Literature Review:

The advancement of technology has caused a rise in childhood obesity for a majority of children and teenagers in the United States in the last 20 years.

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Introduction to Sociology

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**Introduction**

Obesity has been a long-standing issue in the Unites States and has only been growing. A branch of the general obesity problem we face as a nation is childhood obesity. Childhood obesity is a grand concern in its own right and is one that has caught the attention of many including myself. The percentage of childhood obesity in the United States has more than tripled since the 1970s (CDC, 2017). There are still many options to what exactly leads to the development of childhood obesity. Of course, for many patients it is due to genetics and family medical history, but I believe another factor could be the reason. I aim to see if the rise and increase of the production and use of technology has contributed in the increase of childhood obesity in the United States. Since the late 1980s, technology started to rise and the production of more devices was becoming more frequent. Video games like the Atari and Nintendo were being made and every child wanted one. Computers started to show up in everyone’s home. Through the years technology became more advanced and more apparent. Smartphones like iPhone and Android’s are in everybody’s hand, including children. I believe as technology became more prevalent, children started to spend less time participating in physical activity, and thus technology contributing to childhood obesity. Not only technology in the form of entertainment, but also in the form of industrialization could have affected childhood obesity. Children with obesity are also likely to develop bad habits, negative medical conditions, and affected social attitudes. These traits as well as obesity can follow a child in to adulthood. This recorded research could help find a link to the cause of childhood obesity, so we can then take measures to reduce it and find treatment.

**Hypothesis**

The advancement of technology has caused a rise in childhood obesity for a majority of children in the United States in the last 20 years.

**Research**

**A comparison of childhood obesity, technology, exercise, and academic habits.**

This study collected a study sample of 600 children to study the relationship between childhood obesity, exercise, technology, and academic habits. They also looked at the children’s behavioral patterns. They used children from six different school districts, two in urban areas and four in suburban areas, making for a well generalized sample. This study by Don Martin, was conducted because he wanted to find reasons behind childhood obesity. According to Martin (2017), obesity rates are increasing at alarming rates in the United States with over 27% of all children and adolescents identified as obese with nearly an additional 10% of children considered overweight. Each questionnaire was handed to a child for them to fill out on questions about eating habits, exercise, technology, study habits, and family dynamics. Their sample consisted of African-American, Caucasian, and Latino children, making for a good representation. According to Martin (2017):

Approximately 1 in 10 infants/toddlers continue to be at or above the 95th percentile on weight-by-height growth charts, and 1 in 6 older children or adolescent is obese. In 2008, obesity prevalence was approximately 21% among Hispanic children, 15% among Caucasian children, and 20% among African-American children.  Furthermore, 1 in 7 low-income children younger than 5 years of age is obese. (p. 158)

Research from the questionnaire showed that students who watched tv every day was 53 percent in urban areas and 77 percent in suburban. Students who played video games every day was 28 percent in urban areas and 33 in suburban areas. Students who used a computer at home was 38 percent for urban areas and 70 percent for suburban areas (Martin, 2017). The data shows that more suburban children use technology. And as there are predominantly more Caucasian children in suburban areas, and the percentage of Caucasian children who were obese was lower, this data shows that my hypothesis stating technology has a great influence on childhood obesity may be askew.

**Technology leads to childhood obesity**

One approach to the cause of childhood obesity has to do with the connection between parenting and technology. Some people blame childhood obesity on the fault of the parents of the child and how they use technology with their children. As parents become more and more surrounded by the demands of their workplace, they might turn to technology to help keep their kids quiet and distracted as they prepare dinner or relax after a long day (Mendoza, 2013). Some people believe technology intrudes on children’s ability to spend time doing physical activity or playing outside. Technology may encourage children to sit down and watch television or their parents might even encourage their children to do so, so the parents cannot be occupied with their children and work on another activity. According to Mendoza (2013):g/?;’[]

Although technology is used to keep kids occupied, it can also lead to childhood obesity. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children spend an average of seven hours online, watching TV and playing video games. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends children get at least 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. (p. 1)

While children spend a large amount of their time surfing the web, they might forget or not get a chance at all to get the recommended hour of physical activity they need. Most parents also set up parental controls on their children’s television to limit the amount of time they spend watching television, but this may actually hinder children and leave them dependent on these controls (Mendoza, 2013). Mendoza accounts on when she played sports as a kid, participating in karate, gymnastics, basketball, and cheerleading. Joining these teams did not allow her to spend time inside on the computer or playing video games. The physical activity regimen kept her in shape and kept her away from developing any signs of obesity. Technology being used as parenting seems to be a fashion of parents that should not be welcomed and could lead to childhood obesity.

**Technology: The problem or solution to childhood obesity**

My hypothesis looks at how technology and the production and use of it affects childhood obesity negatively. Much of the research I have looked into has dealt with ideas that consider the more children use technology and incorporate it heavily into their lives, the more likely a chance they have of having issues with childhood obesity. This approach looks at how technology may actually help children fight childhood obesity. According to Silverstone (2011):

The recommendation is to turn the problem into a solution - give children an activity they WANT TO DO, NOT HAVE TO DO. Today's younger generation is "hard wired to technology", so take advantage of this fact. Several entrepreneurs have developed new technologies that combine physical activity, technology, and learning that "appeal" to this Generation Z and they are demonstrating promising results. (p. 37)

This plan looks to use what routine and lifestyle children already have and use it to their advantage against childhood obesity. This approach looks at “Xergaming” or “Exer-gaming”, which is defined as a video games that also incorporate exercise into the game. They believe most children in Generation Z are accustomed to technology and video games which bring a sedentary lifestyle (Silverstone, 2011). If you can incorporate fitness into a part of children’s lives where it is lacking, and do it with a tool they are already used to and operating, it could help childhood obesity, instead of possibly harming the issue.

**Television watching and the risk of childhood obesity**

Childhood obesity has been a growing problem over the past decades. In the past decades, the introduction of the television has been a marvelous invention for families all across the United States. This study looks at how the two could have a negative connection between them, and how watching television could actually increase the risk of childhood obesity. Watching television could equate to harmful behaviors and effects according to Zhang (2016):

An important step in successful prevention in paediatrics is the identification of modifiable risk factors of childhood obesity, e.g. sociodemographic risk factors, television (TV) and other screen exposure have typically been linked to an increased risk for paediatric obesity. The correlation between TV and paediatric obesity may be mediated by lack of physical activity, increased consumption of unhealthy foods while watching TV, exposure to advertising of unhealthy foods and/or poor sleep patterns. (p. 13)

If television could have these adverse effects and links to childhood obesity, there may be a cause to refrain children from watching too much television. To test the researchers examined television watching with relationship to children’s sex, age, and study sample size. They found the risk between childhood obesity and television watching in both boys and girls was about the same. And they also found that each one hour a day increment of television watching corresponded to a 13 percent increase in risk of childhood obesity (Zhang, 2016). Traits leading to obesity could be time spent being inactive, food advertising, and less sleep. Also, children usually consume more carbonated drinks while watching television, which can help contribute to causes of childhood obesity. Watching television could be harming children more than we thought and could be a major problem with the issue of childhood obesity.

**Conclusion**

In my literature review of childhood obesity, and how and why it has become such a grand problem in modern society, I find that childhood obesity can come from many outlets. Technology has seemed to go alongside some problems generated from childhood obesity. The introduction of television, video games, and technological innovation has helped society but looks as if it may have hurt the fight against childhood obesity. There are also proponents of using technology to help against the issue and to use this generation’s most used tool to help childhood obesity. It seems that I have gathered mixed results for this research and I come to reject my hypothesis that the advancement of technology has caused a rise in childhood obesity for a majority of children in the United States in the last 20 years.

References

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Students: Note that I make a lot of notes. Take notice, so you get used to the way I like your work done. Grades are based the same for both papers, the outline, and the final exam.

Organization: 25/25%

Coherence: 25/25%

Grammar: 25/25%

Quality of Research: 20/25%

Total Grade: 95/100%

Note: If you earned less than a B-, you may make up the grade by 11/12 at midnight. E-mail to me with the word REVISED in the subject line.

This is a great paper. You can’t put teens in the title, since they aren’t really mentioned anywhere. Also, I would accept the hypothesis with a note that researchers are currently finding ways to use technology to help reverse the trend and it’s up to the parents to ensure their children have their time on technology monitored (or something close). Dr. S