

広島大学学術情報リポジトリ
Hiroshima University Institutional Repository

Title	The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth: Loss of Relationships with Others and Oneself
Author(s)	Goto, Yuta
Citation	HABITUS , 21 : 73 - 87
Issue Date	2017-03-23
DOI	
Self DOI	10.15027/42918
URL	https://ir.lib.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/00042918
Right	
Relation	



The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth: Loss of Relationships with Others and Oneself

Yuta GOTO

Associate Professor, Hokkaido Information University

Introduction

Together with the spread of cell phone and smartphone, Internet addiction of Japanese people, particularly youth, has been becoming a serious social problem. According to the survey of Health Labour Sciences Research in autumn 2012, the percentage of middle and high-school students who are suspected to be Internet addicts run into 8.1% of the total, and the number is estimated to be about 520,000(Oida, 2013). Moreover, a certain psychiatrist insists that the risk of Internet addiction is as high as alcoholism and drug poisoning(Okada, 2014).

This article aims to consider how Internet addiction exerts negative influence on morality of Japanese youth. Particular attention is paid to the loss of “relationship”, which is considered in this article to be the basic factor of morality. First, this article discusses the loss of the ability to have a relationship with others. In this case, others includes all individuals existing within our society as well as culture, history, and nature. In addition, this article refers to several problems such as child prostitution and the spread of obscene information, which are becoming more prevalent because of easy access to dangerous persons and harmful information via cell phones and smartphones Then, this article discusses the loss of the ability to have a relationship with oneself. Here, the ability to have a relationship to oneself refers to one’s own ability to have an effect on oneself, for example, self-reflection, self-discipline, and autonomy.

1. The loss of ability to have a relationship to “others”

1.1. Overestimation of friendship as a fundamental factor of Internet addiction

Why is Japanese youth fascinated by smartphone never before in the first place? One of backgrounds of their devotion to smartphone is a tendency to overestimate friendship

and communication. We can find this tendency in several surveys. For example, according to *White Paper on Children and Young People 2015* by Cabinet Office, 'Having many friends' is the most answer to question 'What is important for you?' (multiple answers from a defined list of choices), second to "Being healthy". Moreover, the number of the answer is overwhelmingly larger than the number of the following answers: 'Being brave', 'Gladly doing what people dislike', 'Getting good grades', 'Knowing a lot of things'. About 60% of the total select the answer 'Having many friends' (Naikakuhu, 2015). Also, according to National Survey of Lifestyle Preferences by Cabinet Office, about 60% of youth (15-29 year olds) select the answer 'friendship' to question 'What do you regard as important thing when you judge the grade of your happiness?' (multiple answers from a defined list of choices). The number of the answer is overwhelmingly larger than older ages (Naikakuhu, 2010). This tendency of overestimating friendship is becoming evident since the late 1990s. This article can present the data of *The Eighth World Youth Survey* by Cabinet Office that shows such tendency. According to this survey, youth who select answer 'Being with friends or acquaintances' to question 'What give you personal satisfaction?' had increased. Such youth were only 38.8% of the total in 1970. Since 1998, however, it reaches to about 74%, is remaining high (Naikakuhu, 2009).¹⁾

In addition to above facts, we should pay attention to the fact that a lot of words which became fashionable in young people since 2000s are deeply related to friendship and communication. For example, 'KY' [the abbreviation of 'Kuki Yomenai' (空気読めない)], which means a person who can't read the situation, 'Komyu-Sho' (コミュ障), which means a person who isn't good at communication with others, 'Hi-Mote' (非モテ), which means a person who isn't popular with the opposite sex, and 'Bocchi' (ぼっち), which means a person who is alone.

Also, the slang 'Benjyo-Meshi' (便所飯) means that only a student eats lunch in toilet in order to avoid to be regarded as lonely person who doesn't have friend as the cause of that other students watch him/her eating loneliness in school cafeteria. Moreover, the slang 'School Caste' means the invisible class system in a schoolroom which has the amount of friend as the standard of classification of students. All these words of youth, needless to say, imply contempt to person who doesn't have friend, isn't good at communication, or is lonely. We should pay attention to the fact that these words are spontaneous by youth themselves, never labels attached by older ages. Since these words are spontaneous by youth themselves, they can effectively show the reality of youth.

As above, the most important thing of youth is to have friend. Their life satisfaction or self-esteem heavily depends on the amount of friend, and therefore they are using

their enormous energy in order to build, maintain, and enlarge their friendship.

For the purpose of maintaining the relationship with friends harmoniously, they look upon 'Kuki wo yomu' (空気を読む), which means reading the situation, as the most important manner. They pay full attention to being lighthearted, joyful, never being above highly.

It's just smartphone that is becoming essential to youth nowadays in order to firmly believe the bonds of friendship owing to above situation. Youth want to communicate with friends via SNS at all times. Needless to say, the Internet is originally media which makes it possible to communicate with people all over the world. In fact, however, youth are mainly communicating with their friends who attends the same school. Looking back the history of media, cell phone and smartphone became explosively widespread as 'the tool for communication with friends' among the Japanese young people since the middle of 1990s, next to a pager. As scholars pointed out at the time, it was just cell phone that was the tool for maintaining 'fulltime intimate community' (Nakajima, *et al.*, 1999) for the young people.

Then, such trend is growing. Now many young people are falling in the condition like Internet addiction, particularly smartphone addiction. Following data show such situation. According to the survey of Health Labour Sciences Research which was already referred in the introduction, one fifth of junior high school students and one third of high school students use the Internet over 3 hours per weekday except school time (Oida, 2013). As for female high school students who include many heavy users, they use smartphone 7 hours per day on the average, according to Digital Arts Inc. (2015). The percentage of user of LINE, the most popular SNS in Japanese youth, which can easily build 'fulltime intimate community' because it is the closest, is 71% in teens, and 80% in 20's, according to Somusho (2014).

Needless to say, young people aren't merely devoting themselves to relationship with known friends. According to Endo and Sumioka (2014), Internet addicts are roughly divided into following two types. The first type is 'mobile type' who devotes himself mainly to the communication with his/her friends in reality via smartphone, as mentioned above. The second type is 'indoor type' who devotes himself mainly to online game via a personal computer or a home videogame machine. The type was major in Internet addicts before SNS became widespread. At first glance, these two types seem to be contrastive because the former is active and the latter is passive with regard to commitment to reality. We, however, should pay attention to that one of main factors of online game addiction is 'overestimating friendship or communication' just like SNS addiction. Most of online game addicts don't play game alone. They enjoy not only game itself, but also 'communication with other players' in the game. Players

team with several other players in many online games. Some players can't stop to log in online game because they feel a fellowship or are driven by a sense of duty to fill their role in the team. That is just typical example of online game addiction. In particular, young people who have no friend in real world, or are dissatisfied with reality, tend to be easily fascinated by online game. They work at a task such as adventure or combat with their party in extraordinary stages of online game. The experience brings them extraordinary feelings such as identification with others, elation, or a sense of mission. Also, the better they play a game, the more they can become the focus of attention and receive an accolade from other players, sometimes are called even 'Kami'(神), which means a god, by other players. In this way, the world of online game becomes exactly their true home(Endo and Sumioka, 2014; Higuchi, 2015). Takeno(2015) also concludes that Japanese youth expect the fulfillment of their self-esteem and approval from others in playing online games.

1.2. The decay of public spirit

The first of negative influences on morality, which Internet addiction and overestimating friendship as a fundamental factor of it bring, is 'the decay of public spirit'.

The amount of human relations which a person can have is fixed generally. Since the amount of energy and time which a person can spend is limited, the more energy and time of young people concentrate in their friendship, the fewer energy and time for caring for human relationship except friendship they spend. They deal with people except friends as if the people didn't exist. People except friends are no longer their object of caring for, and therefore they sometimes have a rude attitude or do a cruel act. According to Miyadai(1997), all people except friends are only 'landscape' to youth. They tend to easily sort others and exclude others except associate as only 'foreign object' or 'noise'.

A very example of above indifference to public space is 'Aruki-Sumaho', i.e. walking while using smartphone, which become a social problem nowadays. They not only interfere with the passage, but also sometimes even injure visually impaired person, and they themselves fall in a railroad from platform. Their attention concentrates on the display of their smartphone, and therefore is never paid to people around. To them, other passengers, who truly coexist in public space such as a sidewalk, are only 'landscape'.

As for using SNS, since some young people are convinced that their Internet postings are browsed only by their associate, they easily post slander, libel, or personal information. In 2013, following incidents occurred frequently and were widely reported: some young people posted photos or movies recording prankish acts such as lying

down in the freezer for ice cream in convenience store where he worked, standing in a railroad, leaning out of a roller coaster, and climbing up to police car. As a result, 'flaming' sometimes occurred, their personal information was released online. The young people might post them without malice, in a sense, with 'good will', in order to entertain their friends. They, however, decisively lacked the sense of 'eyes of people except friends'.

Seeing more vicious case, there were many spectators who shot injured persons with their cell phone in the scene of 'Akihabara random attacker incident' in 2008. There were even some persons who webcast the scene. To them, injured persons might be only 'materials' for getting hot with friends.

Above cases show 'the luck of public spirit when using cell phone or smartphone'. Needless to say, however, 'the luck of public spirit' can be found in scenes except using cell phone or smartphone, for example, nod or whisper during the class, bullying at school, or breach of manners in the coming of age ceremony. In these cases, smartphone is not necessarily used. These cases, however, seem to be influenced by introverted mentality of youth which their daily use of smartphone brought.

By the way, lest there be any misunderstanding, this article emphasizes that it doesn't intend to insist that the cause of 'the decay of public spirit' is the spread of cell phone and smartphone. That is to say, 'The decay of public spirit' and exclusivity in human relationship as the background of it themselves have been pointed out by many commentators since the middle of 1990s. They used keywords such as 'Sima-Ucyu' (島宇宙) [island universe] (Miyadai, 1994), 'Mura-Shakai' (村社会) [small town community] ²⁾ (Asaba, 2001; NTT.ad., 2000), or 'Minna-Bocchi' (みんなぼっち) [only we] (Tomita and Fujimura, 1999), for expressing the distinctive characteristic of human relationship in Japanese youth nowadays. For example, Japanese students nowadays tend to form a small group with classmates of same type right after entrance, limit the communication to within their group, and don't want to communicate with members of other groups.

And now, why did such exclusivity in human relationship occur? It's difficult to fully answer the question in this article. The weakening of 'social inclusion' of youth, however, seem to be a big factor.

Following is all this article can point out now: The spread of cell phone and smartphone itself isn't the immediate cause of 'the decay of public spirit'. However, it has served the function of worsening 'the decay of public spirit' undoubtedly. That is to say, the preference to exclusivity in human relationship, which had already been in society, made youth regard cell phone as a tool for the stimulating of exclusivity in human relationship, become explosively widespread, and develop technologies and services for 'communication' such as SNS.

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth

As the exclusivity in human relationship becomes serious, so youth break ties with the world as a whole. The breaking implies not only breaking ties with others except their friends, but also indifference to wider world such as society, culture, history, and nature, by which humans are surrounded.³⁾ Such indifference seems to be a factor of decline in academic ability and a trend away from reading books.⁴⁾

In 1990s when the Internet became widespread, many people praised the Internet as a tool which enable to communicate with a diversity of people all over the world and realize 'global village'. At this time, however, the Internet is playing an opposite role ironically. That is to say, the main role of the Internet at this time is to divide people into closed small groups. There are so many 'closed communities of same type of people' such as web pages about their hobby in the Internet, because the Internet was able to easily meet others who have same hobby or interest, but are difficult to be met in reality. Also, for example, if we followed only users who have same preference or thought as ours in Twitter, we could assume that we belonged to majority because our timeline was filled with tweets with which we could agree. Moreover, in international situation, the Internet is helping nationalism or terrorism in contemporary world on the other hand, because it is able to easily communicate with same ethnics, believers in the same religion, or others who have the same ideology.⁵⁾ Also, the spread of hate speech which become a social problem nowadays seems to be deeply connected to above exclusivity of the Internet.

And now, if that is true, then school must undertake a role in cultivating the public spirit of children and youth against the trend of exclusivity. School, however, become dysfunctional currently. Even teachers can't go against the trend of overestimating friendship. It's pardonable to scold students, being above highly, because those who can't read the situation(KY) is the worst. Although adult persons as 'different others' are intrinsically responsible for cultivating the public spirit of children and youth, they want to become 'friend' of children or understanding adults, and therefore they are always sensitive to children, curry favor with them, and hop on the bandwagon easily. In a result, such disempowerment of teachers makes classroom become a lawless area, becomes an occurrence factor of bullying. According to Kawamura(2007), in 'the cozy type' of class where homeroom teacher interacts with students as if he/she was their friend, bullying tends to occur more frequently than in 'the control type' of class where homeroom teacher is strict. The incorrigible cruelty is spreading in classrooms ironically owing to superficial 'kindness'. Now, school is only extension of private rooms of students, is becoming no more than training school for future 'complainer', who excessively asserts only his/her own right without caring for public world.

1.3. The loss of ‘sense of distance’ from others: Many problems which contact with dangerous persons or harmful information brings

The exclusivity in human relationship which was mentioned above seems to become a background of children’s easy contact with dangerous persons or harmful information. There are wide variety of people or information in this society. Unfortunately, there are also many wicked men and harmful information. Since some young people have shut themselves in too closed human relationship, they tend to lack an attention to the dark side of this world. As a result, they so casually contact wicked men(in particular, men who create the illusion that they are sympathizer in minds of youth by flattery) and harmful information. We can find youth’s lack of ‘sense of distance’ from others in above situation.

In addition, the characteristic of smartphone is helping the contact with dangerous others or harmful information. The main characteristic of smartphone is not only ‘mobile’, but also ‘personal’. Looking back the history of spread of phone, we can understand that it’s just the history of ‘personalization’ of phone. Phone was mainly for business use originally, then became spread at home in 1970s. After that, cordless phone became spread in the late 1980s, and cordless handset was set in each private room which was more personal territory. Finally, phone had become perfectly personal media as a result of the spread of cell phone and smartphone since the late 1990s. Cell phone and smartphone, considered the “perfectly personal device”, enable children to easily access to dangerous persons or harmful information to which it was difficult to access in the past owing to their characteristic. That is to say, since cell phone and smartphone enabled children to directly contact with others beyond eyeshot of familiar persons(so-called ‘direct link’), it became more difficult for family, teachers or local residents to protect children, compared with the past.

Above fact is bringing several well-known crimes and troubles. The typical example of such crimes and troubles is child prostitution. There were services for searching buyer, for example, ‘Terekura’[telephone dating club], ‘Dial Q2’ in Japan before the spread of cell phone. Cell phone, however, enabled to more easily access to buyer than past services. In a result, it expanded the range of child prostitution(Simoda, 2014). Needless to say, online dating is bringing several crimes and troubles such as a treat, an assault, or a murder, outside of prostitution.

As for getting illegal drug, it was difficult for children to get it in the past, if they didn’t have the connection to juvenile delinquent or ‘Yakuza’[Japanese traditional gangsters]. Now, however, it’s relatively easy to get illegal drug via the Internet, even when children aren’t juvenile delinquent.

Also, so-called ‘Net-Sinju’(ネ ッ ト 心 中)[joint suicide with acquaintance via the

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth

Internet] seems to be unique to the age of the Internet. It is almost impossible for those who are at risk for suicide to meet each other in real world. If they use the Internet, however, they can meet each other on so-called 'Jisatsukei-Site' (自殺系サイト) [the site for those who have an interest in suicide], etc.

Cell phone and smartphone enabled not only to easily meet dangerous persons, but also to easily access harmful information. As for obscene information, which is one of main harmful information, children nowadays can easily watch obscene movies or photos via the Internet, even if they are elementary school students (Takeuchi, 2014).

In the past, children went out into outside world step by step, while being watched over by familiar adults, enhancing their eye for others. Now, however, if children have smartphone, they can directly link to outside world, though they still haven't had the eye.

It's just cell phone and smartphone that steal not only study time at home, but also time for learning how to keep a suitable distance, from children.

2. The loss of ability to have a relationship to “oneself”

The previous section had shown that 'the decay of public spirit' occurred by devotion to closed human relationship. In fact, however, Japanese youth cut off not only relationship to outside world except friendship.

Human has not only relationship to others, but also relationship to oneself. That is to say, human faces to oneself and cares for oneself, thereby deepening his/her own understanding or improving his/her own abilities.

However, since many Japanese youth spend a lot of time with friends, they lose a relationship to oneself. As it were, their relationship is disconnected not only in a 'horizontal' direction, but also in a 'vertical' direction. Smartphone eats up their own time, thereby leads them to lose the relationship to oneself. Their selves are neglected, and aren't esteemed in a true sense.

In this section, a discussion about the disconnection in a 'vertical' direction is divided into the part about the decay of ability to 'deepen' oneself and the part about the decay of ability to 'improve' oneself.

2.1. The decay of ability to 'deepen' oneself

Reflection on one's present self, finding problems, and coping with them are needed in order to grow up. Many young people, however, can't reflect, because they want to always connect with their friends, in a result, don't face to themselves. Moreover, their friends are almost yes-man who curry favor with them. Such situation makes dif-

difficult to develop their ability to associate with oneself, i.e. ability to stare to their weak points, then overcome them, or effectively cope with them if overcoming them was difficult.

According to teachers, following case is increasing: When the children are scolded by teacher, they tend to counter-argue 'Other students do same thing', or 'Why do you scold only me. That is injustice!', laying aside their own fault, without reflection on themselves(Saito, 2008). Above decay of ability seems to become an occurrence factor of such trouble. Children who lack the ability of reflection have danger of becoming future 'complainer'.

Moreover, the lack of self-observation will become a factor of having too much pride. Children place absolute trust in their own present sensibility and values, don't want to know that they are imperfect and ignorant, and become arrogant. The disadvantage of ability to sincerely face to their own 'inner other' such as weak points and fault will cause considerable difficulties to children for the future, because nobody can avoid to have opportunities to lose self-esteem, for example, unemployment, disappointed love, divorce, aging, illness, or death, in life. Those who have too advantageous self-image will not be able to bear up under above hardships in their life.

The disadvantage of ability to sincerely face to oneself seems to be related to the disadvantage of ability to sincerely face to 'external others' such as foreign others or information in which one has no interest, which was mentioned in the previous section. If we didn't realize that we are all each different being from others and are never the same, i.e. 'only a person', we couldn't regard others also as 'only a person'. At a glance, feelings such as 'loneliness' or 'sorrow' look like negative, but they are important feelings which vigorously support our ethics(Takeuchi, 2009). Nevertheless, modern people, particularly young people, tend to think that such feelings are 'heavy', 'dismal', or 'morbid', and therefore escape from them. According to Doi(2014), young people nowadays no longer talk it over with their friends, because giving expression to their negative feelings implies to spoil lighthearted mood or not to read the situation and therefore is 'bad action'. When young people don't realize 'only a person', the cruel and insidious division always lurks in their joyful communication with friends.

2.2. The decay of ability to 'improve' oneself

Then, this article will discuss ability to 'improve' oneself. In this case, 'improving' oneself includes acquiring culture or skill and changing oneself into new self.

If children always hung out with friends, used SNS, or logged in online game, they couldn't acquire culture or skill. It's because they can't have enough time to study or practice. As mentioned in the previous section, one fifth of junior high school students

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth

and one third of high school students use the Internet over 3 hours per weekday except school time. In addition, new message incessantly arrives while studying, as a result, that cuts up children's study time, and breaks their concentration. It was pointed out that their indifferences to wider world were a mental factor of decline in academic ability in the previous section. In addition, their life style seems to be major factor of decline in academic ability. In fact, the more time to use smartphone or play video game children spend, the worse record at school they have naturally. That is clear from a correlation between records in 'Zenkoku-Gakuryoku-Tyosa'[national academic ability survey] and amount of time to use smartphone or play video game(Kokuritsu-Kyoiku-seisaku-Kenkyujyo, 2014).

Also, group learning is very popular in the field of education nowadays. Some people, however, question about the effectiveness. For example, commentator Susan Cain points out that the more excellent the person is, the more time for practice done by oneself he/she spends, in various fields, on the ground of survey results by psychologist Anders Erikson etc. According to Cain, having one's own time brings 'deliberate practice', and becomes a cause of achieving significant results(Cain, 2012). In teaching experience of the author of this article, when students don't have basic academic skills, group learning tends to merely become an opportunity of chat. Moreover, it tends to merely become an opportunity of slipping into self-complacency by praising each other, because students read the situation. Many students loudly insist that a merit of having smartphone is enabling to teach each other via LINE, particularly to their parents as 'sponsor'. In fact, however, some students reveal that they tend to chat and be interrupted study(Endo and Sumioka, 2014). In addition, according to Takeuchi(2014), about half(46.4%) of junior high school students and high school students who had smartphone answered that they didn't have confidence in study. The percentage is more than twice, compared with the percentage (22.1%) in the case of students who don't have smartphone. The effectiveness of group learning does not completely need to be denied. The basic way of learning or practice is, however, 'making efforts by oneself'.

One thing to worry about is that youth nowadays tend to insult persistent effort(Saito, 2008). They scoff at those who make an effort, regarding them as 'tryhard'. As is usual with youth, they check their ambition each other, get in each other's way, gravitate toward the easy way out 'friendly', and thereby try to keep a sense of security each other.

Also, owing to such lack of ambition, their motivation to learn is no longer derived from their inner part by themselves, must be unlocked by teachers. Teachers have been required that they give very fun and easy-to-follow lessons as entertainer, arouse interest of students, and ask students to study. Many students say that they don't have motivation to study because lessons are boring. Such attitude, however, seems to show

‘perfect domestication’, in the sense that students put even their own inner appetite into other’s hand. Some students complain to stern teachers that their way of teaching is pushy and compulsive. Students, however, can’t realize that the more serious ‘push’ and ‘compulsion’ by hard control of entertainment and service industry are spoiling them (To tell the truth, it’s just ‘learning’ that can give students insight into above fact).

Learning isn’t fun generally. It’s different from the amusement. There are many things which we should know and consider in this world, if we don’t enjoy them. Needless to say, ‘joy in learning’ exists undoubtedly. However, it’s just good luck which only those who made an effort may have. ‘Joy’ itself isn’t the purpose of learning. Learning has also the purpose of contributing to others and society as a whole like ‘labor’. Enhanced culture or skill can release us from closed peer relationship, tie us to wider world. The disregard for public nature of learning seems to be deeply connected to following mainstream work values of youth nowadays: the ideal of work is the realization of their own dream or desire. The mainstream work values sound like beauty, however they are too egoistic and greedy actually.

Moreover, there is the function of stimulating social development in learning. That is to say, learning is the activity of understanding various facts or views, temporarily putting aside one’s own preference or values. In this sense, learning has function of correcting selfishness. Nevertheless, if young people didn’t learn from the very first because learning contents weren’t suit their tastes or compatible with their values, and continued to justify oneself by using advantageous words such as ‘Kosei’(個性) or ‘Jibun-Rashisa’(自分らしさ) [personality], they couldn’t acquire academic ability and develop socializing skills, would continue to remain in prison called ‘self’ from now on.

Doi(2009) pointed out that one of trends in human relationship of Japanese young people is ‘Kyara-Ka’(キャラ化) [becoming ‘character’], which means that each person becomes to play one’s own fixed ‘character’ in order to keep their friendship. We can find a sort of ‘stubbornness’ that young people don’t want to or can’t change present self, and don’t want their friends to change themselves. Learning originally includes intension to change oneself and release from prison called ‘self’. ‘Kyara-Ka’ also seems to become a factor of obstructing growth of youth.

3. Untimely meditations

Critical reflection on smartphone and life style of youth who are heavy users of smartphone, particularly on their morality, as this article mentioned, will be offended by a variety of people. In this last section, therefore, this article will just a little refer to

such antipathy.

First, as for the antipathy of young people who are main objects of study in this article, having antipathy itself is never bad, however young people should listen to voices of those who have different view from theirs, first of all. After that, they should carefully consider, then object rationally. They tend to feel that all those who criticize them or give advice to them are wicked men, immediately cover their ears and shut their mind. As this article mentioned, such exclusive attitude seems to be deeply influenced by modern youth culture including the devotion to the Internet and smartphone. Also, such exclusive attitude seems to be harmful not only to people around, but also to young people themselves. They should begin to carefully analyze their situation, putting aside their likes and dislikes temporarily.

Then, 'kind and understanding adults' who empathize with children and youth also will have antipathy to this article. Now, the generation who used cell phone in their teens are becoming parents. Their 'kindness' seems to originate from their mere self-protection. That is to say, such adults merely cater to tastes of children and youth in order to be disliked by them. Adults should always contemplate whether their own 'kindness' is genuine. There is a tendency to be always sensitive to other's mood and cater to tastes of others in society as a whole nowadays. Adults merely swim with the tide, in a result, relinquish their social role as adult, and is obstructing the growth of children.

Moreover, since modern society as a whole is based on mammonism, we may merely relent to invisible pressure from cellphone companies which is winner in business or nation which is still working out 'growth strategy', in a result, are made addict to smartphone, domesticated. That is to say, we not only cater to tastes of children, but also are merely fueled by the supremacy of economy and technology in this society, are mobilized with children and youth as mere 'parts' for operating this society.

Once Socrates compared himself to 'horsefly' because he said things that rub Athenians the wrong way in his philosophical dialogue. The author of this article has discussed 'caring for one's own spirit' in modern Japan, not only as an adult, but also as a philosopher called 'horsefly'

Notes

- 1) In addition, this article can point out the rise of local-oriented in young people as an example which shows the tendency to overestimate friendship. We should take notice of the fact that the 'local' relationship to which youth refer doesn't mean relationship in the local community as a whole, it means only their own friends and family. (Abe, 2013). Moreover, according to Miyamoto(2009), we could find the tendency to overestimate friendship in girls by tradition, however we can find it in boys also

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth

nowadays.

- 2) We can find this term in Harada(2010) nowadays.
- 3) Lest there be any misunderstanding, this article adds that it doesn't insist on returning to the old days, because human relationship in 'Seken[the world]', 'community', or 'company' on which many Japanese depended in the old days, were relatively wider than human relationship of youth nowadays, however weren't completely free from the preference to 'exclusivity'.
- 4) According to Zenkoku-daigaku-seikyoren(2014), 40.5% of university students answered that reading time per a day was zero.
- 5) It's Osawa(1999) that pointed out this fact relatively early.

References

- Abe, Masahiro(2013) *Chiho ni komoru wakamono-tachi*[Youth who stay at their hometown], Tokyo: Asahi-shinbun-shuppan.
- Asaba, Michiaki(2001) '*Keitaidenwa-teki-ningen*' *towa nanika*[What's 'cell phone-human' ?], Tokyo: Takarajima-sha.
- Cain, Susan(2012) *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, New York: Penguin Books.
- Digital Arts Inc.(2015) *Miseinen no keitai-denwa smart phone riyo-jittai-chosa*[The survey of use of cell phone and smart phone in minors], <http://www.daj.jp/company/release/common/data/2015/020901.pdf> (retrieved December 7, 2016).
- Doi, Takayoshi(2008) *Tomodachi jigoku*[Friend-hell], Tokyo: Chikuma-shobo.
- Doi, Takayoshi(2009) *Kyaraka-suru/sareru kodomo-tachi*[Children who (make) play fixed character], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten.
- Doi, Takayoshi(2014) *Tsunagari wo aorareru kodomo-tachi*[Children who are fueled by communication], Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten.
- Endo, Miki and Takashi Sumioka (2014) *Netto-izon kara kodomo wo sukue*[Save children from Internet addiction], Tokyo: Kobun-sha.
- Harada, Yohei(2010) *Chikagoro no wakamono ha naze dame nanoka*[Why is youth nowadays no-good ?], Tokyo: Kobun-sha.
- Higuchi, Susumu(2013) *Netto-izonsho*[Internet addiction], Tokyo: PHP kenkyujo.
- Kawamura, Shigeo(2007) *Data ga kataru*① *Gakko no kadai*[Data show, I: problems of school], Tokyo: Toshobunka-sha.
- Kokuritsu-kyoiku-seisaku-kenkyujo(2014) *Heisei 26 nendo zenkoku gakuryoku gakushu jyukyo-chosa houkokusyo chosakikka-siryō*[The Report of National Survey of Academic Ability and the Learning Situation 2014].
- Miyadai, Shinji(1994) *Seihuku-syojyo-tachi no sentaku*[the choice by girl students], Tokyo: Kodan-sha.

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on Morality of Japanese Youth

- Miyadai, Shinji(1997) *Seikimatsu no saho*[The manners in the end of the century], Tokyo: Media Factory.
- Miyamoto, Sachiko(2009) “Kodomo wo torimaku ningen-kankei[Human relationship of children],” *Dai 2 kai kodomo seikatsu jittai kihon-chosa hokokusho*, Tokyo: Bennese-kyoiku-sogo-kenkyujo, pp.33-47.
- Naikaku(Cabinet Office) (2009) *Dai 8 kai sekai seinen isiki chosa*[The Eighth World Youth Survey].
- Naikaku(Cabinet Office) (2010) *Kokumin seikatu senkodo chosa*[National Survey of Lifestyle Preferences].
- Naikaku(Cabinet Office) (2015) *Heisei 27 nendo-ban kodomo wakamono hakusho*[White Paper on Children and Young People 2015]
- Nakajima, Ichiro, Keiichi Himeno, and Hiroaki Yoshii(1999) “Ido-denwa no huku to sono syakaiteki-imi[Diffusion of Cellular Phone and PHS and it’s Social Meanings],” *IEICE Transactions(Japanese Edition)*, vol.16, No.3, pp.79-92.
- NTT ad.(2000) *Net & keitai jinrui hakusho*[White paper on humans who use the Internet and cell phone], Tokyo: NTT shuppan.
- Oida, Takashi(research representative)(2013) *Heisei 24 nendo kitsuen inshu zenkoku-chosa-kekka*[National survey results of smoking and drinking 2012].
- Osawa, Masachi(1999) “Denshi-media no kyodotai[Communities in electronic media],” in *Media-kukan no henyō to tabunka-syakai*, Tokyo: Seikyū-sha.
- Okada, Takashi(2014) *Internet/game izonsho*[Internet and video game addiction], Tokyo: Bungei-shunju.
- Saito, Takashi(2008) *Anata no tonarino monster*[Complainers next to you], Tokyo: NHK shuppan.
- Simoda, Hirotsugu(2010) *Kodomo no keitai: Kiken-na kaihoku*[Cell phone of children: the dangerous liberated area], Tokyo: Shuei-sha.
- Somusho(Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)(2014) *Heisei 26 nendo-ban joho-tsusin hakusho*[2015 White Paper on Information and Communications in Japan].
- Takeno, Maho(2015) *Online game ha yakunenno ni akueikyo wo ataerunoka*[Do online games have a bad influence on youth?]. Tokyo: Natsume-syobo-shinsha.
- Takeuchi, Kazuo(2014) *Sumaho-children taio manual*[Manual for handling children who have smart phone]. Tokyo: Chuokoron-shinsha.
- Takeuchi, Seiichi(2009) *'Kanashimi' no tetsugaku*[The philosophy of 'sorrow'], Tokyo: NHK shuppan.
- Tomita, Hidenori and Masayuki Fujimura(1999) *Minna-bocchi no sekai*[Only ours world], Tokyo: Kouseisha-Kouseikaku.
- Zenkoku-daigaku-seikyoren(2014) *Gakusei seikatsu jittai chosa*[The survey of university student life]

The Negative Influence of Internet Addiction on the Morality of Japanese Youth: Loss of Relationships with Others and Oneself

Yuta GOTO

Associate Professor, Hokkaido Information University

This article aims to consider how Internet addiction, particularly smartphone addiction, exerts a negative influence on the morality of Japanese youth. Particular attention is paid to the loss of “relationship”, which is considered in this article to be the basic factor of morality. First, this article points out that “overestimating friendship and communication” is a fundamental factor of Internet and smartphone addiction. Furthermore, Internet and smartphone addiction is worsening the overestimation of friendship and communication. There is an interrelationship between overestimating friendship and communication and Internet and smartphone addiction. This interrelationship then results in the loss of the ability to have relationships with “others” and “oneself”. In section 1, this article discusses the loss of the ability to have a relationship with others. In this case, others includes all individuals existing within our society as well as culture, history, and nature. Overestimating friendship and communication and Internet and smartphone addiction lead to “the decay of public spirit”. In addition, this article refers to several problems such as child prostitution and the spread of obscene information, which are becoming more prevalent because of easy access to dangerous persons and harmful information via cell phones and smartphones, considered the “perfect personal device”. In section 2, this article discusses the loss of the ability to have a relationship with oneself. Here, the ability to have a relationship to oneself refers to one’s own ability to have an effect on oneself, for example, self-reflection, self-discipline, and autonomy. Overestimating friendship and communication and Internet and smartphone addiction produce numerous problems in children and youth including little self-reflection, narcissism, and a decline in general ability.