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The Impact of Smartphones on Children's Communication Skills Through Research In Some Countries And Vietnam

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Abstract
In the context of strong development of science and technology, the emergence of more and more types of smartphones has had a great impact on all areas of human activities and life, especially children. Research on the impact of smartphone use is a topic that has been conducted by many researchers in many countries in general and Vietnam in particular. Therefore, research on the impact of smartphones on children in terms of benefits and harms to children is necessary . The article mentions research directions on the impact of smartphone use on children's communication skills through studying theories, concepts, methods, content and general findings on the positive and negative impacts of smartphones on children in some countries in the world and in Vietnam. Thereby, proposing some solutions to improve the effectiveness of phone use for children.

Keywords: *Smartphone; communication skills; children; impact; negative, positive.*

1. Introduction

The birth of smartphones in 1960 is considered one of the great inventions of mankind, having an impact on changing human life, connecting people around the world. Initially, Internet users began to look for a place to satisfy all their needs for information, entertainment, connection,... Since then, after more than 40 years of existence and development, mobile phones have become increasingly popular and indispensable in human life. They are constantly changing and improving in technology as well as design . Besides the advantages, smartphones also bring many negative effects to users, especially for children. When they are at the age of exploring and being curious about the surrounding environment, using smartphones regularly is very harmful. are popular with children . However, this use has both positive and negative effects that greatly affect the ability to communicate and develop psychologically as well as learning and playing activities of children. Because cyberspace with its "virtual" characteristics, easy anonymity, and fast spread has become a favorable environment for spreading fake news, bad and toxic information. If there is no control and children themselves do not have the ability to read and select the right and accurate information, it will cause significant consequences. This is an issue that needs to be researched not only in Vietnam but all over the world.

2. Research methods

2.1 Information collection method

The main research method is to synthesize documents, analyze some of the positive and negative effects of using smartphones on children's communication skills. Through synthesizing studies, it is shown that the research method related to the impact of smartphones on children that is commonly used by authors is the quantitative method such as: Direct interview method; Opinion polling by direct or online self-recorded questionnaire. Another widely used method is the qualitative method including document analysis method; Direct interview method; This is a method widely used in studies related to the impact of mobile phones. To better understand the factors affecting smartphones on communication skills, etc. are important sources of information to help researchers understand the general and detailed impact of smartphones.

2.2 Research results

2.2.1 Theoretical background

The concept of children: The concept of "children" is not simply a biological term but also has profound social, legal and psychological implications. It often defined based on stages of development and benefits protected protected by law The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most important international legal document defining children. A child is a person under the age of 18, unless the national law applicable to the child sets majority earlier. The concept is widely used around the world, particularly in the areas of human rights, education and health, to ensure that all people under the age of 18 enjoy basic rights .

According to Vietnamese Law. Vietnamese law also has clear definitions of children, based on the International Convention and adjusted to suit domestic practice . A child is a person under 16 years of age (Children's Law , 2016). In psychology, "children" is understood according to developmental stages. cognitive, emotional, and social. This concept is more flexible and not limited by a fixed age. (Jean Piaget) . In general, the concept of "child" can be defined differently depending on the perspective legal, psychological or social level. Despite the differences in age milestones, all Both definitions emphasize that children are vulnerable individuals. vulnerable, need protection, care and education to develop comprehensively .

Concept of communication skills

The concept of communication skills is very diverse and is defined in many different ways depending on each field such as psychology, sociology or business administration. Communication skills are the ability to understand, use language and non-verbal signals (such as gestures, facial expressions) to convey messages and perceive the emotions of others. (Daniel Goleman , 1995). Communication skills are the ability to interact with people around to build social relationships, cooperate and resolve conflicts. It includes both conveying messages and the ability to listen to understand the views of others. (Erving Goffman , 1959). In the most general way, communication skills can be understood as a set of personal abilities that help people exchange information, ideas, feelings and thoughts effectively with others.

Characteristics of communication skills in children

Children's communication skills develop in stages, from from the simplest expressions to complex forms. This is a continuous process shaped by interaction with the surrounding environment. Birth to 1 year: Communication is mainly non-verbal. Children use crying, smiling, hand gestures and other expressions to communicate. facial expressions to express needs and emotions Parents and caregivers respond to these signals, creating The first back-and-forth interactions lay the foundation for language learning. (Lynne Murray, 2014) . Stage 1-3 years: This is the period of language explosion. Children begin to say single words, then short sentences. Imitation is very powerful . Children learn vocabulary and sentence structure by listening and repeating. people's words growing up (Vygotsky, 1965) . The stage of 3-6 years old growing up . Children's ability to communicate in language develops strongly. Children can use more complex sentences to tell stories and express themselves. comments and questions in the process of thinking development. (Jean Piaget, 1923) At this stage, children tend to monologue or speaking without waiting for the listener to respond . This is part of Stage 6-11 years old , t children begin to develop skills more sophisticated social communication. They learn to listen wait your turn to speak and understand other people's points of view Communication is not just about exchanging information but also a tool for building friendships, resolving conflicts and showing empathy. (Goleman, 2006) . These characteristics show that communication is a complex skill that needs to be nurtured and practiced through continuous and varied interactions in real-life environments. Stage 11-18 years old: Position adults This stage marks the transition from child to adult as their communication skills become more complex and social . Abstract thinking and the ability to argue develop . This directly affects the way they communicate . (Jean Piaget, 1969) .

The prominent feature of this period is the shift in focus. communication from family to friends. They spend more time talking, texting, and interacting with friends These relationships become critically important for social and emotional development. However, this can also lead to children talking to their parents less, sometimes causing a generation gap. Pew Research Center (2018) indicates that 90% of teens consider smartphones as their primary tool for interacting with friends. and they frequently use texting and

social media to maintain these relationships . Thus, adolescence is not only a physiological change but also a major turning point in communication ability. next.

2.2.2 Some research theories

Social Learning Theory Developed by Albert Bandura, it states that humans, especially children, learn through observing and imitating the behavior of others. This process includes learning not only positive behaviors but also negative behaviors. When children view content on smartphones, they may absorb and imitate unhealthy communication styles, such as unemotional or violent communication, instead of learning necessary face-to-face communication skills from adults in the family.

Sociocultural Theory . Lev Vygotsky argued that children's cognitive and language development depends on social interaction. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) describes the gap between what a child can do on his own and what he can do with the help of others. Smartphones, with their one-way interactive nature, disrupt the language learning process through the ZPD. Children are not "led" by adults in conversations, causing them to lack opportunities to practice and develop language naturally, leading to the risk of speech delay or language disorders.

3. The impact of smartphones on children's communication skills

Through an overview of research on the impact of smartphone use on children 's communication skills in the world and in Vietnam, we can see a complete picture of the impact of smartphones on children , thereby proposing some solutions for effective smartphone use . Studies have confirmed that there is a positive and negative relationship between smartphone use and communication skills problems. of children . This is consistent with the research of the authors Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010), Kumpulainen, K., & MS (2015), Fajariyah & Suryawan, 2018), Ain (2022) ... The results of the synthesis of studies are presented in two directions: positive and negative effects of smartphone use on children's communication skills .

3. 1 Positive effects of smartphone use on children 's communication skills

Information and communication technology has changed rapidly over the past 20 years, with the emergence of social media being a key development. The pace of change is accelerating , and the rise of mobile technology has played a crucial role in shaping the impact of social media. Globally, mobile devices dominate the total number of minutes spent online. They provide the means to connect anywhere, anytime, on any device, with everyone. As technology advances, smartphones have become an integral part of modern life, with children being introduced to them at an ever-earlier age. Despite concerns about negative impacts, some studies have shown positive effects of smartphones on children's communication skills.

Enhance social communication skills and language development

Some studies suggest that smartphones, especially through messaging and social media apps, can help children connect and maintain relationships with friends and family. This is especially helpful for children who tend to be shy or have difficulty communicating face-to-face.

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010) study: “Teens and Mobile Phones” study published by Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project in Washington, DC has shown that text messaging (SMS) is the primary communication tool for adolescents, helping them maintain social relationships. Although this study focused on adolescents, researchers believe that this trend will also appear in younger age groups as technology continues to develop. Frequent texting helps children practice writing skills, organize ideas, and express emotions clearly. Another study by Rosin, M., & Zich, P. (2018 **)** : In the article “The Use of Mobile Phones in the Context of Early Language Development in Children” published in the International Journal of Early Childhood, the authors explored the use of smartphones in educational games and storytelling apps that can promote children's language development. These apps often use pictures, sounds, and interactive stories, helping children learn new vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation in a natural and fun way.

Supporting communication and learning in children with autism and special needs

Smartphones have proven to be a positive tool in supporting communication for children with developmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Augmentative and alternative

communication (AAC) apps help children who cannot speak or have difficulty expressing themselves verbally communicate more effectively. Ganz, JB, BA Earles-Vollrath, SMP (2012) study on Effectiveness of a Computer-Assisted Intervention on the Communication Skills of Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the authors demonstrated that tablet and smartphone applications can help children with autism learn to use pictures and symbols to communicate their wants and needs. Kagohara, DM, SBV (2013) study on the effects of an iPad on the communication of a child with a severe intellectual disability" in the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis presented a specific case, showing that an iPad application significantly improved the communication ability of a child with a severe intellectual disability. The application allowed the child to select pictures to form sentences, helping the child to clearly express his or her wishes and feelings.

Promote multimedia communication skills and creative thinking

Today, communication is not limited to speech and writing. Smartphones help children become familiar with and develop multimedia communication skills through creating and sharing pictures, videos, and sounds. Research by Kumpulainen, K., & MS (2015): In the article "Digital Literacy and Social Participation in Early Childhood" published in the journal Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, the authors highlighted the role of smartphones in helping children develop "digital literacy" skills. Children learn to tell stories through video recording, photography, and editing. This process not only helps children practice their visual expression skills but also encourages creative thinking and teamwork when creating a media product together. Author Marsh, J., H.J. n research year 2016 study "Exploring the Digital Lives of Young Children in a Changing World" published in the Early Childhood Education Journal also explored how children use smartphones to create digital "artworks." This helps children learn how to combine text, images, and sound to convey a message or a story, thereby enhancing multimedia communication skills – an important skill in the 21st century.

Improve connectivity and social inclusion

Using smartphones can be a tool for children to find and connect with people who share similar interests, especially in safe online communities. This gives children the opportunity to practice communicating in a less stressful environment. Author Subrahmanyam, K., & B.C. (2008) In the study *"*The Impact of Internet Use on the Social and Emotional Development of Adolescents,*"* published in the journal Child Development, the authors found that online social media can be a "social laboratory" for children and adolescents, where they can explore their identities and practice communication skills with their peers. Although the study focused primarily on the internet, its conclusions may also apply to smartphone use, which is the primary means of accessing the mobile internet.

The above studies show that, in addition to the potential risks, the use of smartphones also brings significant benefits to children's communication abilities. From enhancing language and social communication skills, supporting communication for children with special needs, to promoting multimedia communication skills and social integration, smartphones can serve as a powerful support tool when used appropriately and with adult supervision. Understanding these benefits is necessary for parents and educators to optimize the use of smartphones for the comprehensive development of children.

Children's language skills help them develop socially and academically, which implies that language acquisition is one of the most important processes in child development. Conversely, language delays and disorders in young children are associated with problematic behaviors Curtis PR, Frey JR, Watson CD, Hampton LH, Roberts MY (2018) , and are also associated with poorer academic achievement when these children start school and later in life . Jing et al (2023) found an overall positive effect of screen media exposure on vocabulary in children aged 0-6 years in a recent meta-analysis of 63 studies. However, in moderation analyses, only experimental studies (testing the effects of educational media exposure) showed a significant positive effect on vocabulary, with a stronger effect for e-books than for apps or games. Meta-analyses that included studies conducted in natural settings found no overall effect on vocabulary, except for educational media exposure. Mobile phones have been shown to help students master speaking skills .

Humans are social creatures, which play an important role in their existence (Steinberg & Sciarini, 2006). Humans always interact and communicate with other creatures and with each other. Humans have

succeeded in developing communication methods and technologies, which have made it easier for humans to interact and communicate with each other thanks to the advent of a highly developed era and the use of everything in digital form (Nalliveettil & Alenazi, 2016). In Indonesia, mobile phones are a common possession of both the elderly and children, and many elementary school students also use them (Fajariyah & Suryawan, 2018). Almost all social classes are affected by the advancement of information and technology, both in terms of beneficial and harmful uses. Language is very important in people's daily lives (Jones, 2010). According to Fromkin et al., (2009), language is the source of human life and power. Language is the verbal disclosure in the search for the appearance of a communication whose scope is the subject of psychological research. In fact, in general, children aged 5-12 are the most users of this technology and media through mobile phones. "Not all children are affected by the risks of smartphones and social media use, but for teenagers we need to apply the precautionary principle," said Patti Valkenburg, head of the Amsterdam-based Centre for Children, Secondary School Students and Media Research.

The results show that one of the most important components of early childhood education is language development because it facilitates communication between people. Language is a tool for interacting with others (Jones, 2010). This method includes all forms of communication in which ideas and feelings are conveyed verbally, written, gesturing, or through words, symbols, gestures, images or drawings (Gultom, 2015). Children acquire many forms of communication as they grow up (Zascerinska, 2010). Although children are different in many ways, in fact, all young children share certain characteristics. According to Rahayu (2019), whose research shows that mobile phones can play a specific role in interactive media, mobile phones also have a significant positive impact on children's development. As they help children learn concepts and consolidate their memories, interactive media plays an essential role in the process of stimulating children. One commonly used type of media is interactive media, which not only conveys knowledge or education but also includes fun features. It includes visual, audio, animation and video components to make the environment more appealing to young viewers. The age of the child must be considered when using interactive media.

3.2 Negative effects of mobile phone use on children 's communication skills

The use of smartphones has become an inevitable part of modern life, even for children. However, too early and too much exposure to this device is creating serious challenges for children's comprehensive development, especially communication skills. Scientific research and statistics have shown that overuse of smartphones can cause profound negative impacts, affecting the formation and development of children's social, language and emotional communication skills.

The study used data from the large-scale Danish TRACES survey of two- and three-year-olds (n = 31,125). Mobile device use was measured as the amount of time children spent using mobile devices on a typical day. Language comprehension and expressive language skills were measured using subscales from the Five to Fifteen Toddlers questionnaire. Combined exposure analysis was used to examine the association between children's mobile device use and language difficulties combined with three other factors related to the home learning environment: parental education, reading aloud to children, and children's TV/computer use. High mobile device use, one hour or more per day, was significantly associated with poorer language development scores and higher rates of both language comprehension difficulties and expressive language skills difficulties . Mobile device use of one hour or more per day was associated with poorer language development in toddlers. Regular reading to children may have a mitigating effect on language comprehension difficulties but not on expressive language skills difficulties .

Among two- and three-year-olds, multiple studies have shown that high levels of mobile device use are associated with poorer language comprehension and expressive language skills. Children who used mobile devices for one hour or more had significantly poorer language development scores on both outcomes compared to children who did not use mobile devices. Similarly, the higher risk of difficulties with language comprehension and expressive language skills was found even after adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics and factors related to the home environment. This confirms the importance of these findings in terms of indicating significant difficulties compared to the majority of children of the same age and gender.

In the development of information technology, mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones have become an indispensable part of the daily life of families. From an early age, children are exposed to mobile devices. Mobile devices provide children and parents with easy access to entertainment activities, not only in the home but also outside the home. Although this easy access to entertainment on the screen is convenient for parents in some cases, it can also pose a risk to the language development of toddlers (Madigan et al , 2015) . Mobile phones are present in all activities in life and cannot be separated. Children's constructive participation in the digital age is a social phenomenon that needs to be studied (Corsaro, 2005). Children believe that smartphones are everything to them because they are so dependent on this device . Children feel restless and uncomfortable without the use of devices. Children play on smartphones most of their free time . As a result, they continue to distance themselves from their parents, in addition to the lack of communication between parents and children (Hastuti, =2012). Communication with children is more difficult when smartphones are used at home. When parents ask their children to do anything, they often do not do it and are less receptive.

Author Banan (2020) believes that spending too much time staring at screens can affect children's ability to focus and pay attention. Additionally, it can also cause short - term memory problems. Another concern is that electronic devices can make it difficult for children to socialize and interact with others. With more and more children spending time playing on phones or tablets, they may have less opportunities to engage in face-to-face interactions with their friends. N Research by author Ain (2022) indicate that smartphones are harmful to children's social connection, including making them less active and less likely to participate in activities, leading to symptoms of obesity. Increasing the choice of outside activities is another action that parents can take to reduce their children's dependence on smartphone use.

One study found that children who use mobile devices frequently have more personal space, which may further reduce their social interactions. Social interactions throughout childhood, mainly face-to-face, are core factors that impact the development of children's social competence (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). Moon et al. (2019) evaluated the relationship between smart device use and developmental levels and language scores in children aged three to five. Parents who use smartphones and other devices without their children for long periods of time, rarely having time to interact with their children, may lead to limited language development in children (McDaniel, 2019). Because those children cannot learn new words or speak effectively compared to other children. This can impact a child's language development as they may interact less verbally or non-verbally, and may express emotions and stress arising from their parents' device use.

Smartphone use not only affects communication and interaction skills in older children, but has been noted to affect children of all ages in their communication with others. A study in preschoolers found a negative association between children's screen-based media use and white matter microstructural integrity in core brain regions that support language (Hutton JS et al., 2019) . Although cross-sectional in design, the findings of this study are consistent with the results of studies examining the association between screen use and language development (Madigan S, 2020) (Asikainen M. et al., 2021). Children's language skills play a pivotal role in their social and academic development, which implies that language acquisition is one of the most important processes in child development. Conversely, language delays and disorders in children are associated with problem behaviors (Curtis PR et al., 2018) and are also associated with poorer academic achievement when these children start school and later in life (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network , 2005)(Raviv T , et al., 2004). A 2017 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) found that for every 30-minute increase in handheld device use per day, the risk of expressive language delay in 18-month-old children increased by 49% (American Academy of Pediatrics , 2017). This shows a direct link between screen exposure and children's language development and communication skills .

Studies have shown that children who are exposed to mobile phones are at higher risk of speech delay or language disorder. According to a study by scientists, children who start watching TV or mobile phones before 12 months of age for more than 2 hours a day are six times more likely to have language delay than children who develop normally (W. Chonchaiya and C. Pruksananonda , 2008). The use of

shortened language, abbreviations and emoticons on online platforms also makes children's vocabulary poorer and their ability to express themselves when communicating verbally.

The Korea Information Society Development Institute reports that Children under 10 years old use smartphones for an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes per day, up 17.2% from the previous year (Korea Information Society Development Institute , 2023). This increase not only reflects a trend but also warns that children are spending less time on traditional social interaction activities. Smartphone dependence not only causes language problems but also makes it difficult to build real relationships. When children are not trained to recognize emotions through direct communication, they will face many obstacles in interacting with others. Scientific data and research have provided clear evidence of the negative effects of smartphones on children's communication skills. From reducing direct interaction time, causing the risk of speech delay and language disorders. create long-term consequences.

Vygotsky's mediation theory (see Fernyhough, 2008) is the main theoretical foundation for supporting social media on learners' emotional states. According to this theory, social media can act as a mediator between learners and the real-world environment. In 2013, author Le Minh Cong conducted a study on the internet addiction of secondary school students and found that the rate of internet addiction among students increased with each grade, and the majority of internet addicted students were male (77.1% of internet addicted students in the study were male). The main causes affecting internet addiction among students were easy access to information, escaping boredom, satisfying the need to make friends, expanding relationships, and using the internet to feel better and assert themselves. The author also pointed out some consequences of internet use such as doing less housework, stress, fatigue, being irritable with others, being sleepy, and participating less in social activities (Le Minh Cong, pp. 7-8).

A major study by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), published in the journal *Pediatrics* , analyzed data from more than 2,400 children aged 2 to 3. The study found that for every hour a child spent using a smartphone or tablet, their risk of developing expressive language delays increased by 50 percent (American Academy of Pediatrics , 2017). Researchers emphasized that viewing content on screens does not provide the back-and-forth interaction that occurs in face-to-face communication, which is essential for early language development.

Research by Harvard University professor Catherine Steiner-Adair, author of The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age, has shown that excessive smartphone use impairs children's ability to recognize emotions. In one experiment, Steiner-Adair showed children and adolescents videos of real-life conversations and asked them to describe the characters' emotions. The results showed that children who spent more time on screens had significantly more difficulty recognizing subtle facial and vocal expressions than children who interacted more directly. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) conducted an experiment on two groups of sixth graders. The first group was sent to a summer camp without electronic devices, while the second group was allowed to use phones and tablets as usual. After five days, the researchers found that the group of students who did not use phones had significantly improved their ability to recognize emotions and social interactions compared to the other group (Yalda T. Uhls et al., 2014). This study demonstrates that a temporary “detox” from technology can help children regain their impaired social communication skills.

Author Dimitri Christakis, Director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior, and Development at Seattle Children's Hospital, points out that exposure to fast-paced television or video programs can reduce children's ability to focus. He argues that when children are accustomed to constantly changing images and sounds on a screen, they have a harder time maintaining attention in a slow-paced conversation that requires listening and back-and-forth . This directly affects their ability to engage in meaningful and deep conversations. The American Academy of Pediatrics' Council on Media and Communications asserts that media consumption has a serious adverse impact on the developmental abilities of children before age two.

Research examining the relationship between problematic smartphone use in adolescents, parent-child conflict over smartphone use, family communication, and adolescent communication skills is limited. Croatia. Therefore, this study empirically tested a model of the direct and indirect effects of adolescent problematic smartphone use on adolescent communication skills via family communication and parent-child conflict over smartphone use. Data were studied on a sample of 284 adolescents (59.4% female), aged 10–15, who participated in a four-wave longitudinal study (2021–2023) examining the effects of problematic smartphone use on health and development. Our path analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of

problematic smartphone use on communication skills via family communication. The study found a significant direct impact of problematic smartphone use on parent-adolescent conflict over smartphone use time and balancing activities with smartphone use. The findings of this study imply that frequent and excessive smartphone use may be a risk factor for frequent parent-adolescent conflict, poor family communication, and poor adolescent communication skills.

According to Meniado's (2016) research, the development of the first language is mainly shaped and influenced by two causes: biological and environmental variables. Natural language learning is also influenced by a number of factors, including neurological, motor, cognitive, and emotional factors. A child's first language develops naturally due to the development of brain regions involved in language processing, muscles involved in producing speech sounds, and the removal of emotional filters that hinder language proficiency. These contextual influences manifest in the form of analogies, organized information, repair and reinforcement, and imitation. Fajariyah & Suryawan's (2018) research explains that there is a significant influence on mobile phone use in children. Starting from children who are new to language when they are immediately introduced to that language from mobile phones, what happens is that children will follow what they hear, for example, when what they see and hear is bad language, this will also affect their first language. The improper use of mobile phones can also affect children's mispronunciation, incorrect pronunciation, as well as language imitation in children. This is due to the lack of supervision by parents, leaving children free to play. Therefore, Fajariyah & Suryawan (2018) mentioned some of the effects when mobile phones affect children's language, namely children are affected by drugs, radiation, children's learning ability is poor and imitating inappropriate things.

In addition, the study by Fajariyah & Suryawan (2018) showed that most (75%) of the children had questionable developmental test results. This is because excessive use of mobile phones can cause many developmental disorders, including speech disorders, emotional disorders , and cognitive disorders. Another impact is that children only sit and lie down to spend time playing with mobile phones.

Author Ain (2022) conducted a study in which he suggested that children's problems in acquiring their first language may be influenced by their living environment , as well as electronic devices, one of which is mobile phones. This depends on the context in which it occurs. Besides building children's language, this also affects their critical thinking, where the goal of critical thinking instruction should be to develop an understanding of the relationship between language and logic, which will enable students to analyze, critique and support arguments, use inductive and deductive reasoning, and reach conclusions or factual judgments based on credible inferences from explicit statements, information or beliefs (Juniardi, 2016).

Studies examining the impact of mobile phone use on social interaction have primarily used implicit effects on measures of social skills . Overall, studies tend to show both negative and positive effects of mobile phone use on social interaction, with communication being the most widely affected skill. Media is a social tool , social interaction, enjoyment, and communication , connecting people . Social interaction refers to the feeling of connection that comes from using popular technology, enjoyment refers to the ability to manage the different strengths and weaknesses of different communication media, and communication can be adapted to the communication media. By adapting communication, enjoyment is increased and social interaction becomes more meaningful. Without allowing for proper face-to-face communication, the specificity of the information exchanged is diluted.

In Vietnam

In Vietnam, children have access to smartphones at a very early age. According to a study by Q&Me (Asia Plus), Vietnamese children start using smartphones on average at the age of 9, while the average age in the world is 13. This means that Vietnamese children use phones 4 years earlier than the rest of the world.

In addition, reports from educational and media organizations also indicate that the time Vietnamese children spend on mobile phones is increasing. Some studies estimate that children spend an average of 1 hour and 22 minutes per day on smart devices, however, this number can be much higher in children who are already dependent on mobile phones (Q&Me , 2023) . This early and prolonged exposure creates a high risk of communication problems. Psychiatrists warn about children with speech delay and language

disorders. The reason is explained by the children's abuse of electronic devices, only receiving one-way information. This reduces the ability to communicate and interact two-way, which is necessary for language development (Do Thuy Dung , 2025). Many other studies have also shown that children who are "addicted" to their phones are more likely to become irritable, isolated and have difficulty building relationships with friends and family . Spending too much time in the virtual world causes children to gradually lose basic social skills, such as how to listen, understand other people's feelings and resolve conflicts.

Specific studies in Vietnam through many reports and initial data have shown alarming problems. The fact that Vietnamese children have access to smartphones at a very early age and spend a lot of time on these devices is negatively affecting their language development, social communication skills and mental health. This fact requires parents, schools and the whole society to have timely and effective solutions to protect the future generation. There have been many studies providing convincing quantitative and qualitative evidence that smartphones are negatively affecting children's communication skills, from slowing language development, weakening the ability to recognize emotions, to reducing attention and social interaction. These findings further reinforce the importance of strictly controlling device usage time and encouraging direct forms of communication to ensure comprehensive development for children.

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of mobile phones can affect children's first language acquisition . These effects can be both positive and negative. One of the negative effects that can lead to the acquisition of the first language is delayed speech, which can even shape the child's personality, making it unable to socialize with others. However, the positive side of this is that it can help stimulate the development and understanding of children's listening ability. As for the negative effects, close supervision of mobile phone use by parents can help avoid negative effects and create a balancing effect .

Conclusion and Recommendations

Through the analysis of research and scientific evidence, it can be affirmed that the use of smartphones has positive aspects and if used excessively, it causes profound and multi-dimensional negative effects on children's communication ability. These effects reduce communication skills and in the long term also affect the social development, emotions and even the brain structure of children. Therefore, schools, families and society need to pay close attention to children , so that they can develop self-awareness, self-control and use social networks for the right purposes.

Many international studies have shown a direct link between screen time and the risk of delayed expressive language development. The lack of face-to-face interactive conversations, where children learn to read non-verbal cues and take turns in communication, has undermined the foundation of effective communication skills. Studies in Vietnam and around the world have also shown that smartphone dependence reduces children's social interactions, making them isolated, lacking empathy and having difficulty building real relationships. Children's ability to recognize and interpret emotions is also significantly reduced, an important factor in building trust and bonding with others. Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown that phone abuse can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety disorders and reduced ability to concentrate, factors that seriously hinder children's learning and practicing communication skills .

Currently, the world and Vietnam have been taking the first measures to limit children's excessive use of smartphones, limiting major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. To minimize these negative impacts, close coordination from many sides is needed. Parents play a key role in setting clear limits on time and content of phone use, while spending more time talking, playing and interacting directly with their children. Educators need to integrate activities to develop social communication skills into the curriculum, encouraging group activities and face-to-face interactions. Finally, policymakers need to develop media education programs for both parents and children on the healthy use of technology. Timely awareness and action will help protect the comprehensive development of children, ensuring that children can grow up to be individuals who can communicate effectively, confidently and integrate into society. This is an urgent task not only for the family but also for the whole society.

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