores the transformative influence of technology on the very fabric of social connections and cultural expressions (Sahlin, 2015). As Pakistan embraces the opportunities presented by technological advancements, a critical undercurrent demands attention—the complex and evolving relationship between this technological tapestry and the emergence of juvenile delinquency (Khan, 2022). In navigating this interplay, we embark on a journey to unravel the multifaceted implications of technological innovation on the behaviors and trajectories of the nation's youth (Baguley, 2014).

To understand the influence of technological advances on juvenile delinquency in Pakistan, we must consider the digital evolution our country is undergoing. For the last twenty years, the country has been on a journey of change driven by digital technology weaved into the nation's everyday existence (Sullivan, 2012). This progression goes beyond simply indulging in gadgets; rather, it reflects how people nowadays, particularly the younger generation, experience the world (Achmad, 2019). Smartphones, which were previously considered a luxury, are now becoming a necessity with instant connection to the world and availability of abundant information (Sergiu, 2016). The Internet has left the cities to expand into rural zones and caused the creation of a digital environment that surpasses social conditions (Ochoa, 2019). With the digital age in full bloom, social media, gaming online communities, and streaming services are no longer just plug-and-play entertainment but also vital for identity formation and the dynamics of human interaction among Pakistani youth (Chassiakos, 2020). The digital revolution has certainly opened doors, providing such connection and potential for self-expression that the world has never seen before; yet, it has also brought with it threats – today, we talk increasingly about new cyber-threats and crimes that up until a few years ago where not even heard of or considered (Zeballos, 2018). This evolution challenges us to question how the digital revolution influences the actions, interactions, and even the (potential) delinquency of the country's youth (Escoda, 2020).

This study sets out on an extensive journey to first 'open up' the digital hemispheres that have amalgamated with boys' everyday worlds in a traditionally analog society such as Pakistan. We aim to pursue distinct representations of the complex interrelation of technological innovation and youth criminality through a qualitative case study approach. Four specific aspects will be examined: cyber harassment, the role of internet gaming violence (e.g., PUBG) in revealing fraudulent behavior, and the role of sexuality and sex offending behavior in rights violation intention (Viki et al., 2007). These aspects serve as gateways into the digital worlds that the youth access – a finer-grained viewing mirror that we can use to analyze and comprehend

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the nuances of internet-induced juvenile delinquency (Wei-li, 2012). Through these specific illustrations, we hope to provide snapshots of the lived experiences and practices of technology-mediated interaction that underpin emergent forms of communicative practices among youth in Pakistan (Licoppe, 2004). Through an intensive investigation, this in-depth examination seeks to unearth the different dimensions of internet-induced juvenile delinquency vis-a-vis to provide insight into peculiar challenges of the information age on the understanding of how innovation influences the development of delinquent disposition in our youths (Gazimbe, 2021).

In order to negotiate the maze of the complicated relationship between technological innovation and youth crime, the theoretical base of our study is the criminological theory, which is used as a reference point to analyze the phenomenon (Short, 1957). These criminological paradigms, which each provide a different analytical viewpoint about juvenile delinquency, will be systematically applied to the cases. It is through this theoretical triangulation that we will be able to not only understand what is happening in each case but also to develop a more coherent picture of the macro relationship between technological innovation and the rise of juvenile delinquency in Pakistan.

The importance of such studies goes beyond academics, as the study seeks to bring technology and the manner young criminal offenders are evolving in Pakistani society to meet halfway. Through analysis of the complex interrelations between these issues, this study has the potential to provide a vital understanding of the struggles of today's young people in the digital age. The overall goal is not only to achieve full disclosure of the multi-aspects of juvenile delinquency actuated by the internet but also to support the framework of the specific targeting of internet-induced juvenile delinquency countermeasures and policies (Wei-li, 2012).

The goal is to make the digital space a safer place for children in Pakistan to enjoy. As we navigate the complexities of this transforming space, we hope to bring a focus not only on the challenges presented by tech innovation but also on how to lead proactive efforts that marshal technology to ensure that however emerging technologies are integrated into the lives of the nation's youth, they protect their well-being and help shape a future where the advantages of innovation are properly aligned with the imperatives of safety and security.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of juvenile delinquency and technology in Pakistan has recently emerged as an interesting area of exploration. There is a reflection of emerging patterns in the socio-cultural set-up of the society within this area (Short, 1957). The literature does, however, give a complex picture of the relationship between the prevalence of increasingly adopted digital technology and its role in the appearance of deviant behavior amongst the young of the nation (Durkin, 1995).

The research discusses the revolutionary impact of smartphones and social media on social relationships among the Pakistani youth, being a game-changer in communication culture and personal relations (Ali, 2016). According to them, this digital socialization has a double effect: besides enabling contact and the construction of identities, it also brings potential risks, paving the way for the practice of deviant behaviors (Güzel, 2016). This demonstrates the necessity to examine the role of technology in the glorious composition of youth in Pakistani society.

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The popularity of online games such as PUBG is rising, and its increasing trends have been under the limelight among researchers. Researchers examine the desensitizing effects of violent gaming, which may lead to increases in aggression and even criminal behavior (Funk, 2005). This investigation goes beyond the surface by acknowledging the abundance of gaming devices and exploring how these technology applications have a psychological impact on juvenile delinquency (Rikkers, 2016). This reinforces the urgency of the need to gain insight into the complex nature of the relationship between online gaming violence and self-reporting for deviant behavior (Dill, 1998).

An important addition to this dialogue is the analysis of cyber harassment. Our study is grounded on the Control Balance Theory: the structural fact that criminal behaviors are too easy to commit in cyberspace breaks down the balance of control in the new space of control where juveniles can violate social control (Huang, 2009). This theoretical lens provides us with useful insights into the existing dynamics of power underpinning the digital world, demanding the development of remedial interventions to re-establish a dynamic equilibrium. This dialogue sets the stage for a deeper cognition of the underpinnings of cyber delinquency and the convolutions surrounding social controls in cyberspace (Ibrahim, 2020).

The literature also explores the impact of explicit content on deviant sexual behavior in youth (Peter, 2006). Their findings also support Social Learning Theory, which posits that exposure to online explicit content can mold actions and, ultimately, possibly even rape intentions (White, 1998). This literature strand highlights the importance of digital literacy initiatives that are sensitive to the effect of explicit material on adolescent attitudes. This perspective may enrich our theoretical understanding of how technology and the etiology of deviant sexual behavior in youths intersect (Långström, 2000).

A dominant theme found in the review is a regulatory void in Pakistan regarding cyber juveniles in the digital era, warranting a focus on policy implications (Yaqub, 2022). All-embracing policies control cyberspaces, raise digital literacy and create educational programs related to a safe e-environment for children (Buckingham, 2006). The call for proactive policy responses highlights the emphasis on reversing the adverse effects of technological advancement on youth delinquency (Loeber, 2000). The existing review of literature, however, provides a base for the current study to provide fresh perspectives and policy recommendations to tackle the nuances faced in the digital environment.

In a nutshell, one acting on the dynamic relationship between technology innovation and juvenile delinquency in Pakistan, in the existing literature, provides a detailed and intricate insight. From digital socialization and its transformational effects to the psychological effects of online gaming, cyber harassment dynamics, and the impact of explicit content, the literature highlights various dimensions of internet-induced juvenile delinquency issues (Rui-Xia, 2006). The inclusion of criminological theories (Control Balance Theory and Social Learning Theory) makes the analysis more complex. It gives rise to the possibility that the present investigation adds new elements to the ongoing debate.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to find out the following objectives.

To explore how emerging technologies and juvenile delinquency are connected.

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To explore how the factors of technological innovations, promote and motivate delinquent behaviors among juveniles.

To suggest suitable outcomes for policymakers to control Juvenile delinquency in contemporary world.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Due to the complexity of researching this field, a qualitative study was employed to gain a better understanding of juvenile delinquency through technological innovations in the contemporary world. In this context, a case study methodology was used to investigate four specific juvenile delinquency cases and the researcher chose the Punjab province of Pakistan through simple random sampling.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was only limited to the secondary data present in different research and reports.

Only four selective cases of delinquents were analyzed.

The researcher wasn't allowed to interview any juvenile directly and all the information was provided by respected police.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study approach was employed, focusing on four juvenile cases reported in Punjab, Pakistan. Secondary data were collected through police records, case files, and media reports. Ethical limitations prevented direct interviews with juveniles; therefore, interpretations are drawn from verified official statements and behavior assessments.

CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSIS

Case 1 – Adolescent A: Pornography and Rape Intent

Adolescent A (17) committed rape after prolonged exposure to online pornography and minimal supervision due to single parenting.

Theoretical Lens: Social Learning Theory

Key Insight: Online explicit content shaped the offender's distorted understanding of intimacy and consent.

Case 2 – Adolescent B: Online Business Fraud

Adolescent B (16) defrauded a man during the COVID-19 pandemic by impersonating an e-commerce trader. Peer influence and weak parental monitoring were contributing factors.

Theoretical Lens: Control Balance Theory

Key Insight: Economic vulnerability and unsupervised internet access enabled fraudulent behavior.

Case 3 – Adolescent C: Cyber Harassment and Blackmail

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Adolescent C (17) blackmailed an ex-girlfriend using intimate photos after their breakup. Social media misuse and peer validation played key roles.

Theoretical Lens: Control Balance & Social Learning

Key Insight: Misunderstanding of consent and digital ethics fostered coercive behavior.

Case 4 – Adolescent D: Gaming-Related Multiple Homicide

Adolescent D (14) committed multiple homicides under the influence of the game PUBG. The youth had unmonitored screen time and psychological issues rooted in a disrupted family environment.

Theoretical Lens: Differential Disorganization Theory

Key Insight: The prevalence of violent content, coupled with the absence of a stable family structure, has significantly contributed to the intensification of aggressive behaviors.

Table 1: Overview of Research Methodology

Methodological Component	Description
Research Approach	Qualitative
Research Design	Case Study
Data Source	Secondary data from police records, case files, and media reports
Sample Location	Punjab, Pakistan
Number of Cases	Four
Ethical Considerations	No direct contact with juveniles; all data derived from verified authorities

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Four cases of juvenile delinquency were reviewed from Punjab, which highlighted a commonality in the role digital exposure and socioenvironmental factors play in shaping deviant behavior among the young. One of the key things was the role of unfiltered access to the digital world, "all" of the juveniles fare the opportunity to go online unsupervised, in quite a few cases accessing harmful content, ranging from pornography, violent games or exploitative social media. This is a real gap in digital literacy for both young people, and clearly their parents, at the moment. Parental delinquency and family separation were also prominent, and all but 1 of the 4 juveniles either was from a single-parent family or experienced inadequate supervision consistent with Differential Disorganization Theory. Peer pressure and social modeling also became a key factor, especially in the fraud and cyber harassment cases, where offender emulation of unethical behavior prompted by peers or online services was observed—again supporting the value of Social Learning Theory. Signs of psychological vulnerability were present in all cases but were most marked in the gaming-related homicide; it followed exposure to violent virtual content and the development of emotional blunting and behavioral disturbance. Low-risk perception of potency restrictions was also evident in the fraud and blackmail cases in which juveniles felt that they were unlikely to get caught or to be punished, supporting

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Control Balance Theory and demonstrating how perceived anonymity facilitates cybercrimes. Finally, financial stress – especially exacerbated by the coronavirus crisis – was a factor in at least two cases in which financial difficulties were the driving force for criminal motivation and neglecting parenting, which then endorsed the deviant digital behavior. Taken together, these results highlight the urgent requirement for organized intervention at familial, institutional, and policy levels.

CONCLUSION

Criminal juvenile activities in Pakistan are now witnessing a drastic transition – turning from old violation trends to technology-focused succumbed in the cyber world. With no limits to physical areas such as streets or schools, contemporary youth delinquency is also exhibited in a virtual dimension, which includes chatrooms, online games, social networks, and unmonitored digital services. This research highlights the importance of unsupervised tech exposure in the development of behaviors like cyberbullying, financial fraud, sexual harassment, and even more violent offenses. Adopting a qualitative case-based approach underpinned by criminological theories, this study established a cycle of digital abuse influenced by fractured family structures, inadequate parental monitoring, peer influence, and economic precarity. These cases speak to how juvenile offenses are now often shaped more by what young people digest online and how they process it in fragile social settings. A single-dimensional response—whether legal or educational—will not suffice. A holistic, hybrid strategy that includes strict digital content regulation, technology-integrated education, school-based psychological support, and parental involvement is urgently needed. Without proactive and systemic intervention, the current trend threatens to normalize deviant behavior in cyberspace, creating long-term consequences for both individual youth and society at large.

By addressing these issues comprehensively, Pakistan can move toward a future where digital innovation enhances youth potential rather than enabling their criminalization.

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UTJECAJ TEHNOLOŠKIH INOVACIJA NA MALOLJETNIČKU DELINKVENCIJU: EMPIRIJSKA ANALIZA ZA RAZVOJ SUVREMENIH POLITIKA INTERVENCIJE U PUNJABU, PAKISTAN

Prethodno saopštenje

Abstract

Eksponencijalni porast digitalnih tehnologija redefinirao je načine na koje mladi u Pakistanu komuniciraju, izražavaju se i uče, ali je istodobno otvorio nove oblike devijantnog ponašanja. Sukladno tome ovaj rad analizira slučajeve kibernetičkog kriminala koje su počinila djeca, primjenjujući teoriju ravnoteže kontrole kako bi se objasnilo narušavanje društvenih kontrola u kibernetičkom prostoru. Također, u radu se razmatra utjecaj tehnologije na devijantno seksualno ponašanje adolescenata, s posebnim osvrtom na povezanost izloženosti eksplicitnim sadržajima sa namjerom počinjenja silovanja. Naime, trend porasta korištenja digitalnih tehnologija među maloljetnicima tijekom posljednja dva desetljeća povećava rizik od nenamjernog počinjenja kaznenih djela. Slučajevi analizirani u ovom radu služe kao osnova za oblikovanje specifičnih strategija usmjerenih na suzbijanje maloljetničke delinkvencije koja je inicirana upotrebom interneta u Pakistanu. Neke od predloženih javno-političkih mjera uključuju regulatorne intervencije, jačanje digitalne pismenosti i obrazovanje s ciljem stvaranja sigurnog digitalnog okruženja za mlade. U konačnici, istraživanje doprinosi dubljem razumijevanju odnosa između tehnologije i maloljetničke delinkvencije te nudi praktične smjernice za preventivno djelovanje donositelja javnih politika, usmjerene na osiguravanje sigurnosti adolescenata u kibernetičkom prostoru.

Keywords: maloljetnička delinkvencija, tehnologija, kibernetički kriminal, mladi, Pakistan, digitalne politike

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