# I'm all Alone with my Phone, Adolescent's Ideas on Solitude and Technology Use

**Ali Rizwan***

*Editorial Office, Journal of Psychological Abnormalities, Belgium*

***Corresponding Author****

*Ali Rizwan*
*Editorial Office, Journal of Psychological Abnormalities,*
*Belgium Telephone: +32(800) 709-48*
*E-mail: psycholab@journalres.com*



**Received**: 07-June-2022, Manuscript No. jpac-22-20022; **Editor assigned:** 09- June -2022, Pre QC No. jpac-22-20022 (PQ); **Reviewed**: 23-June -2022, QC No. jpac-22-20022 (Q); **Revised**: 28- June-2022, Manuscript No. jpac-22-20022 (R); **Published**: 30- June -2022, DOI: 10.35248/2332- 2594.22.11(3).202

## Abstract

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by the emergence of isolation as an important context for optimal development, as well as the near universal usage of technology. Furthermore, modern computer-mediated communication devices (e.g., smartphones) allow teens to be physically alone while virtually communicating with innumerable people. However, these two important factors in teenage development are still examined independently, and as a result, little is understood about adolescents' perceptions and experiences of solitude and technology use. We investigated the confluence of these two phenomena in the current study by assessing teenagers' perceptions of, and affective responses to, isolation when physically alone but under diverse conditions of technology use.

**Keywords:** Aloneness

## Introduction

Adolescents' views of being alone were of interest, although at varied levels of virtual interaction (e.g., watching videos, texting, interacting audio-visually). We also investigated whether adolescents' motivations for solitude (i.e., affinity for aloneness, shyness) were related to their perceptions and anticipated affective responses to pure solitude (physically alone without using technology to interact with others; and the various conditions of being physically alone but engaging in various technologies).

Adolescence is a crucial and unique period for understanding experiences of solitude, according to developmental theorists and experts. Time spent alone, for example, grows from early to late childhood and into adolescence, as does autonomy in how to spend leisure time. This has significant consequences for how teenagers perceive isolation, as time spent alone doing intrinsically motivated activities is more likely to be associated with good emotional states. Adolescents also seek refuge from external social constraints and self-monitoring through isolation (an increasingly valued experience at this age). Finally, alone time can help with self-exploration and identity formation, both of which are important developmental activities during adolescence.

As a result, the findings of several recent researches suggest the possible benefits of solitude during adolescence. In comparison to later childhood, general attitudes toward solitude improve with adolescence, and by the age of 16, adolescents regard the urge to spend time alone as highly normative. Furthermore, the majority of adolescents who spend the most time alone: (1) appear to do so out of preference/enjoyment (rather than anxiety/avoidance); (2) engage in intrinsically motivated solitary activities (e.g., hobbies, music listening); and (3) report trait positive/negative affect levels comparable to their more sociable counterparts.

It has been suggested that people who are physically alone while watching television or listening to music are nevertheless spending time alone because these technologies do not immediately compel reciprocal connections or need feedback. Talking on the phone while physically alone (i.e., using interactive technology) would not. In the context of modern technology, passive technology usage (e.g., viewing videos or reading through social media newsfeeds) when alone would be considered solitary, whereas active technology use (e.g., interactions with people via text, voice, or video) would not be. Interestingly, many adolescents disagree with Larson's (1990) notion of solitude. When asked to describe the three things they did the most while alone in the previous week, 87% stated using technology.

Passive screen time (e.g., Netflix) was mentioned the most (41%), which is consistent with Larson's (1990) conceptualization. Respondents did, however, recall using more socially interactive kinds of technology while "alone," such as texting, conversing on the phone, and even audio-visual communication (e.g., FaceTime). These findings suggest a potential mismatch between how researchers/theorists define solitude and how adolescents understand isolation in actuality. As a result, one purpose of this study was to determine how much teenagers feel "alone" when physically separated from people and in environments of increased virtual participation.

Screen time is increasing year after year, particularly among adolescents and young people. Still, there is substantial dispute over the costs and advantages of adolescent technology use. However, it has become obvious that when considering the possible impact of screen time on adolescents' well-being, both how (i.e., type of use) and under what conditions (i.e., social context) young people engage with technology should be examined. Although many adolescents and young adults spend time alone to engage with technology (Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2019), technology use when alone may also interfere with and disrupt the pleasant features of these solitary encounters, especially for those who value and enjoy solitude.

The results of the affinity for aloneness largely confirmed the hypotheses. In the pure solitude and passive technology vignettes, for example, affinity for aloneness was exclusively related with more favorable predicted feelings of being alone (i.e., greater happiness, less boredom/sadness/loneliness). These favorable perceptions of alone were diminished in the active and audio-visual vignettes. These findings are consistent with prior studies indicating that teenagers with a higher affinity for aloneness prefer to spend time alone without engaging in active technology use. Furthermore, teenagers with a high propensity for aloneness may interpret enhanced virtual participation as intrusive; undermining their perceptions that time alone will be more pleasantly enjoyed in the active and audio-visual vignettes.

It should be highlighted that across vignettes, inclination for aloneness was not related to social connectivity. Although the findings did not entirely support the hypothesis that an affinity for aloneness would predict positive affective experiences in contexts of pure solitude and passive technology use, the findings regarding social connectedness make some intuitive sense, as episodes of pure solitude and passive solitary activities (e.g., Netflix watching) are not inherently social.

Shyness was connected with a significantly distinct set of reactions than affinity for aloneness. The current study's findings offered some support for our hypotheses that shyness would be associated with negative affect in situations of pure solitude and audio-visual technology use, but positive affect while engaging in technology use passively and actively. In the pure solitude scenario, for example, shyness was associated with a generally unfavorable predicted experience of being alone (i.e., more grief and loneliness, less social connectedness). This data supports the notion that shy teenagers seek to interact with others.

It also confirms prior research that suggests shy teenagers are more likely to spend time alone worrying and brooding. Surprisingly, shyness was no

longer linked with loneliness or social connectivity at the greatest level of virtual interaction (i.e., audio-visual communication). Shyness, on the other hand, was associated with greater expected sorrow (although to a smaller extent than in the pure solitary scenario), implying that shy adolescents may experience some unpleasant emotions in situations with synchronous interactions and visual signals. Taken together, although shyness may be less of a hindrance in audio-visual environments, shy adolescents' wishes to socially engage may be hampered, at least partly, by socio-evaluative worries in socially uncomfortable situations.

**Cite this article:** Rizwan A. I'm all Alone with my Phone, Adolescent's ideas on Solitude and Technology use. J Psychol Abnorm 2022, 11 (3), 001-002