

Internet Usage Among Children in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The Internet has become an integral part of human life. The Internet has opened a new land of opportunities for people of all ages and races. Due to the enormous contribution of science, humanity has stepped into the era of globalization and technological advancement. Multiple innovations to make human life easier are the core concern of experts and researchers across the world. The amazing development of the computer and the consequent birth of the Internet are considered the most significant advancements in human history in the twentieth century. The Internet has dramatically revolutionised different fields across the globe. Nowadays, the Internet has become a global means of communication in every day's life and the lives of humans. Today, human beings are living in the era of the information age, where the Internet plays the most significant role and thus has become an inevitable part and parcel of human life. Till January 2023, more than sixty-four (64.4%) percent of the entire human race were Internet users. This clearly defines today's Internet, which has captured almost every aspect of human life and living. In the era of technological advancement, no one can escape the impact of the Internet, especially children, who are the largest users among different age groups. This article explores the usage of the Internet and its impact on the children of Bangladesh while considering the worldwide scenario of Internet usage.

Keywords: *Internet for Children; Child Internet User; Child Internet User in Bangladesh; Internet Usage among Children in Bangladesh*

1. Background

"The Internet has changed the way we communicate with each other, the way we learn about the world, and the way we conduct business." (Ronald Wyden).

Today, humans are living in an era of technological advancement where the communication system has become the easiest ever in human history. The Internet had become part and parcel of human life. Slowly, the Internet has turned into a human necessity instead of a luxury. Many societies now consider the Internet to be one of their basic needs. As the day passes, it will become more difficult to extract

human life from the Internet and its influence. Almost every nation on earth has been hit by the revolution of the Internet, and every day its user numbers are increasing at a tremendous speed. With time, human beings across the globe are becoming more dependent on technology, especially the Internet. The Internet penetration rate across Asia was more than sixty-seven percent (67.4%) (Kameke, 2023). This is almost double the Internet penetration rate in 2011. In 2023, more than sixty-four (64.4%) percent of the entire human population were Internet users, which means there were more than five (5.16) billion Internet users across the globe as of today (Petrosyan, 2023). This data clearly shows the important impact of the Internet on human life. Therefore, it has become important for humans, especially parents, to understand the impact of the Internet on child development. Different social activities, government agencies, and many societies around the world have been trying to ensure a child-friendly environment where future generations can develop safely and organically. Children being the most valuable and sensitive resource in the world, their proper growth and development largely depend on different entities like parents, teachers, guardians, sociologists, government agencies, and all other concerned bodies. Therefore, it is one of the core responsibilities of every society to ensure a proper development option for every child growing within it. It is important for people to understand the impact of the Internet on a child's development and explore all the ways it can influence the normal growth and behaviour of a child. This article explores the present status of Internet usage and its influences on the children of Bangladesh. Just like the rest of the nation, the children of Bangladesh are the best assurance for the future. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the impact of the Internet on children's growth. Bangladesh, being a developing nation, has adopted the Internet in mass volume over the last decade, giving access to a mass number of children to use the Internet as a communication, education, and entertainment source.

1.1 Problem Statement

Before the revolutionary expansion of the Internet, mass populations across the Globe had almost no, or to some extent, very little, opportunity to express their viewpoints or opinions in front of the public or in the public domain. In talk shows and Newspapers, people's opinions or the voice of their thoughts were carefully managed and sometimes manipulated to get more public attention. The Internet opens many new options and spreads all existing doors and windows for masses of people to express their opinions, thoughts, anger, frustration, feelings, and most importantly, the fastest and easiest way of communicating. On the Internet, everyone has a voice, but no one listens (Steven, 2020). There is no doubt that the Internet has blessed people in different ways and with many opportunities. But it is also a fact that people simply cannot ignore the dark side of the Internet. Among the different age groups of human races, the Internet has influenced the lives of children ageing from four to sixteen in the most devastating way. There has been much research conducted on the influence of the Internet on children (Jackson *et al.*, 2006; Subrahmanyam *et al.*, 2001). This study is intended to explore Internet usage among children, with an emphasis on children in Bangladesh (Ferdousi, 2020). This article mainly aims to explore one of the most devastating problems humans are heading towards, i.e., the impact of the Internet on children. Children are the promise of the future, which makes us believe that greater things will appear soon. It is an undeniable fact that the Internet is making the younger generation of any nation much smarter than they used to be, but it is also true that the Internet is influencing children's mental and health conditions in a great deal. This article aims to explore the results and consequences of Internet usage among children in Bangladesh.

1.2 Objective

The main objective of this article can be divided into two broad classes. One is the primary or core objective, and another is the secondary or supportive objective. This article mainly aims to explore Internet usage among children in Bangladesh and its results.

1.2.1 Primary Objective

- Explore the status of Internet usage across Bangladesh.

- Explore the Internet usage among children in Bangladesh.
- Explore the Impact of the Internet on Bangladeshi child’s mental and physical growth.

1.2.2 Secondary Objective

- Explore the status of Internet usage among adults and children across Globe.

2. Methods

This article is written based on the descriptive exploration of the subject area, which is backed by different published articles, journals, and online verified data. Different types and sources of data have been collected, analysed, and formulated in the right way to draw meaningful information and possible recommendation for the study problem. Details methodology of the article is mentioned below:

2.1 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data have been used to address the problem statement. Primary data was extracted from real-life experience sharing that is through field surveys whereas secondary data was extracted from different published statistical reports and databases.

2.2 Study Area

The study area of this article is Bangladesh. The study area of this article is mainly limited to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Dhaka has the largest and most diversified population size compared to all other cities in Bangladesh. Therefore, selecting Dhaka as the study area has opened the door to opportunities. As a result, respondents from different backgrounds, locations, cultures, religions, and income levels participated in the oral interview process.

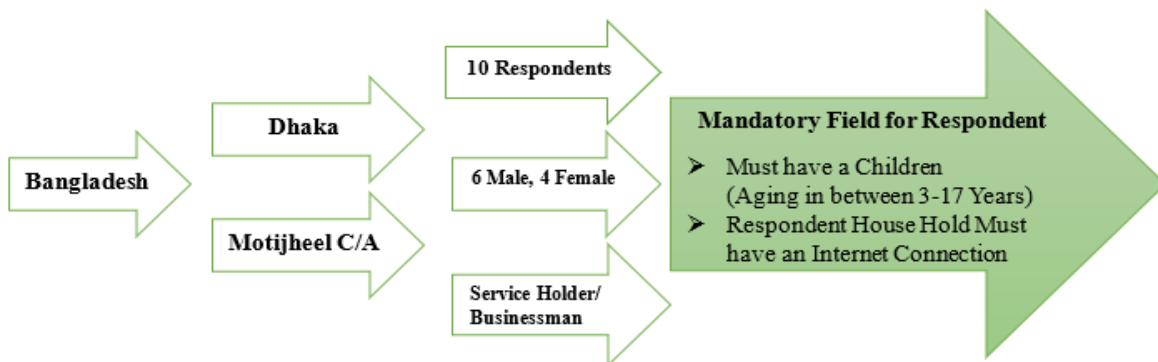


Figure 1: Study Area and Mandatory Filed for Study Result

2.5 Sample Population Size & Selection Process

Due to time and resource limitations, this study is limited to a specific sample size. The population size of this study is limited to ten (10) respondents from Dhaka city, who were cleverly selected based on their diversified professions and level of monthly income. While choosing the population size, only two mandatory fields were placed so that findings could be related to the problem statement. Mandatory fields are that the respondent must have a child ageing between three and seventeen years. The family or household of the respondent must have an Internet connection.

2.6 Study Approach

Due to time and resource limitations, the population size of this study is limited to ten (10) respondents. A primarily quantitative approach has been used for collecting data to formulate this article. Through a quantitative approach, numerical data has been collected, which will be quantified later. A very limited portion of the qualitative approach has been used to identify non-numerical data, which is mainly related to the emotional state of the respondents. To draw conclusions and recommendations, both qualitative and quantitative findings have been used.

2.7 Techniques of Data Collection

Data has been collected through a face-to-face interview with the respondents while following the guidelines of a pre-prepared questionnaire containing ten questions.

2.8 Interview and Questionnaire

In interviews with respondents, thoughts are explored and captured through oral and verbal communication. Both verbal and nonverbal communication have been used to analyse each respondent's response. Different aspects of emotional intelligence have been used to identify respondent's state of mind while having the informal interview session. A questionnaire of ten questions has been developed to conduct the interview. Questions are limited to ten so that respondents do not have to invest much of their precious time. As the number of questions is limited to ten, questions are carefully selected and designed so that they can draw a coherent conclusion.

2.9 Reliability and Data Validity

All secondary data are collected from published journals, statistical reports, and articles, whereas primary data are collected through face-to-face interviews with the respondents involving different professions, so the chances of the respondent giving false information are very low.

2.10 Maintaining Confidentiality of The Respondents

As the problem statement is related to extracting data from respondents, who will mainly discuss and share information about their minor children, Therefore, a high level of confidentiality is maintained throughout the survey, keeping minorities best interests in mind.

- Every respondent was aware of the study work and problem statement.
- Every respondent willingly participated at the face-to-face questionnaire survey.
- Name and Contact details of all the respondents were kept private and confidential.
- Name of Respondent's children were kept confidential and private.

2.11 Constraints & Limitation

Like all other studies or research work, this study also has some limitations and had to go through several challenges. This study is self-funded, so budget constraints were the greatest challenge. Time constraints were another big challenge, as many of the respondents were too occupied to allocate the time needed for a detailed discussion of every response they gave. A few parents were not willing to share some information about their children due to fear of mistreatment. Keeping all constraints aside, the hardest try has been given to get the desired outcome.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Evolution of the Internet

“We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain” (Stephen Hawking).

Today, the Internet has slowly pushed itself up onto the human basic needs list. Some schoolchildren also argue that if education is considered one of the top five basic needs of humans, then the Internet must go side by side with education, as today’s education system is largely dependent on the Internet. In 1965, Lawrence Roberts (Roberts, 2012.), for the first time in human history, made it possible for two separate computers at different places to talk to each other using a telephone line with an acoustically coupled modem. This system transferred digital data using packets. Later, this emerging discipline slowly transformed into wide-area networks. The official birth of the Internet started on January 1, 1983, and before that, information sharing between computer users did not have a standard way to communicate with one another. Later, the communication protocol name, Internet Work Protocol, or in short, IP, was established. IP is also termed Transfer Control Protocol (TCP). This attribute allows different computer users on different networks to talk to or communicate with each other. Later, Mr. J.C.R. Licklider came up with the idea of a universal network at the Information Processing Techniques Office (IPTO) of the Advance Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the Department of Defence (DoD) of the USA (Britannica 2023). After the development of networking technology, several scientists and engineers brought their research together to create the ARPANET. Together, APRA and DoD are termed the ARPANET. On 29th October 1969, ARPANET established the first host-to-host network connection. Later, a universal language was established to communicate. Today’s Internet is the result of research by different research networks across the United States and Europe. All such research work for the evolution of the Internet mainly aims to support government projects and defence systems. The commercial use of the Internet came into existence soon after Personal PCs and workstations were introduced. Later, Ethernet and Local Area Networks (LAN) joined the Internet's evolution journey.

3.2 Defining the Internet

In a broad sense, it can be said that the Internet mainly consists of a vast network that connects computers across the globe so that people can easily share information and communicate with each other from a distance. The Internet is a global network of billions of computers or communication devices. It is also termed The Net. The Internet is a global system of computer networks, or communication networks. Through the Internet, one can get his or her desired information from another computer if permission is granted. Using the Internet usually means going online or surfing the net. Typically, the term Internet it indicates a globally connected networking system that works for establishing and facilitating worldwide communication. The Internet is governed by the Internet Assigned Number Authority (IANA, n.d.). The Internet is used to get access to data resources using different types of networks owned by private, public, business, academic, and governmental bodies. The Internet is a system architecture that has revolutionised human communications systems. The Internet allows various computer networks across the globe to interconnect with each other to communicate, share information, or send and receive messages. It is said that the Internet emerged in the United States between 1960 and 1970 (Online Library Learning Centre, n.d.). The process of connecting publicly accessible computer networks with many smaller private and public networks across the globe is known as the Internet. The Internet is a global computer network that uses standard communication protocols to enhance the variety of information and communication facilities that flow within interconnected networks. Nowadays, the Internet has become the finest and fastest means of communication, exchanging information and data between two or many sources across the globe.

3.3 The Internet Across the Globe

The world is going through an information age where the Internet is slowly substituting for all activities. The Internet has influenced every aspect of people's lives across the globe. Humans in different parts of the world are becoming more and more accustomed to new knowledge, new things, and unknown facts. Human beings are witnessing an age where information is instantly and readily available to more people than ever before. This attribute slowly declines the patience level of humans, and as a result, instant gratification has become the norm in different areas of our lives. In 2002, just within a decade, the Internet user population size increased to six hundred and thirty-one (631) million, which was eleven percent of the entire world's population (Simon, 2022). Later in the next decade (by 2010), this number went up to almost two billion (1.8 billion). In 2010, more than 26 percent (26.6%) of the world's population were Internet users (Raj, 2014). In 2021, there were almost more than four (4.9) billion Internet users across the globe (Petrosyan, 2023). In the year 2022, the estimated number climbed dramatically and reached above five (5.3) billion, which is more than sixty-six percent of the world's population (Petrosyan, 2023). Although worldwide the Internet growth rate has been over three hundred percent, more than two billion (2.7) people do not have any Internet access (Internet World Stats, 2022).

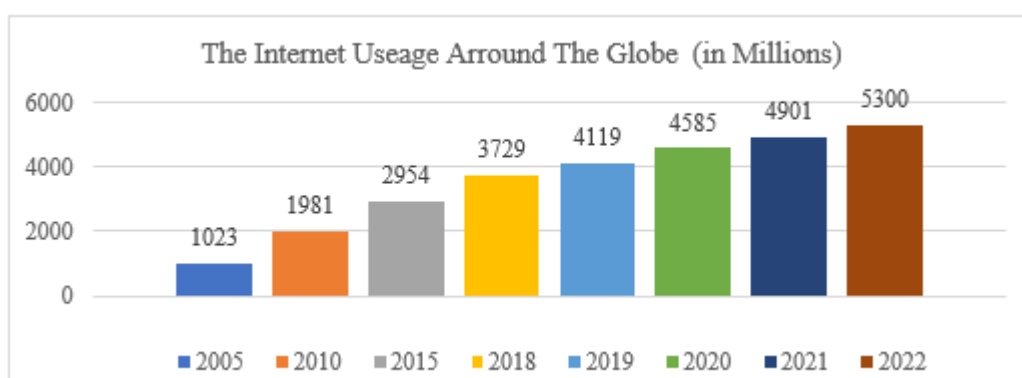


Figure 2: Total Internet User Across Globe (in Millions), Source: Petrosyan, 2023

3.4 The Internet in Bangladesh

Like different developed and developing countries around the globe, Bangladesh has also witnessed significant growth in the number of Internet users. More than one and a half (1.6) million people increased between 2021-2022, which is equal to one (+1%) percent increase in the total population size. Within the existing population, females comprise more than forty-nine (49.5%) percent, whereas males comprise more than fifty (50.5%) percent (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2022). In the year 1993, for the first time, the Internet reached the land of Bangladesh through Unix-to-Unix copy (UUCPs) email connectivity (Roknuzzaman, 2006). During that time, Bangladesh used dial-up access to email using the Bulletin Board System (BBS) (Roknuzzaman, 2006). The Internet user number in Bangladesh at the time of the penetration period was limited to five hundred across the country. Within the next three years of time, i.e., in the year 1996, the Internet reached across the country via IP connectivity. In the year 2000, the number of Bangladeshi Internet users was 186,000 (Hasnayan & Sultana, 2016). Within just nine years, this number of Internet users had climbed to 617,300. Till 2009, the number of Internet users across the country comprised only four (0.4%) percent of the total population. In the year 2011, things get twisted (Hasnayan & Sultana, 2016). This unrealistic number is the result of increasing digitalization of the work process and easy access to mobile phones and Internet connections across Bangladesh. According to Kepios analysis published by DataReportal (Simon, 2022), between 2011 and 2022, the number of Internet users across Bangladesh increased by over five million (5.5 million), which was more than eleven percent (11.6%) growth. According to a press release by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), in 2021, the number of Internet users across the country was one hundred and twenty-three (123.82) million (BTRC, Internet Subscribers, June 24, 2023).

Table 1: Bangladesh Internet User as of December 2021, BTRC

Operator	Subscriber Number (in Million)	The Internet Subscriber means subscribers/subscriptions who have accessed the Internet at least once in the preceding 90 days.
Mobile Internet	113.73	
ISP + PSTN	10.09	
Total	123.82	

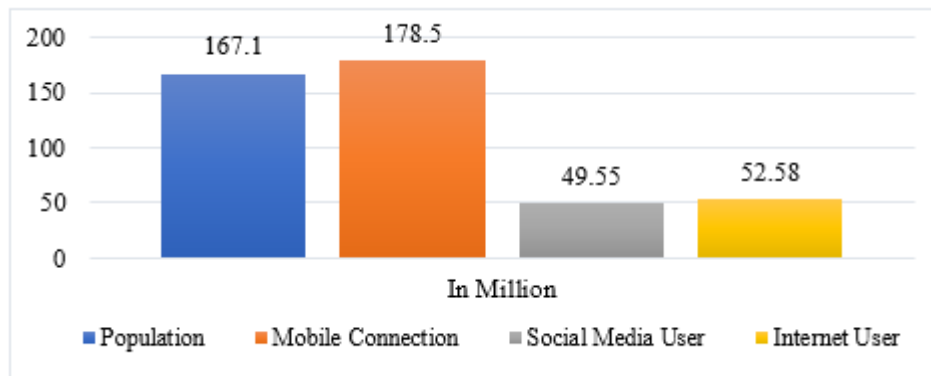


Figure 3: Population, Mobile Connection, The Internet & Social Media User as of January 2022
 Source: BTRC, Internet Subscribers, January 2022

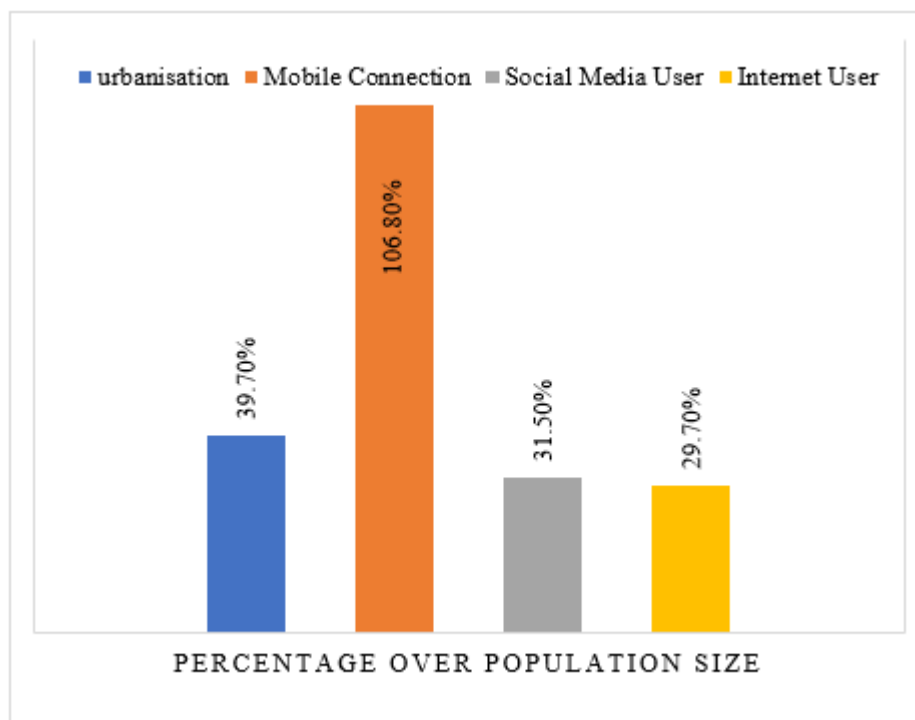


Figure 4: Percentage of The Internet & Social Media users over total population
 Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2022

3.5 Child Internet Users Across the Globe

The Internet has become an inevitable part of humans. With time, the Internet is slowly capturing every aspect of human life. The Internet has become an essential part of today’s culture, especially for children and youth. Each day, children in different parts of the world are establishing strong bonds with the Internet, replacing many childhood activities and outdoor games of past times. Children of different age segments are tending to use the Internet for schoolwork, online gaming, exploring new things, and mostly for social networking. A reference to a publication in The State of the World’s

Children 2017: Children in a Digital World clearly stated that across the globe, one out of every three Internet users is a child (OCHA Services, 2017). UNICEF also reveals that "every day, more than 175,000 children go online for the first time, tapping into great opportunities but facing severe risks" (UNICEF, 2018). The number of Internet users across the globe is increasing at a tremendous speed. Most of such users in today's world are children of different age segments. Many social scientists and activists find it terrifying, as there have not been many protective mechanisms developed to date to safeguard a child's interests from the perils of the digital world. Much more concern and effective action are required to ensure children's access to safe online content and an adequate level of precaution to protect the trail of information online activity creates for every child. The availability of the Internet connection and the Internet access device is the main reason working behind it. Children in developed nations tend to have a greater number of Internet access devices at home compared to children in developing and underdeveloped nations. Among the Internet users across the globe, a good number of people of different age segments spend their time on social media. It is observed that compared to adults, the younger generation tends to spend more time online due to their free time and capacity for the advancement of technology. Surprisingly, younger women are a higher percentage of Internet users compared to young men. According to research conducted by DataReportal (DataReportal 2022), women ageing between sixteen and twenty-four years spend an average of eight hours every day online.

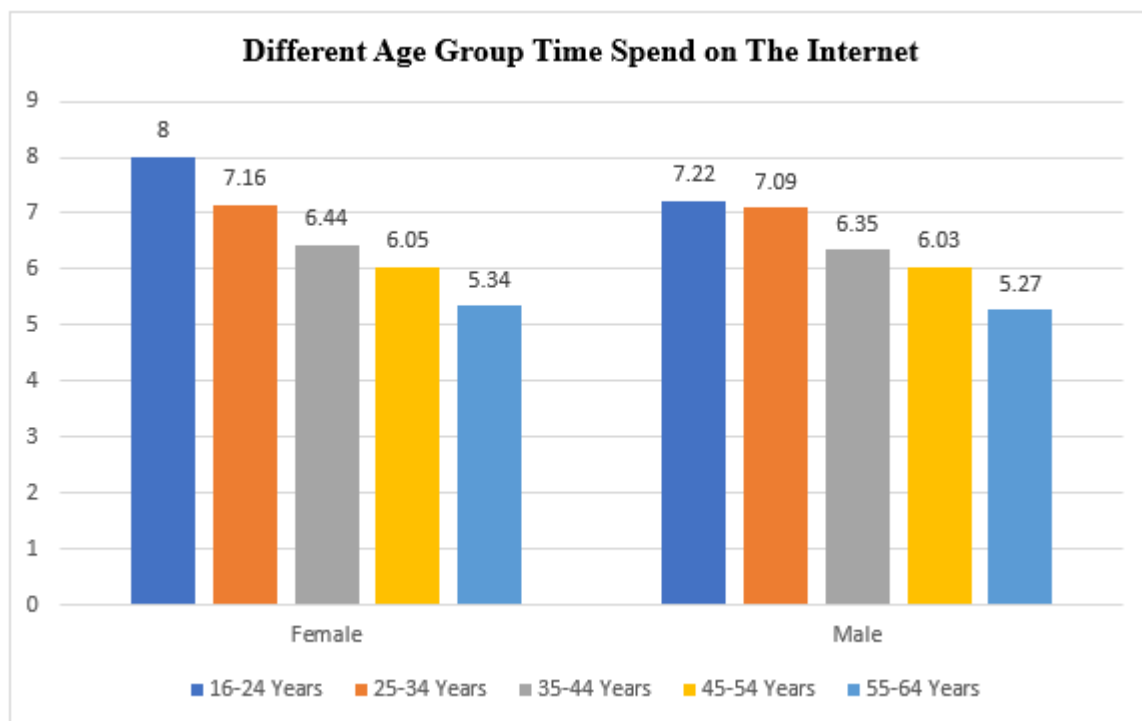


Figure 5: Online Time Spend of Different Age Group Across Globe, Source: DataReportal (2022). Digital 2022: Global Overview Report

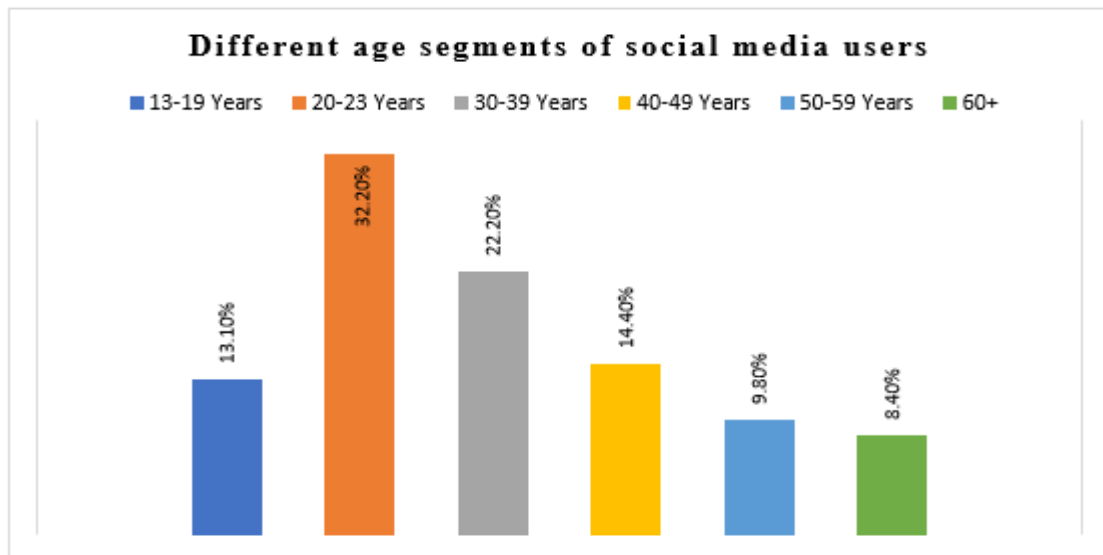


Figure 6: Different Age Segments of Social Media Users Across Globe, Source: Oberlo (n.d.). Social Media Age Demographics.

3.6 Internet Usage Among Children in Bangladesh

In the past two decades, there has been an extraordinary upsurge in the use of the Internet and information technologies like the tab, smartphone, and computer. On a large scale, the Internet has revolutionised the way humans carry out their daily activities. Bangladesh is no exception to that. A large portion of the Bangladeshi population has adopted the Internet in their daily lives. As of January 2023, there are one hundred and seventy-two (172.1) million people living across Bangladesh, among whom more than fifty percent (50.4%) are female and forty-nine (49.6%) are male (Country Metres, n.d.). There are approximately fifty-eight million children (ageing from 0 to 15 years) living across the country, among whom twenty-nine million (29,510,177) are male and twenty-eight million (28,679,646) are female (Country Metres, n.d.).

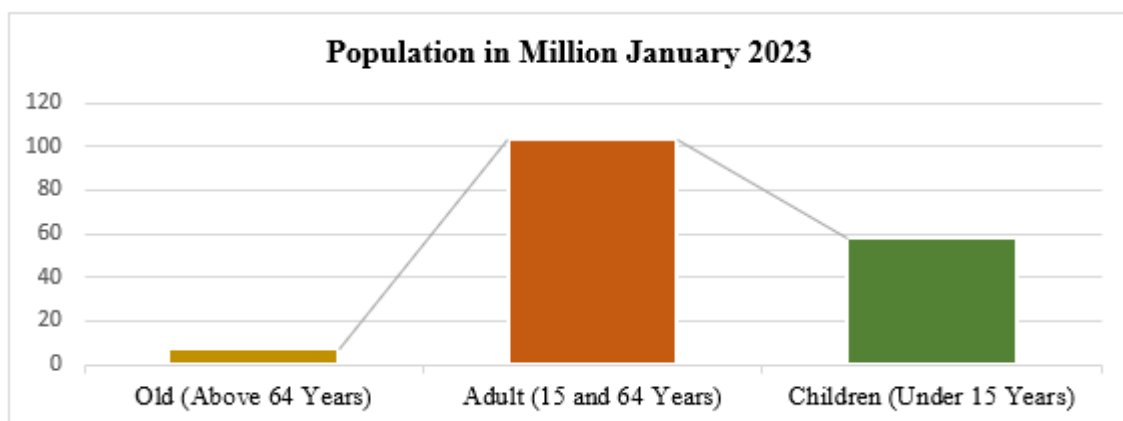


Figure 7: Population of Bangladesh (in million) as of January 2023, Source: Country Meters, n.d.

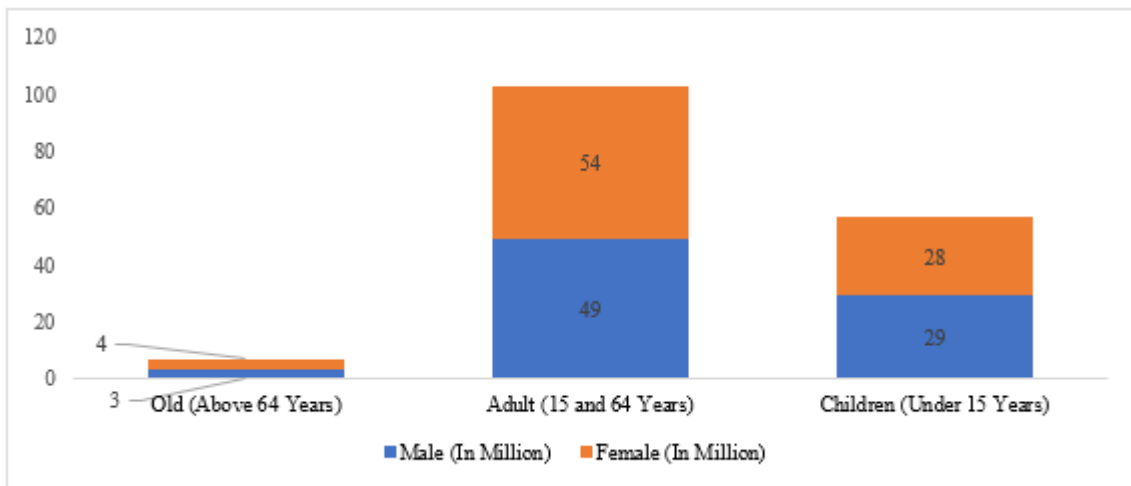


Figure 8: Male and Female Different Age Group Population Segments (in Million), Bangladesh. Source: Population and Housing Census 2022

Kepios analysis (DataReportal, 2022) indicates that among 167.1 million people, approximately 52.58 million people across Bangladesh use the Internet as of January 2022. Which means above thirty-one (31%) percent of the entire country's population goes online. Bangladesh Statistics Bureau (BBS) (Population and Housing Census 2022) presented a report on the Population and Housing Census 2022, which indicates that more than thirty seven percent (37.01%) of the country's total population are adults (eighteen years and older) who use the Internet (The Business Standard, 2022). But things are getting twisted with time. Day by day, children in Bangladesh are becoming one of the most significant users of the Internet for education, socialising, communication, and entertainment.

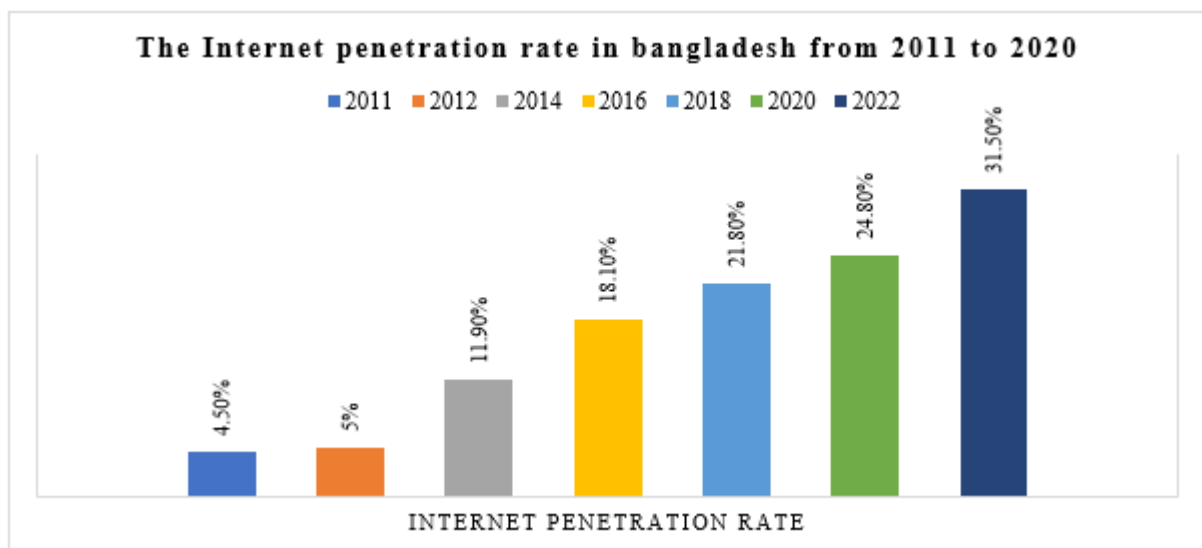


Figure 9: Bangladesh the Internet Penetration rate in between 2011 to 2022. Source: The Business Standard, 2022

The Bangladesh Statistics Bureau's (BBS) report on the Population and Housing Census 2022 also reveals that more than thirty percent (30.68%) of the country's entire population are children (aged five years and above) who use the Internet as well. Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, has the highest number of Internet users in both the adult and child population segments. In Dhaka, above forty percent (40.41%) of the Internet users are adults, and above fifty-seven percent (57.61%) of the Internet users are children. Till January 2023, the Internet penetration rate of almost forty percent (38.9%) made almost sixty-seven million (66.94 million) Internet users across Bangladesh (Population and Housing Census 2022 Preliminary Report, Page 19, 2022, August). As per Kepios's analysis (Simon, 2022), among such a gigantic number of Internet users, forty percent (40.41%) fall into the adult group due to ageing of eighteen years and above. More than fifty seven percent (57.61%) the Internet users across country are children in January 2023.

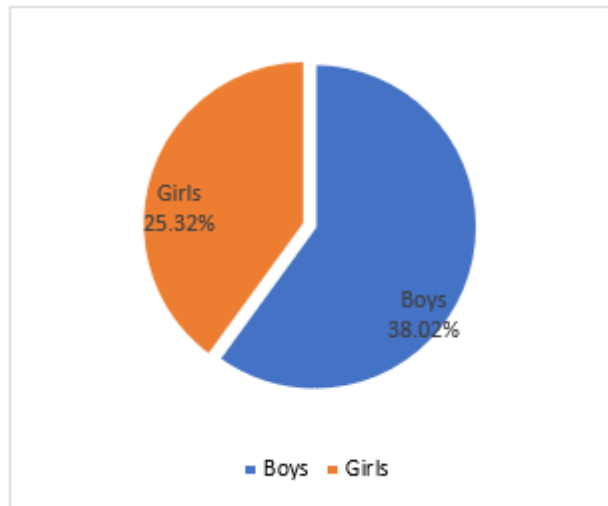


Figure 10: Percentage of Internet Usage among Children in Bangladesh according to BBA

According to the Bangladesh Statistics Bureau's (BBS) report on the Population and Housing Census 2022, the number of internet users is highest in Dhaka division and lowest in Rangpur division. Some key notes on Internet usage in Bangladesh, according to the BBS report, are:

- Around 30.68% of Bangladeshi children, aged five years and above, use the Internet.
- Among these 30.68% of Child Internet Users, 38.02% are boys and 23.52% are girls.
- The number of internet users among adults in Dhaka division is 40.41% and among children in Dhaka division this rate is 57.61%.
- In Rangpur division, lowest 17.67% of adults and 20.62% of children use the internet. (Eng. Checked)

3.7 Findings from Questionnaire Survey

The study area of this article is mainly limited to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Dhaka has the largest and most diversified population size compared to all other cities in Bangladesh. Therefore, selecting Dhaka as the study area has opened the door to opportunities. As a result, respondents from diversified backgrounds, locations, cultures, religions, and income levels participated in the oral interview process. The population size of this study is limited to ten (10) respondents who are randomly but cleverly selected from Dhaka city based on their diversified professions. There are only two mandatory fields placed in the questionnaire so that findings can be related to the problem statement, which are that the respondent must have a child ageing between three and seventeen years and that the respondent's family or household must have an Internet connection. The face-to-face informal interview technique has been used with a specific questionnaire containing ten questions. Keeping social distance, occupancy level of the respondents, and time-resource constraints in mind, primary data has been collected in a very careful manner. This article is written based on a descriptive exploration of the subject area, which is backed by different published articles, journals, and online verified data. Different types and sources of data have been collected, analysed, and formulated in the right way to provide meaningful information and possible recommendations to address the problem statement. Through a quantitative approach, numerical data has been collected, which will be quantified later. A questionnaire containing ten questions was cleverly asked of respondents in a form of face-to-face discussion to extract the required information about Internet usage among children in Bangladesh. Several social issues have come up after analyzing all the data received from the informal interview. It is clearly observed that few respondents found an affirmative impact of the Internet on the kids, whereas a few found the Internet to be somewhat damaging. A summary of the findings is provided below for a better understanding of the problem statement.

Table 2: Findings of the Questionnaire of Informal Interview conducted on January-February 2023 in Dhaka

Findings from the Face to Face Informal Interview through Questionnaire					
SL	Questions	Answer / Possible Answer			
1	Name				
2	Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/> Home Maker
	Respondent Response Number	4	2	1	3
3	Marital Status of the Respondents	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential
	Respondent Response Number	0	8	1	1
4	Do You have any Children*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
	Respondent Response Number	10		0	
	If yes, please specify the number	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
	Respondent Response Number	8	1	1	-
	How older your children are?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-8 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-11 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-17 Years
	Response Number (Total Children 13)	1	6	4	2
5	Your House have an Internet Connection? *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Used to Have	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential
	Respondent Response Number	10	-	-	-
6	How Often Your Children Use Internet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Always	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Never
	Respondent Response Number	8	2	-	-
7	Device your kid uses for going online?	<input type="checkbox"/> PC	<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop	<input type="checkbox"/> Smartphone	<input type="checkbox"/> Smart Device
	Response Number (Total Children 13)	3	1	7	2
8	Reason for using Internet by your Kid	<input type="checkbox"/> Games	<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> YouTube (video)	<input type="checkbox"/> Class/Education
	Response Number (Total Children 13)	3	4	4	2
9	Is Internet benefiting your child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
	Respondent Response Number	3	4	3	-
	If Yes / Sometimes than How?	<input type="checkbox"/> Study	<input type="checkbox"/> Explore	<input type="checkbox"/> Tech Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication
	Response Only Yes / Sometimes (3+3 =6)	3	1	1	1
	Any Other Comment	Attending Online Classes of School and Problem-Solving Tutorial			
10	Is Internet Causing harm to your Kid?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
	Respondent Number	4	2	3	1
	If Yes / Sometimes than How?	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsocial	<input type="checkbox"/> Disobedient	<input type="checkbox"/> Weak in study
	Response Only Yes / Sometimes (4+3 =7)	1	1	2	3
	Any Other Comment	Stubborn and Taciturn			

3.8 Affirmative Impact of Internet on Children

In the face-to-face informal interview, it was observed that three out of ten respondents clearly stated that the Internet is beneficial for their children, whereas three others stated that sometimes they found

the Internet beneficial for their children. Sixty percent of the respondents stated the positive impact of the Internet on their kids. The major benefits of the Internet are mentioned below:

- **Survey Outcome Shows Internet Open Opportunity to Explore New Things**

The Internet opens the door to exploring new things for all human beings. Children of all ages can explore as many things as they want on the Internet. Children across the globe use the Internet to explore history, solve mysteries, and gather firsthand experience. Like all other nations, a good number of children in Bangladesh explore new things through the Internet (Questionnaire survey findings).

- **Survey Outcome Shows Parents Believes Internet has Created Learning & Development Opportunity for their Kids.**

On a press conference (Dhaka Tribune, 2022), Bangladesh Education Minister Dipu Moni quoted that Bangladesh has already converged one hundred percent electricity in all educational institutions; now all of them will be given Internet coverage. All educational institutes will have Internet access so that students across the country can learn through experience and experimentation (Questionnaire survey findings).

- **Questionnaire Survey Found, Uses of Internet has Enhance ICT Skills of Children.**

Children need to have a minimum of ICT skills to use the Internet. Therefore, the Internet has opened a new window for every child to enhance their ICT skills. In developing nations like Bangladesh, children of all ages are slowly becoming technologically sound, which thus promotes a tech-friendly society. Sound ICT knowledge also enhances career development opportunities in the long run (Questionnaire survey findings).

- **Survey Results Shows That a Good Number of Parents Believes Uses Of Internet Has Excel Communication Skills Of Their Kids.**

The communication skills of the children of Bangladesh are becoming more effective due to the use of the Internet. Children living in cities and urban areas of Bangladesh tend to adopt good communication skills due to their easy access to the Internet compared to children in rural areas, who comparatively use less Internet. The Internet enhances the chances of increasing the self-confidence of children. Nowadays, children of all ages gain more self-confidence by gaining more knowledge and ICT skills using the Internet. The Internet exposed the easiest learning and career development opportunities for children (Questionnaire survey findings).

3.9 The Questionnaire Survey Also Identified Some Adverse Impact of Internet On Children

Among ten respondents, four stated that Internet usage is having an adverse impact on their children, whereas three respondents found that sometimes Internet harms and sometimes benefits their children (Table 2: Findings of the Questionnaire of Informal Interview conducted in January–February 2023 in Dhaka). The major adverse impacts of the Internet are:

- **Survey Results Finds That Access Use of Internet Has Cause Health Hazards to Their Kids.**

In the era of globalisation, individuals across generations must use and rely on the Internet, willingly or unwillingly. As per the Population and Housing Census 2022 report by the Bangladesh Statistics Bureau, above thirty percent of the country's entire child population uses the Internet, among which above thirty eight percent are boys and twenty-three percent are girls. According to a research report from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), around sixteen percent (16%) of

children ages 13 to 18 suffer from high blood pressure due to their obesity. Extensive use of the Internet, an increasing amount of total sedentary time, and a very limited number of outdoor sports and physical activities are the main reasons behind it. Spending too much time on the internet gives rise to several physical responses like poor eyesight, obesity, high blood pressure, and many more (Campbell Health Policy Editor, 2018).

➤ **Survey Result Shows That Extensive Use of Internet Has Made Their Children Unsocial.**

A major portion of the Bangladeshi child population spends a good amount of time on their smartphones or laptops, usually surfing the net or using social media platforms. As a result, the younger generation of Bangladesh is becoming more unsocial and tends to have less physical communication with friends, relatives, and neighbours. Spending more time online deprives children of many opportunities for socialising, playing, enjoying, entertaining, and networking in person. As a result, distance has been created among children and society, children and parents, children and teachers, and children with real-life friends. Many children across the country give more priority to virtual life than real life. Spending time alone increases the chances of many demotivation and suicidal tendencies (Questionnaire survey findings).

➤ **Survey Result Identified That Spending More Time Over Internet Has Turn Their Kids Disobedient.**

Still, the Internet users in Bangladesh are not mature enough. It can be said that Bangladesh is running on its first generation of Internet users, who need to learn a lot about the norms of behaviour in the virtual world. Lack of knowledge about the Internet among most parents increases the chances of the Internet having a negative influence on children. Extensive use of the Internet can result in a range of harmful behaviours in children that need to be addressed and monitored immediately to counter them. Many children across the country tend to develop many harmful behaviours like unlawful use of social media, impulsive online buying, addiction to TikTok, and playing games (Questionnaire survey findings).

➤ **Survey Result Found That Some of The Parents Tend to Believe Due to Spending Much Time Over Internet Is Causing Deteriorating Education and Knowledge Level Of Their Kids.**

Excessive use of the Internet (EIU) usually forces a child to adopt an Internet addiction, which is also termed compulsive Internet use (CIU), which may result in several adverse impacts. Spending more time online is reducing children's productive hours for education and learning (Valcke *et al.*, 2010). In most cases, children who spend more time on social media platforms perform poorly in academics and become slower at gaining new knowledge and education insights (Questionnaire survey findings).

5. Conclusion

In every half second, a new child goes online, which means the chances of abuse and addiction are getting much higher with time. Children in different parts of Bangladesh are slowly becoming addicted to the Internet due to a lack of parental monitoring and easy access to the Internet and Internet access devices like smartphones. This enhances the chances of an adverse impact of the Internet on children. The tremendously high adoption rate of the Internet has slowly transformed it into a necessity of daily life for more than half of human beings living across the globe. Due to its wider scope of uses and huge penetration rate, the Internet influences human life in both positive and negative ways. But compared to other inventions, the Internet has the deepest impact on human life in all age segments. Children (four to sixteen years old) are the largest segment that uses the most volume of the Internet and spends the most time on the Internet compared to all other age groups across the globe. Therefore, there is no doubt the Internet has influenced the lives of people of different ages, but it has also

influenced children of all ages in a great manner. With this reality of the two sides of the Internet, the most important question arises: is the Internet good or bad for the development of children? Therefore, every nation must analyse the impact of the Internet on child development and its consequences as well. It is also becoming increasingly important for Bangladesh to understand the impact of Internet usage among the younger generation, who are going to lead the country soon.

6.1 Recommendation

The Internet is one of the most remarkable inventions of science and technology that has shaken the world. One of the most massive impacts of the Internet is, it has sped up the globalisation process through major integration of economies and cultures. In Bangladesh, all segments of human life are slowly captured by the Internet as time passes. It is being observed that compared to the adult adoptability rate of the Internet among different age segments of Bangladeshi people, children (ageing above 5 to 17 years) hold the peck percentage (Statistical Yearbook Bangladesh, 2022). In these circumstances, when the Internet has become every day's necessity, it is impossible to keep children away from the Internet, especially from social media. As a result, countermeasures must be taken to minimise the adverse impact of the Internet on children of different age segments living across Bangladesh.

- Parents should acquire adequate knowledge on the best use of the Internet to safeguard a child's best interests and privacy (Valcke *et al.*, 2010).
- The Internet's time duration must be monitored and controlled at home and at school.
- Parents, teachers, and educational institutions should encourage children of all ages to spend less time on the Internet and get maximum involvement in outdoor activities.
- Children using smartphones or any other smart devices should be strongly monitored.
- The Internet use awareness session should be given to students of all levels.
- The government should take the necessary initiatives to ensure proper laws are in place to prohibit people from engaging in cyberbullying and other crimes, especially with children.
- Government authorities should restrict different sites and digital platforms that are not child-friendly or that can have an adverse impact on a child's mind and development.
- Parents should encourage their children to spend more time with friends, relatives, and outdoor spots instead of sitting at home, playing online games, and browsing social media sites.

As the Internet has become an inevitable part of humans, parents cannot detach their children from the Internet and must set guidelines for Internet usage that can protect their most precious assets.

• Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate: In the data collection process, consent was obtained from the participants.

Conflict of interests: Not applicable.

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