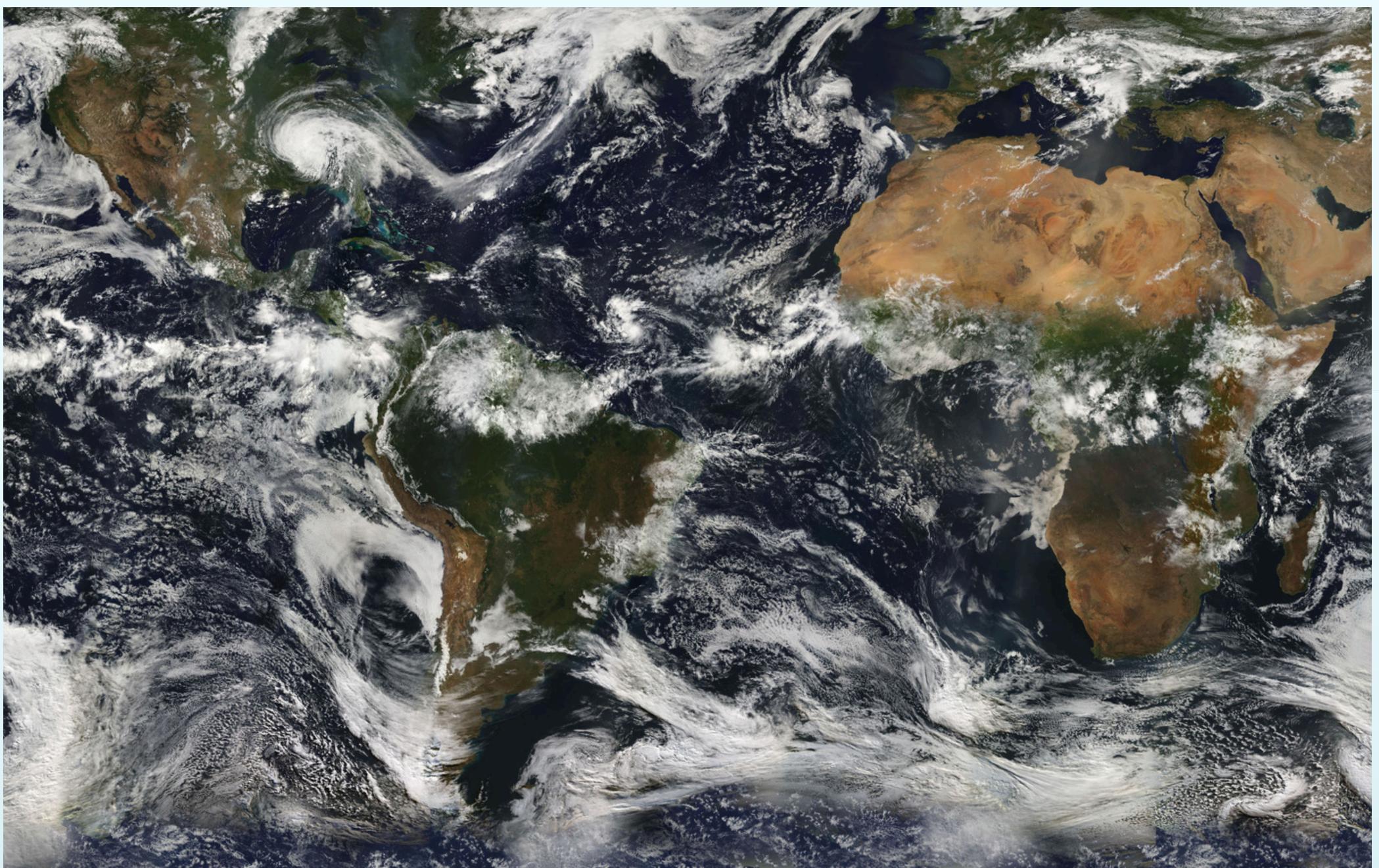


# INSPIRE YOUTH JOURNAL



## The 19th Edition

Tarot, TikTok, and Teenagers  
Eco-Terrorism  
Heatwaves  
Women in the Workforce  
Intelligence: Gift or Growth?

The Art of Dying Well  
Humans and Nature  
Dark Humor and True Crime  
Living with Disabilities  
And More!

## THE TRIPLE T'S OF TAROT, TIKTOK, AND TEENAGERS: WHY DIVINATION IS MAKING A COMEBACK

Bao Ngoc Truong

In 2019, as the world was plunged into lockdowns and uncertainty, people clung to any source of comfort they could find — and often, that comfort came from a screen. With face-to-face connection cut off and the future feeling fragile, social media platforms like TikTok surged in popularity. Thanks to the number of users who wanted entertainment, reassurance, and answers, TikTok tarot readers began to rise. Tapping into a collective sense of fear and curiosity, they quickly gained traction — and with them, divination, especially tarot reading, began its unexpected comeback.

While it's hard to pinpoint exactly how many tarot readers were active on TikTok at the time because some include "tarot" in their usernames, while others don't, the approximate numbers certainly make a point: the hashtag "#tarotreading" has over 510 million views, and "#tarot" has amassed a staggering 1.8 billion views. Tarot readers on TikTok, such as Jenny Chang, who is among one of the top influencers with 970,000 followers, has gained massive influence over time. They have found great, and somewhat surprising success as a fortune-teller on a platform where interactions all depend on algorithms and mindless gears of a machine.

***The biggest question is: Why are so many young people turning to divination right now, and what does that say about us as a society?***

The answer boils down to two components: control, and reflection.

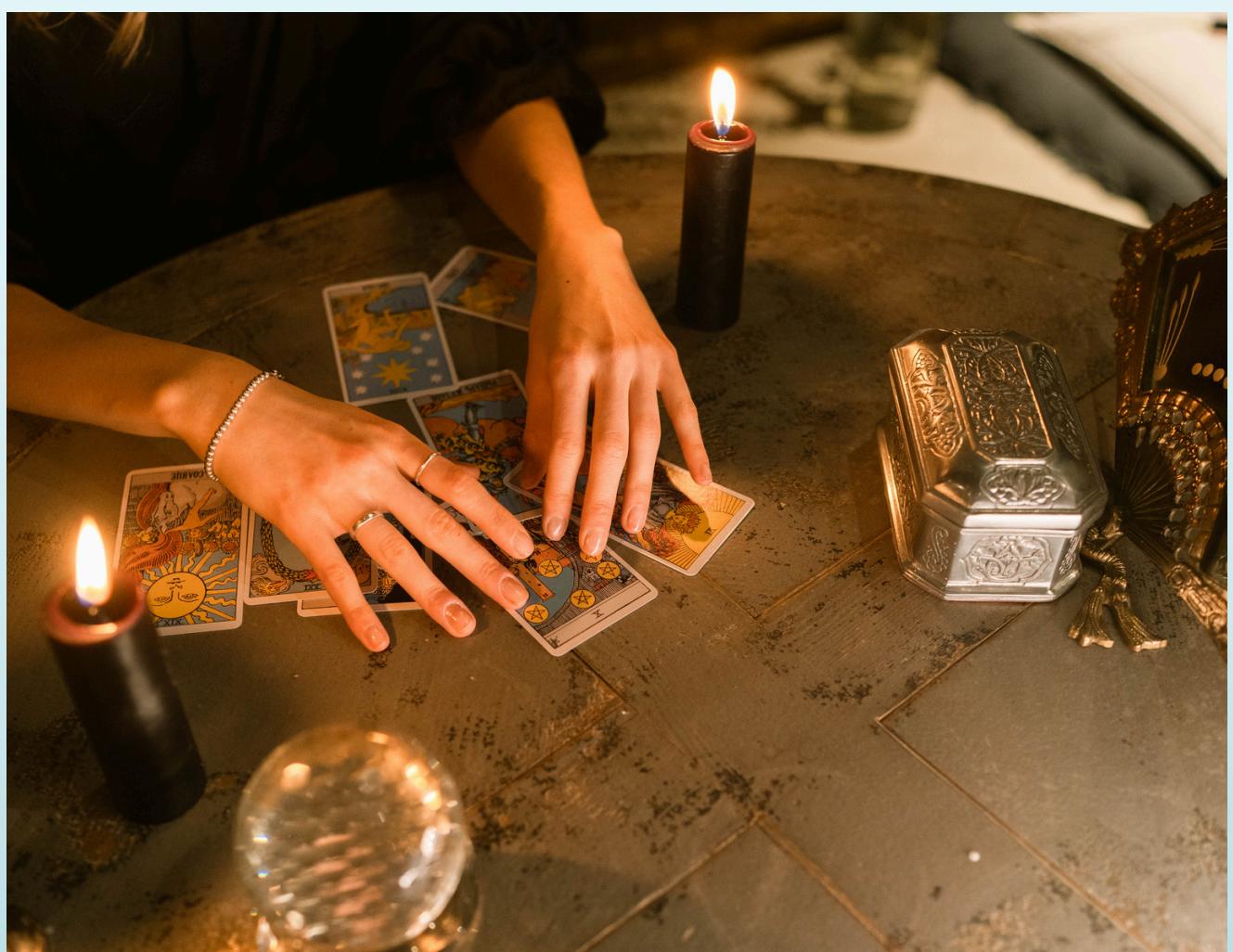
***These are the things that make us truly "human".***

### 1: Control

Professor Jolanda Jetten says that "People embrace conspiracy theories, because they hold at least the illusion that there is some sort of explanation for why all of this is happening." She concludes that it is a direct result of facing a particular crisis and feeling anxious, which reflects exactly how divination manipulates the feeling of longing for an answer from the mass media during times of the pandemic. During a period where climate change, AI, and WW3 become aspects that instinctively come to mind, the future feels like a blurry mess. If one were to put themselves into the views of a teenager, they'd see much more than just that. In this blurry mess, divination draws lines and symbols, things that give order to what we're feeling now, even if it means providing a false sense of certainty. A team of researchers from Australia conducted a study in 2020 leading to the conclusion that people were more likely to resort to emotion-focused coping methods like divination and meditation, rather than solving the root cause itself. Even though divination faces highly skeptical critics, it gives a sense of motivation

### 2: Reflection

Apart from exploring the future, many believe in divination as a tool for self-reflection and encouragement towards discovering their potential. While divination, especially tarot card reading, is extremely randomized and generalized, scientists and psychologists have discovered the Barnum effects that keep us attached to ideas that would be the same for everyone. The Barnum effect, also known as the Forer effect, is a psychological concept that refers to people's tendency to accept very broad generalizations as being accurate



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and specifically descriptive of their own personality or circumstances.

Since the 2019 spread of tarot reading, more and more teenagers have become interested in divination, and with their daily lives and planning of transitioning from teenage years to adulthood, the need for a small affirmation could go a long way. For many teenagers, especially in a world that moves fast and rewards productivity, there's little space to just stop and think: "How am I feeling? What's really bothering me? Why am I drawn to this question?" Tarot cards and various other divination methods initiate these questions for teenagers. They force teenagers to think back upon themselves with the answers that they receive and project these answers to fit their moments of hardships and struggles in life as they go from teen to adult.

But the main thanks not only goes to the mindset of those who seek guidance and answers in life, but also to algorithms in "For You" pages. Thanks to algorithms which know exactly what we are most interested in and which account we often take the most time scrolling through reels, the deeper you go into divination in general and tarot reading in specific, the more posts relating to these themes will be suggested to you. That is how everything, even tarot cards, spread through social media, from one person to another. But up until now, nothing would've been achieved if it wasn't for that explosion of virtual divination during the year 2019.

***Whether or not we believe in fate, we believe in the need to feel seen, heard, and understood.***

For teenagers growing up with uncertainty as a backdrop, divination isn't an escape, but it's a way to cope, to reflect, and even to hope. In the scroll of an algorithm, in the turn of a card, in the pause between one thought and the next... Maybe we're not just predicting the future. Maybe we're learning how to face everything.

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## GREEN IS THE NEW RED? ECO-TERRORISM

Hoang Nam Phu

Where do we draw the line in protecting the planet as a thing between life and death? When does protecting and sustaining life turn into destructive behavior?

***Eco-terrorism is one of those uncomfortable phrases that takes us to the intersection of ethics, urgency, and law.***

Eco-terrorism is violence inflicted by environmental-related groups on people or assets. Eco-terrorism is a form of violence primarily focused on achieving financial damage, not human casualties. The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and its sister organization, The Animal Liberation Front (ALF), were one of the most notorious holders of this label. The FBI attributed over 600 crimes between 1996 and 2002 to them, with damages amounting to more than 43 million dollars. Different from most terror groups, ELF operates through anonymous attacks, which make their actions hard to predict and trace.

The ELF organization is well known for its acts of arson and vandalism allegedly carried out in defense of the environment. One of the group's most prominent actions was in Vail, Colorado, where a \$12 million ski resort expansion was set on fire in 1998. The arson was justified as environmental defense in an ELF statement claiming that the resort expansion "burned habitat of the endangered lynx." Leading the "genetic engineering" of frankenplants, ELF set fire to the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture in 2001, which cost around \$7 million. Fuel inefficient vehicles also came under fire; four SUVs were bombed at a California dealership in 2003, serving as what the organization described as a symbolic attack against the gas vehicles of the time. In 2005, ELF burnt down a housing development in Maryland, USA

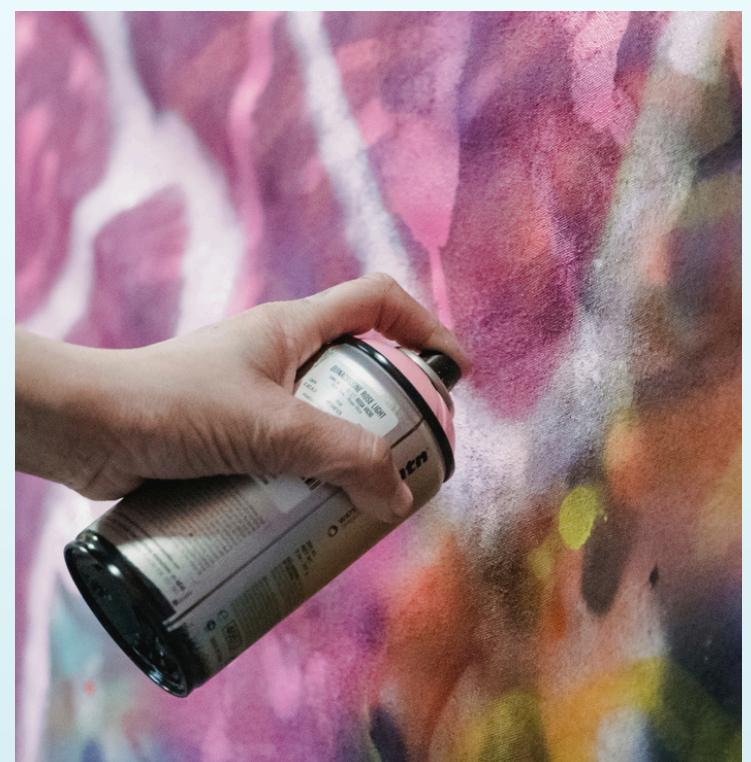
**Consequences.** In 2006, Operation Backfire was executed, which resulted in capturing a group named "The Family" which did a decade's worth of ELF and ALF sabotage. Regardless of the fact that no one was killed in any ELF action, a majority of them were convicted under terrorism enhancement clauses which served to increase their sentence far beyond the original (if they were not 'terrorists' due to the so-called "terrorist" nature of their actions. The USA PATRIOT Act expanded the definition of terrorism to include politically motivated property damage, therefore enabling the prosecution of even non-lethal activism as terrorism.

**I thought we were on the same side!** There was a serious backlash from key environmental groups, particularly focused on the actions of ELF. Patrick Moore, a co-founder of Greenpeace, labelled them as nihilists masquerading as activists. The Sierra Club, another environmental organization, also raised concerns on public perception in regards to supporting such actions.

**Less extreme movements!** Extinction Rebellion (XR) is a nonviolent climate activist group known for traffic blockades and more theatrical forms of demonstration. In a 2020 UK counter terrorism briefing, they were labelled as part of an 'extremist ideology'. They stand by their reaffirmation to non-violence, although their actions go the opposite when they state something as damaging as this. More and more it appears that governments see disruption, no matter how symbolic, will stop.

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## JULY 2025 HEATWAVES AND THEIR GLOBAL IMPACT

Nguyen Tran



July 2025 turned out to be a major wake-up call for our planet. Heatwaves didn't just arrive early; they hit hard and spread across pretty much every continent. In Southern Europe, countries like Portugal and Spain were scorching. Mora, Portugal, recorded a blazing 46.6 °C (116 °F) on June 29, which was the hottest day of June experienced there. And the heat didn't stop in June, it carried right into July. Schools closed, people were told to stay home from work, and many tourists had to cancel or change their plans. Even the top of the Eiffel Tower had to shut down, and delivery apps like Glovo came under fire for pushing workers to go outside in the extreme heat.

A massive heat dome sat over Western Europe, trapping hot air in place and stopping cooler weather systems from moving in. Spain and Portugal stayed stuck in the 41-45 °C range, while France hit the low 40s. Even the UK wasn't spared from the heat, southern England saw highs around 34-35 °C, and Scotland could be heading toward its hottest summer ever, possibly breaking its 2022 record.

Over in Western Asia and North Africa, things weren't any better. Wildfires broke out, especially in Turkey, where more than 50,000 people had to evacuate around İzmir. Temperatures there were 5-10 °C higher than usual. Fires also raged across Greece, Spain, and Italy, forcing more evacuations. In some places, nuclear power plants had to cut back operations because the river water used for cooling was too warm.

Meanwhile, South Asia was also experiencing a heatwave. India and Pakistan had already been suffering since April, and by June and July, the situation was intense. Cities like Rajasthan and Jacobabad hit 48 °C (118 °F). In India alone, at least 195 people died from heat in April, and another 260 in May. Experts from World Weather Attribution said heatwaves like this were previously extremely rare in that region, but now they're about 30 times more likely because of climate change.

### Why Is This Happening?

There's a mix of factors at play, but the main cause is global warming especially due to greenhouse gas emissions. That heat dome over Europe? It was a big, high-pressure system that blocked cooler air from moving in, letting the hot air just sit there and get worse. Also, changes in the jet stream and other global wind patterns has made the whole situation stick around longer than it used to in the past.

In South Asia, scientists have found that even a 1.5-2 °C increase in global temperatures could lead to five to eight times more frequent heatwaves. And we're not just talking about dry heat because when humidity gets involved, it makes the heat even more dangerous. Usually, monsoon rains bring some relief, but now the heat starts earlier, lasts longer, and sometimes even pushes into the rainy season.

### The Impact on Humans

#### **Heatwaves hit people hard.**

In Europe, at least eight people died directly from the heat, and thousands more ended up in the hospital with heatstroke or dehydration. In places like Italy, hospitals reported a 15-20% spike in heat-related visits. One person in Bologna even died due to the heat.

The numbers were even worse in South Asia. Around 200 people died in India and Pakistan in April, and the heat just kept going from there. Outdoor workers, farmers, and people living in rural areas with limited access to cooling were especially at risk. In the UK, around 570 people died due to the heat, with Spain seeing 380+ and Italy adding more.

The heat isn't just a health issue; it also messes around with the economy. A report by Allianz Research said Europe could lose up to 0.5% of its GDP in 2025 because of lower productivity, crop damage, and energy demand. Spain might lose as much as 1.4%. Globally, the impact could knock off about 0.6% from the world's GDP. The International Labour Organization warned that by 2030, the world could lose 2.2% of total working hours due to heat stress.

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In South Asia, farmers are already feeling the pain. Wheat crops in northern India are suffering. Severe heat events have cut yields by as much as 35% in some places. On top of that, water supplies are drying up, glaciers are melting faster than expected, and hydroelectric dams are under stress.

Even buildings and infrastructure are cracking under the pressure. In Europe, schools, museums, and landmarks had to shut down temporarily. Electricity grids were overloaded. In some cases, such as in Turkey, wildfires threatened entire towns, airports, and highways.

### How We're Responding to Heatwaves:

Luckily, weather forecasting is getting better. The European weather agency ECMWF can now predict heatwaves up to four weeks in advance, which helps governments prepare. Countries like Spain, France, and Italy have rolled out heat action plans: inflicting measures such as banning outdoor work during peak hours, opening public cooling centers, and providing people with tips on how to stay safe.

But one big issue is air conditioning. Not everyone has access to it, and in some countries, such as France, there's a big debate over whether to require it in public buildings. The catch is, running too much AC uses a lot of energy, and if that energy comes from fossil fuels, it makes the climate problem worse. That's why there's a push for more sustainable solutions, like solar-powered AC, heat-reflecting paint, and cooler urban design (green rooftops, more trees, better airflow).

The scary part about this business? That this could just be the beginning. Studies show that pretty much every major heatwave since 2023 has been linked to climate change. And places that weren't used to get this kind of heat are starting to feel it. In early July, southern England hit 33.6 °C, which was almost a record. The UK Met Office says there's now a 50% chance the country could experience 40 °C days within the next decade. A recent scientific paper states that South Asia could face five to eight times more deadly heatwaves by the end of the century, even with just moderate warming. That means a lot more people at risk, more pressure on health systems and food supplies, and bigger hits to the economy.

***July 2025 wasn't just a rough summer, but it was a sign.***

The world is getting hotter, at an alarming rate. These extreme heat events are no longer rare. They're part of a growing pattern that's affecting health, food, jobs, energy, and everyday life. What we do next matters a lot. Better planning, greener cities, fair access to cooling, and big steps to cut emissions will all be needed. Because without strong, global action, summers like July 2025 might become the new normal month, and that's a future we should all take action to avoid.

## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Hoosen Christiana

Last year, news broke of Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old accountant who tragically lost her life shortly after beginning her dream job. While the official cause of death remains undisclosed, reports pointed fingers at a toxic work environment. In another case, a female staff member from Queensland's QBCC died by suicide after raising alarms about excessive workload and high psychosocial stress. These are just two examples, among many that show how workplace environments can become silent killers. Globally, both men and women suffer burnout, but the weight is not evenly distributed. Women in healthcare experience burnout at rates 15-20 percentage points higher than their male counterparts. 56% of women physicians report systemic burnout, compared to 41% of men. Among surgical residents, the rate is 42% for women versus 36% for men.

In the fashion industry, data is scarce, but stress is undeniable. A survey of over 600 professionals revealed entrenched emotional fatigue, with 84% of working mothers citing career setbacks after maternity leave. Across all industries, women report 9-10 percentage points higher burnout rates than men (46% vs. 37%), and they take nearly twice as many mental health days off per year (0.91 vs. 0.44).

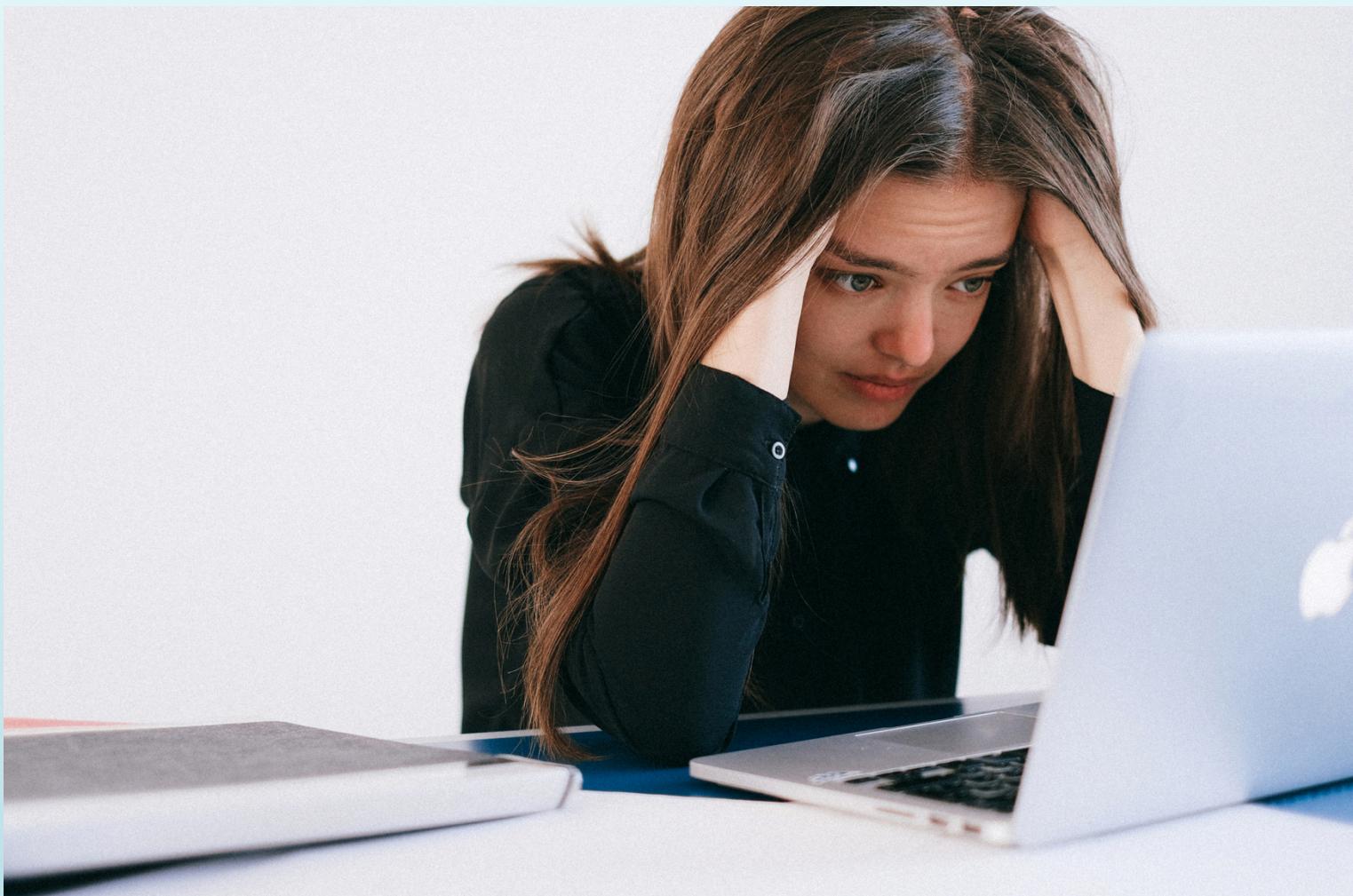
And burnout is just the surface.

Some women lose their jobs not for poor performance, but for standing their moral ground. William, who refused her boss's sexual advances, was fired, though she fought back and won in court. Landmark cases like Barnes v. Costle and Williams v. Saxbe affirms that such retaliation is illegal, yet this doesn't stop it from happening. Data shows 46% of women change jobs after harassment, and over one-third quit entirely within a year.

### ***Others are given no choice at all.***

At least 12% of women report direct sexual coercion tied to employment benefits. High-profile cases like Harvey Weinstein's exposed the systemic rot where roles were traded for compliance, and refusal meant blacklisting.

We see glimpses of this exploitation even in media portrayals: women are invited to interviews not for their skills but to be ogled. Behind the fiction is a painful fact: three-quarters of women worldwide report workplace harassment, and women are five times more likely to be targeted. One woman, "Bola," was pushed off projects and eventually resigned after rejecting her banker boss's advances.



## WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Hoosen Christiana

After securing jobs, a disturbing portion of women are cornered into exploitative conditions. Research shows women receive 4-5% higher callback rates than equally qualified men—yet this meritocracy is often tainted. In New York, 12% of women said they were offered promotions or jobs in exchange for sexual compliance. In Poland, 10% reported being asked sexually inappropriate questions during interviews, with many believing rejection cost them the job. Even more disturbing: 33% of women who refused such advances faced retaliation, lost promotions, cold shoulders, hostile workplaces.

Sometimes, saying “no” costs everything.

Even when women secure positions on merit, they are often undermined by a toxic narrative: that their success came from advantage, not ability. Some men dismiss their achievements as the result of “pretty privilege” or diversity quotas, rather than competence. This attitude not only discredits women’s hard work but also fosters hostile, dismissive environments where they constantly have to prove they belong. It’s a damaging double standard, where women are either penalized for refusing exploitation or accused of benefiting from it if they succeed.

For women of color, the climb is even steeper. Intersectionality adds weight to the burden. For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 87 white women advance—and the numbers drop to 82 for women of color, 76 for Latinas, and 54 for Black women.

Even within the gender gap, race widens it further. Pay gaps persist: Black women earn 64 cents, Latinas 57 cents, Asian women 85 cents, and white women 79 cents for every dollar paid to a white man. This isn’t just about the pay of these women, it’s about systemic erasure. They’re stories of exhaustion, quiet tolerance, and daily resistance.

Now more than ever, the world needs women in the workforce, not as accessories to office décor, but as equal drivers of progress. Women are not less capable. They are equally trained, equally educated, and equally resilient. And the data agrees. According to the Financial Times, companies with over 15% women in leadership earn up to 50% more than those without. In India, inclusive companies report nearly double the profits.

### ***When women work, economies grow.***

Yet, women are still asked to prove themselves twice as much for half the credit. It’s time we stop treating inclusion like a favor. It is not charity. It is a necessity.

Because at the heart of every statistic is a woman—qualified, overworked, overlooked, harassed, or silenced—who just wanted a fair shot.



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## INTELLIGENCE: GIFT OR GROWTH?

Nguyễn Đức Hiếu



Have you ever looked at someone and thought to yourself, "How are they so intelligent?" How is someone half your age able to accomplish as much, if not more, than you? "Maybe they're just born with this innate talent, and their rise to success is in fact inevitable," you think to yourself as your motivation slowly erodes, and eventually you are left with this ringing conclusion: "Maybe I'm just not good enough." But what happens if you put these thoughts aside and instead look at what most people fail to see in one's remarkable success?

A brief look at remarkable and extraordinary individuals

Take Terence Tao for example--a professor at UCLA who won countless awards and made numerous contributions to mathematics-- some even called him the "Mozart of mathematics". But despite this, we can't ignore the fact that he was exposed to advanced math at a very young age. He would often spend hours and hours each day learning and solving math problems. In addition, his parents also created the perfect environment for his abilities to flourish by surrounding him with lots of books and freedom to explore. All of this along with years of competitions, dedicated work, and constant research would ultimately create the exceptional talent we see today.

The greatest Olympian of all time, Michael Phelps, who won 23 Olympic gold medals, famously stated that he trained every single day of the year, including Christmas and his birthdays. Phelps also shared that even he had those days where he didn't want to train, and times when he felt like giving up, but with persistence, he pushed through.

Overall, the purpose of these examples is certainly not to say "anyone can be Michael Phelps if they tried," but to instead shed light on their journey, and their incredible work ethic that separates them from others. Hence, debunking the myth that these people are just "naturally talented" and that they didn't have to put in a tremendous amount of work to get to where they are.

### What does research say about our intelligence?

In 2004, a group of researchers conducted a study on neuroplasticity where they looked at MRI scans of adults brains before and after they learned how to juggle. And what they found was that there was a massive increase of grey matter in specific parts of the brain that related to learning and memorizing. In addition, a third scan was also performed 3 months after the participants had not practiced or further extended their juggling skill. However, it is notable that in this scan, the grey matter actually decreased in similar areas of the brain. This study suggests that even an adult's brain can change physically when it is in the process of learning. Those who stimulated their brains by studying, gained a substantial amount of grey matter, and those who didn't, lost some.

Throughout our lifetime, there have been hundreds of studies on the fluctuation of intelligence, yet every single one of them ultimately leads to the same conclusion, that our intelligence is very much malleable. This is especially true within the teenage brain when multiple researchers have pointed out that their brains are extremely vulnerable to changes. Carol Dweck, one of the pioneers in the growth mindset area, conducted a study where she taught a group of students that every time they push out of their comfort zone to learn something new and difficult, the neurons in their brain can form new, stronger connections, and over time they can get smarter. Those kids who were taught this growth mindset outperformed kids who weren't, even kids who came from a poor family were performing at the level of much wealthier peers.

### What does this mean for education?

***If intelligence can change, then the way we teach and the way we study should also be changed.***

Teachers should start praising efforts instead of the end result. Research has shown that praising kids for being smart or talented can have an adverse effect on the child, as this puts them in a fixed mindset where they're afraid of mistakes and can easily back them off from challenges.

## INTELLIGENCE: GIFT OR GROWTH?

Nguyễn Đức Hiếu

However, praising their process and improvements can make them more resilient, it can familiarize them to struggles which everyone has to face. It's also important to create an environment where failures are not punished or shamed but instead treating it as progress towards their goal. And when this happens, students get braver, and they start to see challenges not as something they should avoid but rather something that makes them smarter.

***As for students, the message is clear: our intelligence is not the score that we receive on a piece of paper, but rather it is the system and the progress that we can improve.***

Avoid those ringing thoughts of "I'm not good enough"; get rid of it! This will hold you back more than any genetic limits ever will. Break your goals into smaller steps that you can take daily, treat it like a training similar to how Michael Phelps trains 365 days to achieve his goal. At the same time, keep track of your progress in a journal to see your improvements over time. And once you get yourself into that mindset, your intelligence becomes something you can truly control.

### Conclusion

We always tend to think that intelligent people are just born this way, but the truth is, behind all of that success is years worth of progress and hard work. Terence Tao wasn't born with this math talent in him, and Michael Phelps didn't just hop into the pool a few times and win 23 gold medals either. But rather, it's the system that they stick to and the mindset that sets them aside from ordinary people. Researchers have consistently proven this point time and time again, that our mind is very much malleable. So let's reexamine our view on intelligence, let's break free from those self-limiting thoughts and finally allow our minds to bloom.



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## HE LAUGHED, HE FOUGHT, HE LOGGED OFF: TECHNOBLADE, FRANKL AND CAMUS ON THE ART OF DYING WELL

Minh Châu Đỗ

How would you feel in the face of death?

Morbid question, isn't it? However, death is not all about darkness. For some, like YouTube legend Technoblade, facing the end came not as worry, nor as fear, but as an act of graceful defiance and legacy with humor. He turned the script on his head and faced terminal cancer with a wit sharper than his virtual sword. His humor wasn't a distraction—it was a way of taking control, a way of enjoying his life. It was a way of making millions smile through the tears.

So, what if the final punchline could be a kind of peace?

**"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." [1]**

— Viktor Frankl

In 2022, millions of fans watched as Technoblade, a terminally ill Minecraft YouTuber, left behind not a sob story, but a joke. In his video *So Long Nerds* (stylized in lowercase), Technoblade's father read a farewell message that the creator had written just hours before his death. Besides serving as a characteristically witty and disarmingly lighthearted goodbye message, for a man who had built his online persona through irony, deadpan commentary, and the occasional fake Sun Tzu quote, the farewell also made space for sincerity and laughter within death.

That raises a few deeper questions: Could humor be more than just a coping mechanism? Can it be a way of dying well, when used as agency instead of escapism? In choosing to go out on his own terms, Technoblade showed the silver lining in even the darkest cloud. He spoke with pride in himself and his fans, with both laughter and a bittersweet sense of nostalgia, about some of his most treasured moments during his time on YouTube.

Philosophers like Viktor Frankl have long argued that meaning can be found in joyful days, dreadful nights, and everything in between, even in suffering. Technoblade found meaning in *being* Technoblade, instead of just *Alex*, his real name. *Technoblade*, to him, was much more than just a username; it allowed him to fight, laugh, and live as himself. In *So Long Nerds*, the content creator stated, "If I had another hundred lives, I think I would choose to be Technoblade again every single time, as those were the happiest years of my life."

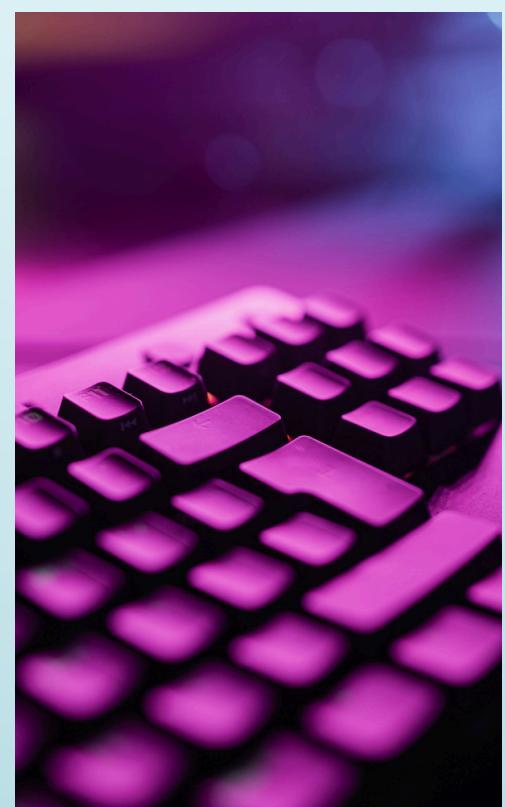
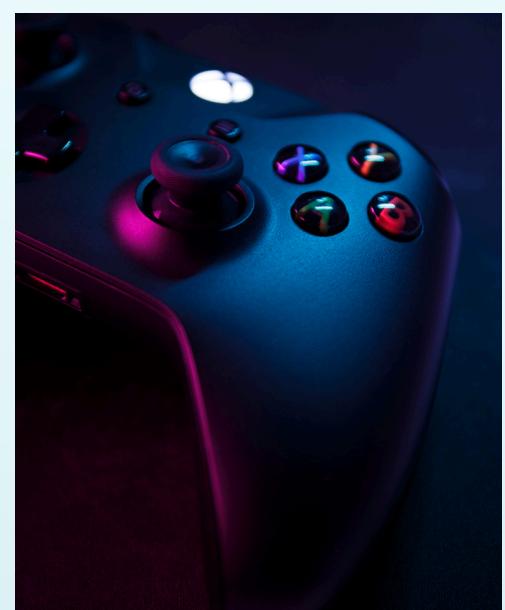
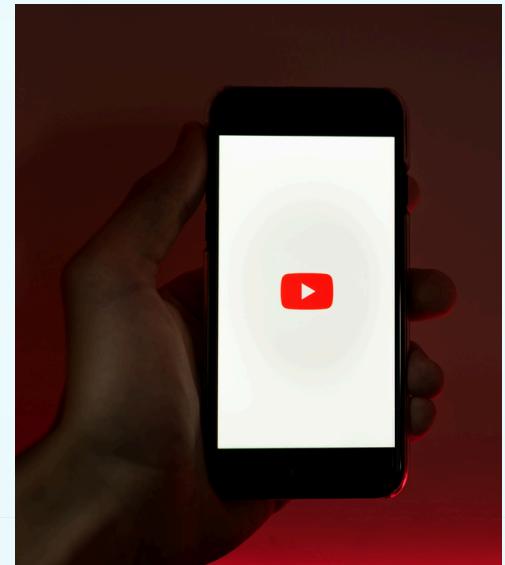
As Frankl famously wrote, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." In Technoblade's case, he couldn't alter the diagnosis—but he could choose how to tell the story. Talking about his experience at the doctor's, Technoblade recounted when the doctor discussed the possibility of amputating his right arm, due to the severity of the cancerous tumor. He replied with a humorous understatement:

*"I'd rather not. I'd rather keep both my arms, please."* [2]

While Frankl saw meaning in suffering, Camus looked to the absurd—and found dignity in resisting it. In his work *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he famously wrote, "one must imagine Sisyphus happy." [3] He urged readers to think about Sisyphus as a hero for never giving up, pushing that boulder up the hill, instead of a trapped, eternal victim.

Likewise, when Technoblade thought of death, he didn't think of himself as a helpless victim. He didn't think of himself as *losing* to cancer—because, as he said in his farewell, "the cancer dies too. With [him]." [1] Although he realized the futility of his rebellion, he did it anyway.

This, to Camus, was the definition of an "absurd" hero. "The absurd hero is someone who recognizes the absurd or meaningless nature of life, but who continues to fight against this absurdity with passion and dignity." [4]



## HE LAUGHED, HE FOUGHT, HE LOGGED OFF: TECHNOBLADE, FRANKL AND CAMUS ON THE ART OF DYING WELL

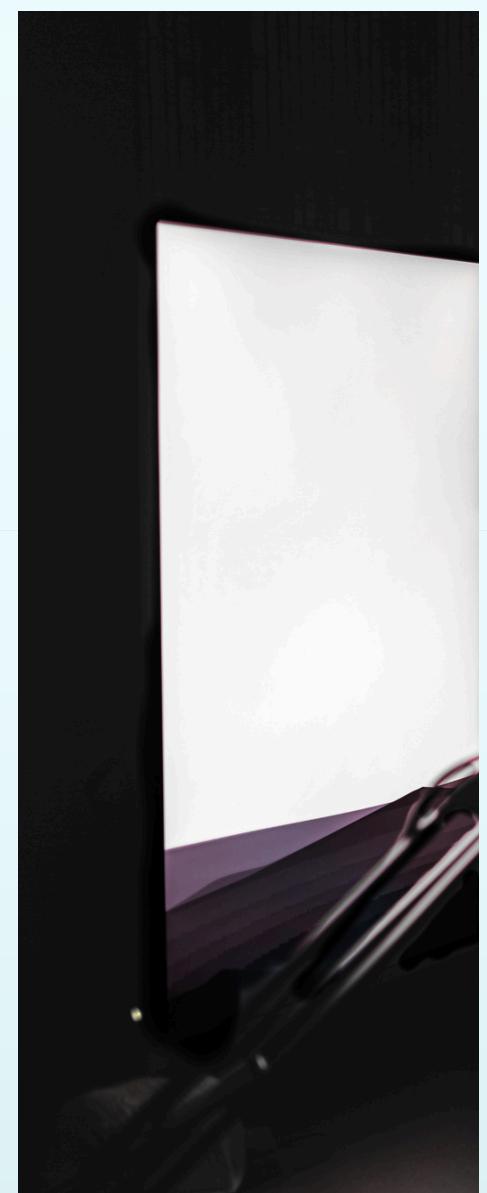
Minh Châu Đỗ

And in becoming the “absurd hero”, Technoblade didn’t deny death—he answered it with a smile. Like Camus’ Sisyphus, he knew he couldn’t escape his fate, and pushed his boulder with a smirk. In doing so, he revealed one of life’s deepest truths: we all carry private struggles, and we can meet them with rebellion, irony, and grace. From celebrities to strangers you see on the street, every one of us faces an uphill battle. Technoblade was no exception—he was “one of us”—as he would’ve put it—sharing a story and a lesson that transcends fame.

***What do we do when we can no longer control life — when suffering, death, or absurdity confronts us head-on?***

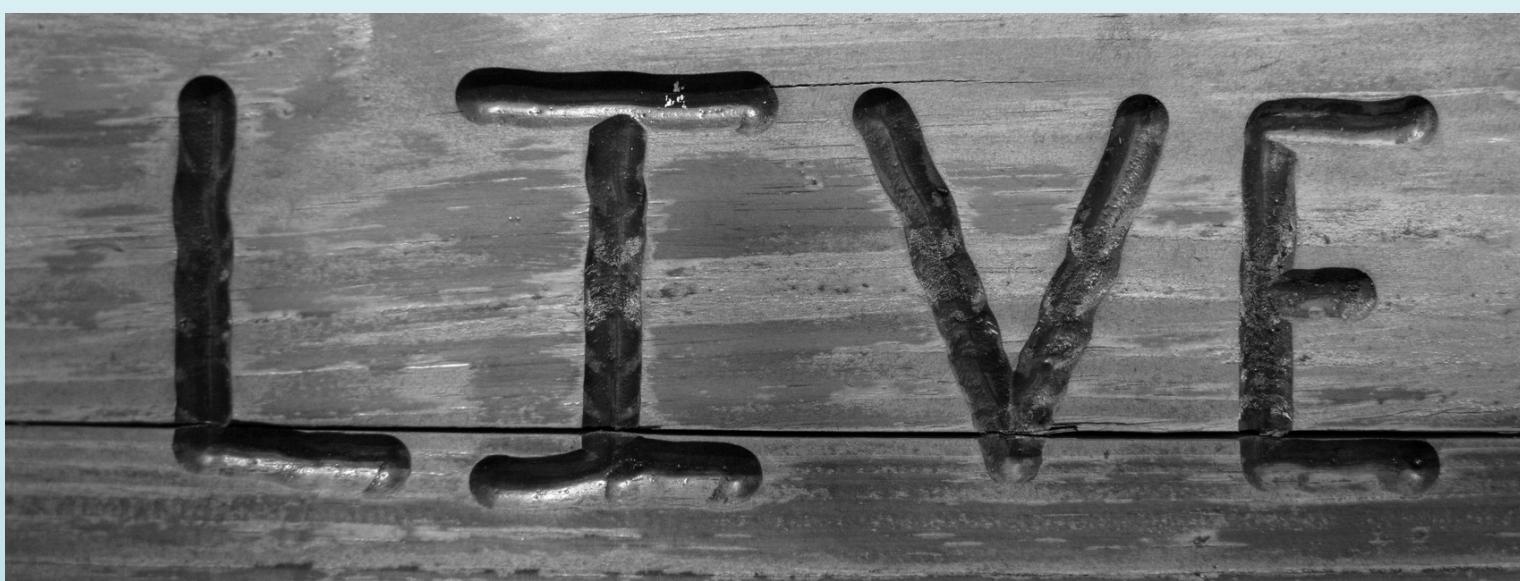
That is the question that both Frankl and Camus pondered in their works. Perhaps, the art of dying—and living—well is not in avoiding death, but in learning how to accept it. To look Death in the eye is to find meaning and happiness in the inevitable, and make the most of one’s time on Earth. To accept Death is to accept that one’s business may be unfinished, that one must leave everything behind, and to continue anyway—with laughter instead of despair, with peace instead of dread. If so, we must live with intention.

Perhaps Technoblade, Frankl and Camus present us with a fuller picture: a life well-lived is not one free from suffering or absurdity; the truth is quite the opposite; a good life is one in which we get to choose our stance toward them. In this way, the art of dying well becomes inseparable from the art of living well — to meet the end with humor, with resolve, with love. To face the void, and still say: I would choose this life again.



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## BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR EMMA THOMPSON

Elza Elif Mehdiyev



Emma Thompson wears many hats. She is a bridge-maker, a connector, an ever-curious student, all because she is an environmental educator. In her dedication to advocate for the environment, and help rebuild the relationship between Mother Nature and her children, she embodies the role of facilitating the rediscovery of the world. Today, we have the pleasure of listening to her talk about environmental education. Through her profound insight and sparkling passion, we embark on a journey to see the world from green-tinted lenses.

**Could you tell our readers a little bit about your background and what led you to become an environmental educator, as well as explain environmental education in your words?**

I'm a Danish-American gal from Ohio. Nature has been my passion since I was a kid, so getting involved in environmental education felt natural. I studied at Colorado State University, and have a degree in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources with a minor in Spanish. Essentially, that degree focuses on the social science of environmental science.

Since then, I've worked ten years in the field of environmental education. Currently, I am at the Peace Corps, continuing with environmental education. This profession is really about being a bridge between people and nature, and rebuilding those relationships with our home.

People sometimes tend to see green without necessarily understanding its meaning. That's where environmental educators, environmental interpreters and naturalists come in to try to help others digest and dissect the meaning. And, along the way, begin to understand what it means to them personally.

**What was the favorite lesson you gave?**

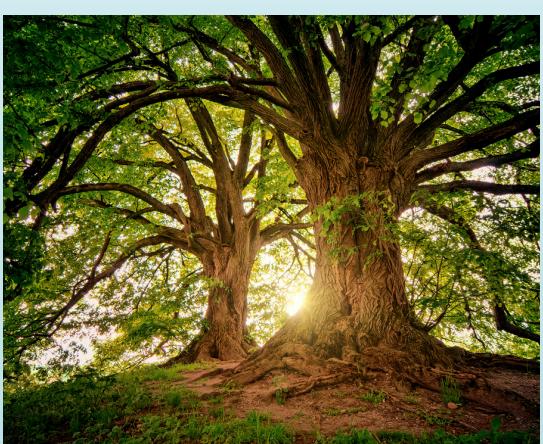
I think one of my favorites is from when I worked for the forest service. I had been working as a split intern: splitting my time between two of the educational facilities at the recreation area. One day, us interns were provided a program called the tree-mendous hike -essentially a tree hike! We were given the opportunity to design it from scratch.

For my hike, I focused on tree identification. Since we went through three microbiomes in both directions, I dedicated the first half to learning about identification. Is this tree more identifiable by the leaves? By the bark? By the look of it? The other half we had a mini pop quiz to review and refresh what we had learned.

The very first time I did it, I had two moms and their kids, alongside one college student. I was very nervous because it was the first program that I had ever designed; I had practiced it a lot. Heading into it I was so glad I got the group that I did because they were so engaged and learned so much. I remember as I was sitting in the staff area after the hike, I could still hear the kids practicing the trees that they had learned and talking about the different leaf shapes.

The college student told me she was studying environmental science at the local university, and how she loved trees but just never had a chance to really learn about them. She said she learned more about the identification through our hike than she had through her dendrology class and I was so proud of myself!

I think that's one of the ones that meant the most to me. It's definitely one of my favorites.



## BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR EMMA THOMPSON

Elza Elif Mehdiyev

### What do you think is the most significant effect environmental education can have on people?

Not to be cheesy, but it really can be life-changing. Again, that's so cheesy to say, but it really is true! I've seen it happen. Seeing that light-bulb moment when it clicks, like "oh so that's why," or "I didn't know that," or "so that is how it's connected," is so meaningful.

One of the programs that I used to provide were animal ambassador programs. These are wildlife who have been rehabilitated and rescued, but for various reasons, they can't make it in the wild. So, instead, we take care of them. In exchange for the love and care they become animal ambassadors to represent their species, and through that program folks come and learn about their local wildlife.

One of our ambassadors was the endangered Endemic South Eastern Red Wolf of the United States. Most folks don't even know that there's a wolf species from the southeast, often thinking of the gray and timber wolves of the Rockies. But here's a wolf from the southeast! Folks had a chance to learn more about the benefits of the wolves as well as how they're crucial for our ecosystem's survival. People tend to think of the Big Bad Wolf narrative: the three little pigs and red riding hood. Oftentimes people don't realize the statistics show there is zero documentation of a red wolf ever harming or killing a human. So it was interesting to see how learning about this got the gears turning in our guests' heads.



### In the classroom, how do you balance theoretical and hands-on learning?

Environmental education is often a mixed media career of theoretical and hands-on learning. They both come to play and have moments to shine, but I think what's important is that it all builds up towards hands-on learning in order to facilitate that personal connection.

Sometimes that can be a difficult balance. For example, I currently work with the local schools here to provide a nature class, and even though we're living in a cloud forest, the schools are just far enough away that we're not able to go hiking during class. That's why we mainly have presentations, which is great and all, but there's only so many facts, so many names and so many relationships that you can cram into those sponges before something starts leaking out. That's where the hands-on projects and classes can come in to really help build those connections.

This semester I asked the students "What do you want to learn about nature?" The number one response was animal and plant identification, and we've since done several activities about that. There are six main felines here in the Sierra Gorda mountain range. And to help my students learn about them, I designed a "who's that Pokemon" sort of trivia game: if you're familiar with the program, they have a segment at the end where they provide a shadow outline of a Pokemon, a few seconds to think, and then the reveal of which pokemon it is. I took that concept and made it for our felines, with a bunch of stats on their qualities. It was so much fun, and the kids had a really great time. They learned a lot, but that was more so the brunt memorization. We then tied it to hands-on learning by setting up camera traps in the reservoir to capture pictures of different species. We have photos of warthogs, white-tailed deer, crows, two of the felines, and more! And seeing the student's faces, when the photos came up, like, oh my gosh, we finally caught photos... You could see the links forming as they applied their knowledge from the who's that feline class to these actual species.



It's all good and dandy to have these classes because information is still being shared and taught. But that personal experience, that personal tie to nature, is really where the magic happens. That's where you see their eyes start to shine.

***So yeah, environmental education is a mixed media. You have to be flexible with what you got, but it's so crucial to be able to bring nature to the classroom as well as your students into nature.***

## BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR EMMA THOMPSON

Elza Elif Mehdiyev

**What recommendations or pointers would you give someone interested in becoming an environmental education? Where should they start? What are some pathways?**

This is such a great question. I think I will start by sharing my story, and hopefully there's some inspiration in that. Growing up, me and my family moved around a lot due to my parents' work. I've lived in as many places as I have years, and I always found solace in nature. Even though the faces and places would change there was always nature wherever we moved. It might look different, be a completely different ecosystem, but it was there wherever we went. That's how I started to find peace, a sense of home and a sense of place in nature, and I became curious to learn more.

From there, I began learning as much as I could. And I'm still learning, which is so important when you are an environmental educator: to be a passionate and forever-humble student. As much as environmental educators are teachers, at the end of the day nature is the biggest teacher of all. We have so much more to discover, and I think curiosity is really all you need.

In terms of where you should start, you should start at home. Is there a park? A creek? Mountains? I think that that's where you should start. Research how you can get involved in your community. Is there a canoe rental place? A wetlands restoration program nearby? Get involved locally, and be willing to absorb as much as you can.

Follow your personal nerdiness. For me, that was trees. What lives in trees? Who calls a forest home? What are the different types of forests?

***Follow your personal curiosity and stay a passionate, humble student. As a teacher, nature will take care of the rest.***



## DARK HUMOUR AND TRUE CRIME: CASE STUDIES OF DESENSITIZATION

Ingrid Tang

In recent years, increasing concern has arisen over the apparent desensitization of younger individuals to violent and often sexual crime. Desensitization is the process by which an individual's emotional or physical response to a stimulus decreases after repeated exposure to it. Most prominently, this has affected Generation Z (1997-2012) and Generation Alpha (2010-2024) the most, both through dark humour and true crime.

Dark humour encompasses jokes made at often taboo and sensitive topics, which can be deemed offensive if not presented to the appropriate audience. Jokes about rape, school shootings (especially in the US), and suicide are often shown as "edgy" or "relatable." On social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram reels, short-form content has made this type of content accessible to a younger audience. YouTube Shorts, a function of the broader app/website typically utilized by Gen Alpha, has seen many re-uploads of suicidal content, such as edits of a noose with the caption "what I want around my neck after a long exam."

Proponents argue that dark humour is simply a way for younger generations to cope with the anxiety of an increasingly uncertain and frightening world. In a political and social climate filled with horrible disasters like terrorism and shootings, perhaps dark humour is just a way to bridge the emotional distance between individual and event. For victims of traumatic events, it allows them to remove the negative feelings associated with their situation and replace them with positive emotions through the laughter initiated by the joke.

***However, when the general audience begins to treat crimes as abstract concepts rather than actual tragedies, it can lead to a reduced awareness and justice for victims.***

For instance, when Sean "Diddy" Combs was arrested on RICO and sex trafficking charges, many sentiments online emerged on the baby oil discovered in his residences. Some poured baby oil on themselves, making graphic expressions, and an infamous livestreamer Ramsey Khalid Ismael (Johnny Somali), gave lap dances, doused baby oil and kissed a comfort woman statue in Korea whilst playing a Diddy song. This media consumption can lead to young people watching extremely graphic content, such as what is described in Diddy's case, and have either no reaction or an automatic humorous response.

Alternatively, true crime can potentially lead to or have the same consequences as dark humour. A 2019 study published by Harvard Business School found that individuals consistently exposed to footage of violent crimes developed decreased levels of anxiety towards the footage as time progressed. When individuals, especially young, impressionable ones, are constantly exposed to descriptions, examples and videos of explicit, illegal activities, they will eventually lose the initial horror and may view such happenings as normal.

On YouTube, social influencer Bailey Sarian posts GRWMs ("get ready with me"s) of makeup looks with vivid eyeshadow whilst speaking about cases like the "Crossbow Cannibal" and the "Granny Ripper." For many women, especially teenagers, across the world, makeup is an incredibly important and integrated part of their daily routines. By associating this common activity with disgusting crimes like sexual assault, cannibalism and murder, it creates the impression that they are just as regular and just as innocent as getting ready in the morning.

Many true crime listeners/watchers attribute their interest to wanting to understand the world better and human nature, which is not inherently bad and is often beneficial to foster cautious adults able to successfully and safely navigate society. Oftentimes, true crime creators who present cases as journalism (for the end goal of advocating for victims and increasing awareness) are viewed in a positive light, such as Stephanie Soo's podcast Rotten Mango.

The desensitization of violent and sexual crime is a large issue in modern society. By normalizing it, we are promoting such behaviour, and potentially leading to aggression when fully matured. Dark humour and true crime are permissible and perhaps even innocent in some cases, but cannot be perpetuated to a state where vile actions are viewed as a norm for some to try and conform to.

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## REALSHORT. REAL IMPACT: HOW MICRO-DRAMAS ARE RESHAPING ENTERTAINMENT.

Thư Minh

***Found a Homeless Billionaire Husband for Christmas. The Quarterback Next Door. Revenge of the XXL Wife. My Secret Agent Husband.***

These may sound like cringey fantasies, but they're actually titles of "vertical" or "micro-dramas", a new form of episodic television that is gripping millions around the world.

Originating in China and dubbed "TV for the TikTok generation," micro-dramas consist of just minute-long episodes designed for smartphones, compared to traditional content where even the shortest shows last 10-20 minutes per episode. This means viewers can consume such scaled-down and bite-sized content on the go-during meals, while commuting, or even in between chores. Interestingly, storylines typically revolve around popular themes, including female empowerment, rags-to-riches revenge arcs, and werewolf-vampire fantasies. Apps will usually offer a handful of episodes for free, before requiring a paid subscription. Much like a video game, ReelShort allows its users to purchase "coins" to access episodes. These series can run anywhere from 20 to 100 episodes in total.

The scale is staggering: as of June, China had 1.1 billion internet users, with 52.4 percent of them viewing micro dramas. According to a recent industrial report by iiMedia Research, the sector's value hit nearly 37.4 billion yuan (\$5.25 billion) last year—a 268% jump—and is forecast to exceed 100 billion yuan in 2027.

### 2. But why are micro-dramas so popular?

The first reason could be attributed to our diminishing attention span, which makes short content convenient and irresistible. The second reason will lie in its production features. These mini-dramas do not feature A-list stars, focusing instead on tight budgets and explosive plots, which easily keeps viewers engaged. For example, "The Divorced Billionaire Heiress," directed by Chinese filmmaker Gao Feng, was made on a budget of less than \$170,000 and grossed \$2 million in North America alone, a return of more than 11 times the initial investment.

Moreover, platforms like Douyin or ReelShort (30M+ downloads, #1 on the US iOS entertainment app charts) supercharge their reach.

### 3. Economic gains compared to traditional films.

While traditional blockbusters often require budgets of around \$50-300 million and depend on theatrical releases or streaming deals, micro-dramas flip the model with low cost and short production. For instance, a Chinese micro-drama titled "The CEO and his Maid" has swept the charts, making over \$3.6 million in just a few weeks.



## REALSHORT. REAL IMPACT: HOW MICRO-DRAMAS ARE RESHAPING ENTERTAINMENT.

Thư Minh

### 4. The use of AI in micro-dramas.

AI has been employed in many aspects, including generating a virtual background, pre-production, script writing, and post-production. It seems like the whole process can be made by AI. White Fox in China was produced entirely by AI by a 4 person team for under 10,000 yuan. The final product is regarded as an innovative idea with fast output that is being labelled as an AI production on streaming apps.

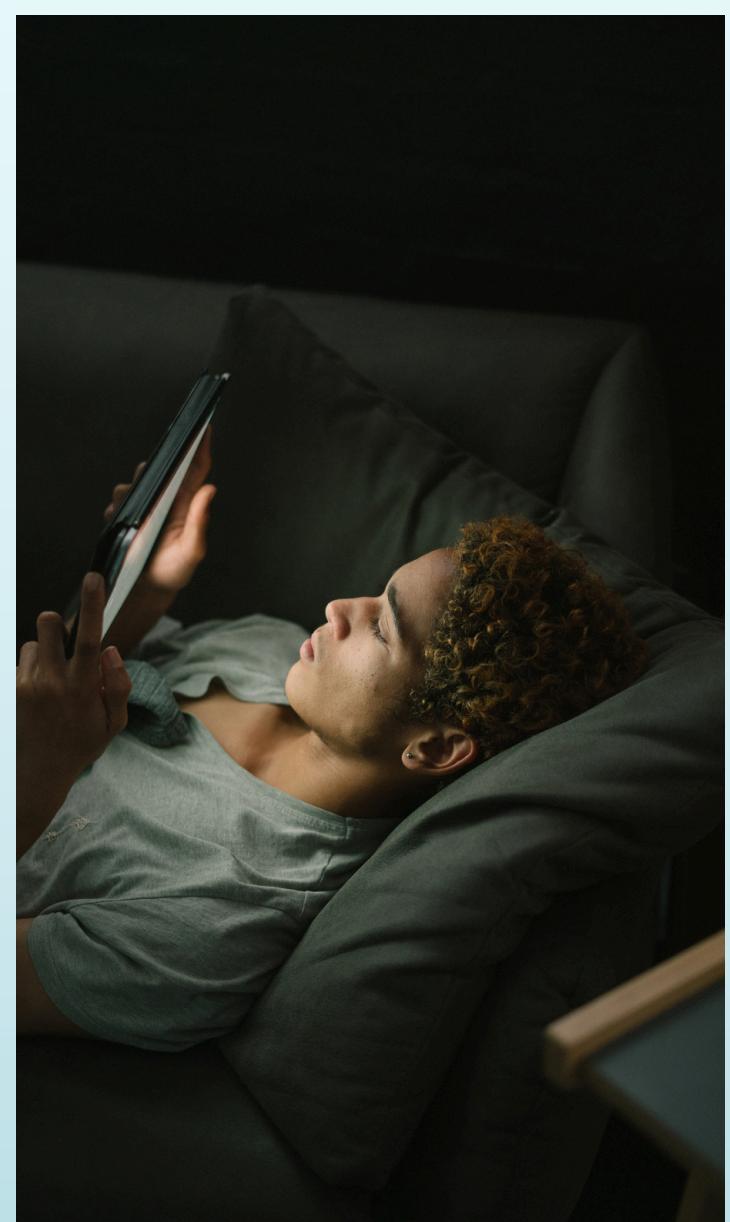
### 5. Are micro-dramas a positive or negative development?

From an objective perspective, the rise of mini-dramas has both pros and cons that warrant careful consideration. On the bright side, this genre brings acting opportunities to lesser-known actors, providing the stage for young actors to make a living. Additionally, due to low production costs, micro-dramas could be regarded as one of the most effective strategies to experiment with new filming ideas and anticipate the interest of mass media. On the flip side, this genre is often criticized for the substandard acting, repetitive plots, and the lack of emotional depth.

In summary, with its clickbait titles, cliffhangers, and eyebrow-raising scenes, China's vertical-format micro-dramas are quickly becoming a global sensation. Thanks to the micro-boom in the Chinese market, it has gradually proved its position in the global film-making industry, being increasingly adopted by foreign countries, especially in the U.S.

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## BLEEDING POTENTIAL: HOW PERIOD POVERTY DRIVES INDIAN GIRLS FROM SCHOOL TO CHILD MARRIAGE

Kunga Gyalmo

India, the world's fifth-largest economy, is characterized by a record GDP growth and technological progress. Yet beneath this economic ascendance is a profound paradox: millions of adolescent girls are being pushed out of school and into early marriage—not because they lack brains or aspirations, but because of menstruation.

### ***Child marriage puts an end to childhood.***

It has a negative effect on the health, education, and protection rights of children. These effects not only have consequences for the girls themselves, but also for their families and communities.

A girl married before adulthood is far less likely to complete her education, earn an income, and make a contribution to her community. She faces a higher risk of domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancy, when she is also a child herself, which can lead to life-threatening complications during childbirth.

In India, an estimated 1.5 million girls under the age of 18 get married every year. Almost 16% of girls aged 15-19 are already married. According to UNICEF (2022), girls who drop out of school were three times more likely to marry before 18. For low-income families, the monthly cost of sanitary products—around FY 300—seriously clashes with the daily income of FY 180 or less (ChangeinContent, 2025). Even from an economic standpoint, this is a classic case of market failure. Sanitary products are public health and productivity needs of positive value, yet remain widely inaccessible.

Each day of missed schooling means reduced female labor-force participation and increased income inequality. Girls who are absent from school for 4 to 5 days per month for 4 or more years don't stand much chance of catching up, academically or socially. Ultimately, we take away from them their human capital—their ability to learn skills to participate in the labor force.

India's measure of income inequality, the Gini coefficient, stood at 0.472 in 2014-15 but 0.402 in 2022-23, reflecting a trend of rising mobility (SBI Research, 2024). But composite Gini measures hide deeply gendered and regional inequalities. Period poverty is, therefore, not just a crisis in health but also a structural cause of economic stagnation across generations.

### **The Solution**

The solution lies in treating menstrual equity as economic policy. Studies by Roenitzsch (2015) and Krishnashree Achuthan et al. (2025) show that school-based menstrual hygiene interventions—providing free pads, education, pain relief, and cleanliness—are responsible for drastic declines in dropouts. UNESCO's #KeepGirlsinSchool campaign and the SuSanA's case studies of Ghana and Nepal illustrate that education and infrastructure are what bring long-term success.

Key actions include:

- Provide free or subsidized sanitary products in schools.
- Build inclusive toilets, especially in tribal and rural areas.
- Educate community leaders and teachers to speak openly about menstruation.

Every girl forced to leave school due to her menstruation is not only an educational loss—but an economic one. She represents lost business potential, truncated social mobility, and a diminishing economy.

If India is committed to inclusive development, then it will have to put a stop to the practice of letting biological cycles drain its demographic dividend dry. We need to make sure that no girl is ever forced into a situation where she has to compromise her dreams or her dignity, and have to choose between a pad or a book.

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## THE CLUB WORLD CUP AND THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY AND COMMUNICATION

Jose Luis Estremadoyro Masias

How could we not pay attention to the Club World Cup, right? For sports fans, especially football lovers, it's an extremely important event. Football, often called the "king of sports," goes far beyond tradition and simplicity. It hits us emotionally, from the thrill of shouting "GOAL!" to the frustration of criticizing a missed chance. All of that globalizes our feelings toward this sport, connecting fans worldwide. But this year's Club World Cup made it clear that there are other reasons to call this sport "king." Not only has it generated global excitement, but it has also driven a huge communicational repercussion and significant economic growth.

### **The Communication Impact**

How can an event like this impact communication? Well, in this area, the 2025 Club World Cup has set new standards in reach and engagement. In the 45 days leading up to the start of the tournament, its official social media accounts saw interaction jump by 81%, gaining more than 638,000 new followers (O Globo, 2025). During the group stage alone, the tournament accumulated over 1.2 billion video views and 163 million interactions on social platforms (Comscore, 2025).

Traditional media coverage also played a key role. In Spain, the group PRISA Media deployed an integrated strategy that combined live broadcasts, reports, and analysis across media outlets such as Cadena SER, Diario AS, and El País, generating high-quality content tailored to different audiences and platforms.

It didn't stop there. Private messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, saw explosive growth. In South America, top football discussion groups (whether on the Libertadores, Premier League, or local leagues) grew impressively by 1,000%, strengthening regional identity and sporting rivalries.

And to close this communicational point, outdoor and digital advertisements also made its mark. Specialized OOH (Out-of-Home) campaigns reached more than 16 million people through screens placed in strategic locations, directly connecting with fans, especially Brazilians, upon arrival in the United States, the tournament's host country.

### **The Economic Impact**

On the economic side, the tournament presented an unprecedented opportunity to boost both the global and local economy. According to a study conducted by FIFA and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the event is projected to generate approximately \$21.1 billion in global GDP, with \$9.6 billion coming directly from the United States (FIFA & WTO, 2025). Now, if this already sounds amazing, that's before we factor in the upcoming 2026 World Cup. Together, both events will contribute an astonishing \$62 billion to the global economy (Poder360, 2025).

Will this create jobs? Of course. It is estimated that around 105,000 full-time positions will be created in the U.S. during the tournament (El Tiempo, 2025). In addition, a gross income of around \$17.1 billion and \$3.36 billion in social benefits is projected, driven by tourism, infrastructure, consumption, and entertainment (FIFA & WTO, 2025).

### **The Connection Between Communication and Economy**

So why link communication and the economy in the context of football? In today's football context marked by global expansion, the two are mutually reinforcing. The 2025 Club World Cup clearly demonstrates this: the high revenues generated—from tourism to broadcasting rights—are only possible thanks to a communicational strategy that mobilizes people and audiences. These strategies moved millions and turned matches into global-scale events.

At the same time, the tournament's communicational success feeds off the economic dynamism that allows large-scale content production, marketing campaigns, coverage, and technological innovation. In this tournament, the narrative of football and financial flows blend, creating a football field where what is said and what is spent are part of the same game.

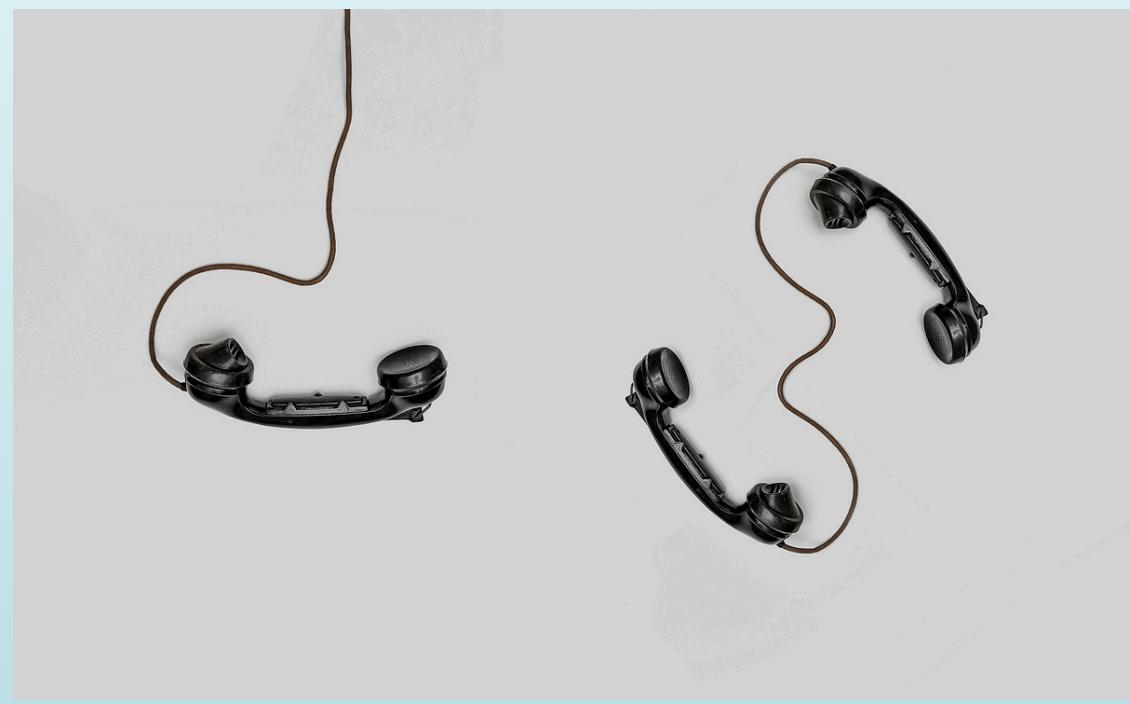
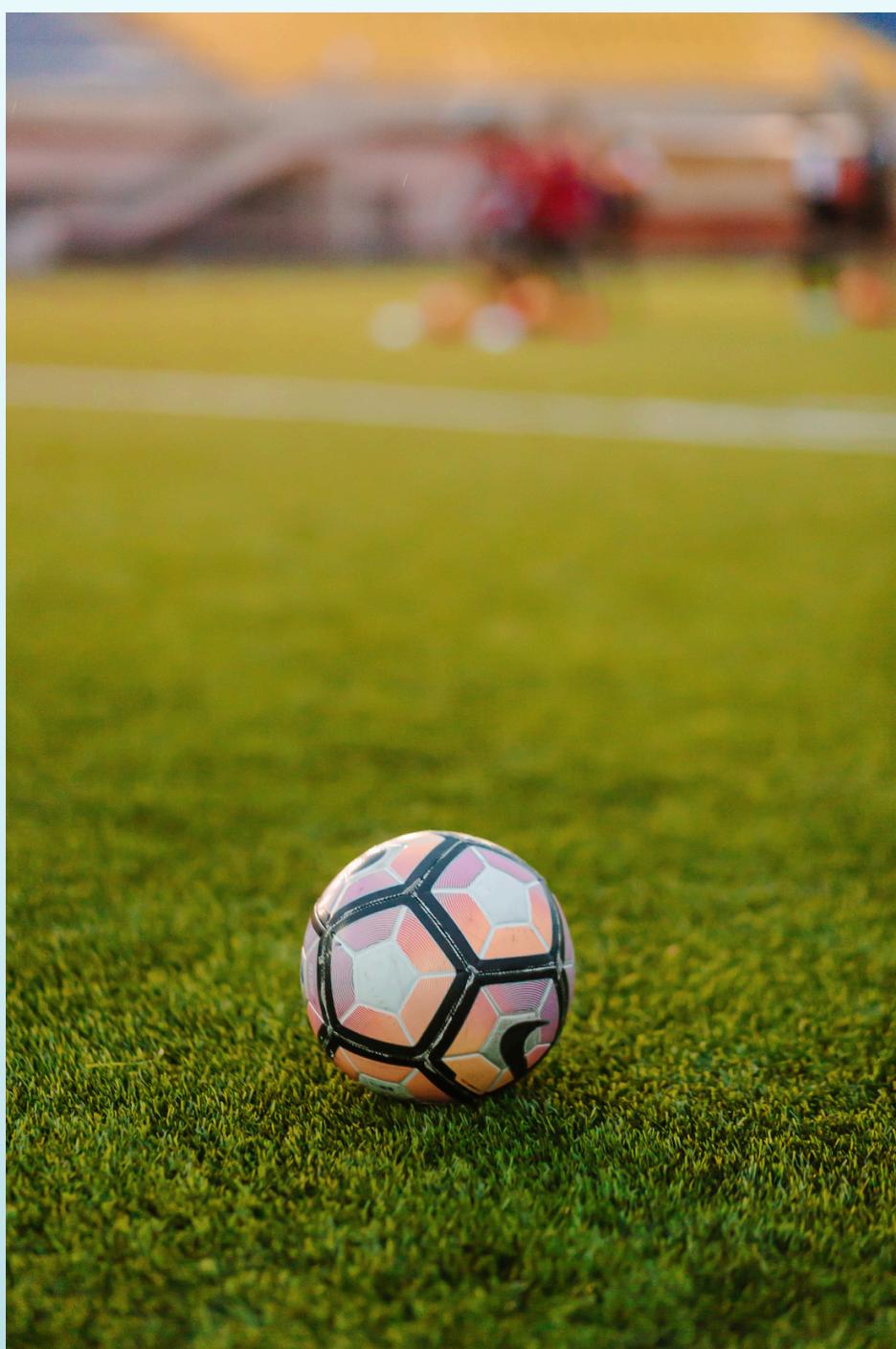


## THE CLUB WORLD CUP AND THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY AND COMMUNICATION

Jose Luis Estremadoyro Masias

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## ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG STUDENTS AND SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Nam Phuong Vo

Education is a universal concern for individuals, families, school authorities and governments, however, the issue of academic stress among students is overlooked or underestimated by many.

***Scientific research has demonstrated that chronic stress can negatively affect a student's academic performance, physical and mental health.***

Thus, this highlights the importance of preventing the issue and further supporting students.

### Statistics

A study by Stanford University found that 56% of students considered homework a major cause of stress, while 43% reported tests, and one-third said pressure to achieve good grades were the main causes. Noticeably, only 1% of students don't feel homework is stressful. Another study by McGill University showed that approximately 15% of students suffer from severe depression to the extent that they struggle functioning. These figures reinforce the necessity of understanding and intervening academic stress.

### Impact on Physical Health

When an individual experiences stress, the brain senses "danger" and signals the hypothalamus to activate the sympathetic nervous system. This triggers the adrenal glands to release adrenaline. If the stress response continues for too long, excess adrenaline can cause harm such as damage to the heart and blood vessels, weaken the immune system, and contribute to weight gain and eating disorders. In the long term, this may result in serious illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and stroke.

### Impact on Mental Health

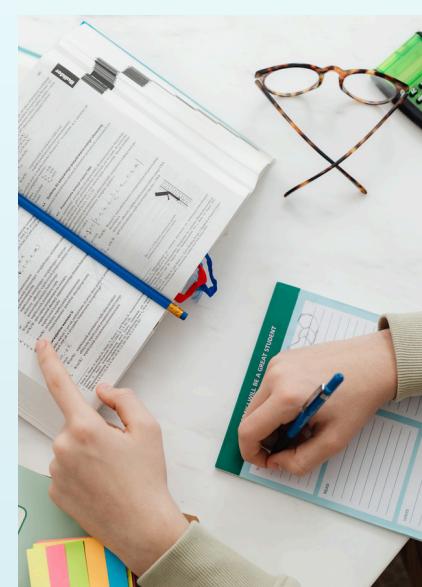
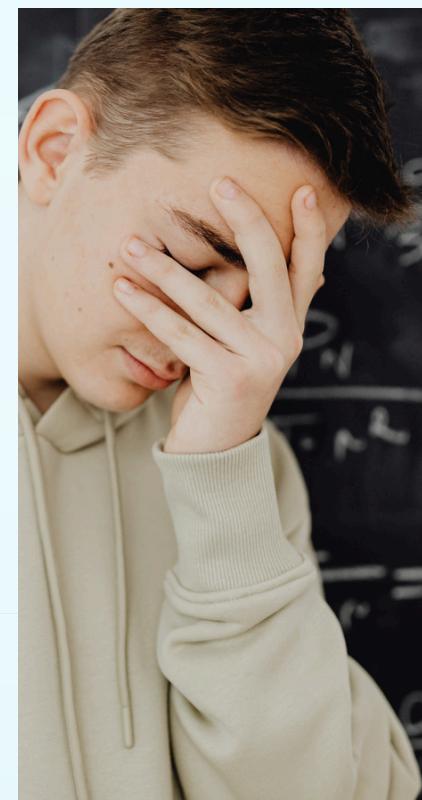
Academic stress significantly contributes to the development of mental health disorders. A research among Chinese college students found that school-related stress could be associated with anxiety symptoms and a sense of hopelessness which contribute to depression. Additionally, chronic stress can lead to mental exhaustion, reduction in self-esteem, and isolation, as the students are constantly pressured, questioning or denying their ability. For adolescents and young adults, these early medical issues may last longer since their brains and bodies are still developing.

### Contributing Factors

Some contributing factors to academic pressure among students of various ages may include heavy workloads and high expectations. Deadlines and assignments are common burdens, especially among students attending accelerated programs or those with unique academic needs. Another aspect is that students might feel obligated to succeed in class, rank high, ace exams, or maintain healthy and engaging relationships with teachers and peers.

In addition to personal desires, cultural, social, and family expectations are also great contributors to students' stress. For example, the traditional Confucian philosophy has influenced China and some other nations in Asia, making academic achievement the priority above extracurricular activities. In some societies, students might feel the responsibility to make up for their parents' sacrifices; in others, they want to be independent, and academic pursuit is the most effective way to achieve their goals.

Another hidden factor involves the obsession of an exam-oriented education system, where students and teachers race for high test results without focusing on deep learning or real-life application. This comes at the expense of self-care and self-development time. Finally, young people tend to unrealistically compare themselves to the "perfect life" portrayed by social media influencers, forcing themselves to feel anxious, worried and self-doubt.



## ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG STUDENTS AND SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Nam Phuong Vo

### Scientific Solutions & Interventions

An effective and simple stress reliever is regular physical activity, whether through sports, aerobic, intense exercises, or even just little jogs. A study by Liu, M., Shi, B. & Gao, X. revealed that sports have a significant positive impact in enhancing psychological resilience and reducing stress levels for students.

The above study also suggested that social interaction is beneficial to mental health. Participating in sports and other group activities could improve social networks and build supportive friendships, therefore lessening the feeling of loneliness and anxiety, encouraging positive self-esteem, mental well-being, and better academic achievements.

Having a healthy diet, adequate sleep (7-9 hours per night), and avoiding dependence on substances such as caffeine and nicotine is also widely agreed to help reduce stress.

Another method is to practice time management. A recent study by Wong, Y. K., & Lai, W. H. (2025) has shown that better time management is associated with lower levels of stress and vice versa. This could be done by planning, prioritizing tasks, following deadlines, avoiding procrastination, and breaking down assignments into smaller steps for better focus and productivity.

Students can also practice mindfulness and relaxation. Mindfulness is the focus on one's thoughts and body in the present without judgments or distractions. This can be done by practicing yoga, meditation, deep breathing exercises, and muscle relaxation.

Last but not least, building a safe and cooperative environment is essential for early intervention. Hence, students should be encouraged to seek help when overwhelmed. This means having open conversations with parents and teachers, as well as being able to seek counsel or therapy when needed.

### Conclusion

Everyone has experienced stress and anxiety at least once in their life. While positive stress motivates individuals, chronic academic stress can lead to threatening consequences to students' mental and physical health. The most important thing is to equip oneself with knowledge to recognize times of stress and overcome them. Not only the students themselves, but also schools and families hold the main responsibility to resolve this concern together. Through a combination of evidence-based approaches, they can create a balanced and healthy educational environment to ensure both academic success and holistic development for students of all ages.

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## SAUDI ARABIA 2034: A TEST FOR MIGRANT LABOR RIGHTS

Tanisha Kinikar

In 2034, Saudi Arabia is planning to host the next FIFA World Cup, following in the footsteps of Qatar, its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partner. Billions tune into the FIFA World Cup for entertainment, but what goes unseen is the exploitative labor in the background. As the 2034 World Cup approaches in Saudi Arabia, it's critical to understand migrant labor systems and their consequences.

### Migrant Labor in the Middle East

A migrant worker is a person engaged in paid employment in a state where they are not a national. As of 2019, migrant workers in Arab countries alone amount to over 15% of migrant workers worldwide. As more nations become industrialized, the desire for "unskilled" labor will increase. Today, about half of the workers in GCC countries are migrant workers, mainly from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

### The Kafala System

The power balance between migrant workers and their employers is controlled in the Middle East under a principle called the "kafala system." This system gives private companies in the GCC complete control over the status of migrant workers through a visa sponsorship contract, typically lasting 2-3 years. These sponsorships are initially administered by the Interior Ministries, but are then transferred to employers who sponsor the worker's travel and residency.

Employers do not typically follow the host nation's labor laws, leaving room for exploitation and abuse. Because migrant workers are legally tied to their kafeels and often have dependent residency status, they have limited working mobility and low bargaining power.

### Human Cost

In most GCC countries, workers require permission to leave the host country, switch occupations, or even quit. With no other resort, they are frequently forced to endure dangerous conditions and poor pay. Employers may confiscate passports and restrict access to phones.

### ***Legal aid is virtually inaccessible.***

In 2020, reports revealed that workers in Qatar were routinely underpaid—or not paid at all. Since most migrant workers under the system are bound to their employer by a contract, their employer can reduce wages significantly without losing employees. Furthermore, despite having college degrees or academic credentials, many migrants are placed in elementary occupations based solely on their race or origin country.

Another major but overlooked issue is debt bondage. Most host countries require the employer of the workers to pay a recruitment fee, which unjustly ends up being the worker's responsibility and debt to pay off. This results in workers forcing themselves through more intolerable work.

### The 2022 Qatar FIFA World Cup

The rebuilding of the Khalifa International Stadium began in 2014, in preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. This labor-intensive project required an immense amount of cheap labor, supplied by the migrant workforce. Migrant workers performed the intensive labor of constructing roads and hotels in temperatures above 100°F. The conditions of the World Cup contributed to the death of over 1,000 migrant workers in the past five years. Mohamed, a 38-year-old migrant worker from Sri Lanka, saw a chance to start a new life for him and his family by taking a promising job in Qatar. "With the burgeoning petrol crisis and rising food costs in Sri Lanka, it was becoming difficult to support my family," Mohamed said. He sold his only means of transport for the job and was sent to Qatar, where he was shocked by the conditions he would be working and living in.

He was to live in a dirty, small room with ten other men and was put to work on a construction site with no safety hazards. He worked for months and received a small weekly allowance for food, but was not permitted to send remittances and had not received a consistent salary. At the end of eight long months, Mohamed received two months' worth of pay and purchased a flight back to Sri Lanka. "I feel the labor court has ties to these companies," he said. "There is no justice in our situation."

The 2022 FIFA World Cup threw a spotlight on the exploitation of migrant workers in Qatar, and stories like Mohamed's received enormous worldwide attention. Rather than sitting back, Qatar was pressured into taking immediate action. Since then, several regulations such as mandatory hydration breaks, a standard minimum wage, and shorter hours have been implemented.



## SAUDI ARABIA 2034: A TEST FOR MIGRANT LABOR RIGHTS

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According to workers in Qatar themselves, these are dramatic improvements from the conditions during the World Cup and have attracted positive media attention. However, they are yet to encourage many other GCC countries to significantly alleviate the status of migrant workers.

### Why the System Persists

Even with the recent spotlight on the Gulf region, differences in global and regional policies have left the movement of labor largely unregulated. The economic growth of many Gulf nations still depends on the consistent availability of cheap labor. Host countries give migrants the “dirty” jobs that nationals do not want, often under hazardous working conditions. Despite unjust treatment, legal support remains out of reach due to language barriers and workers’ fear of termination. Most migrant workers work overseas for the sole purpose of sending remittances to their origin country. For many, the alternative to working-returning home with nothing-feels even worse.

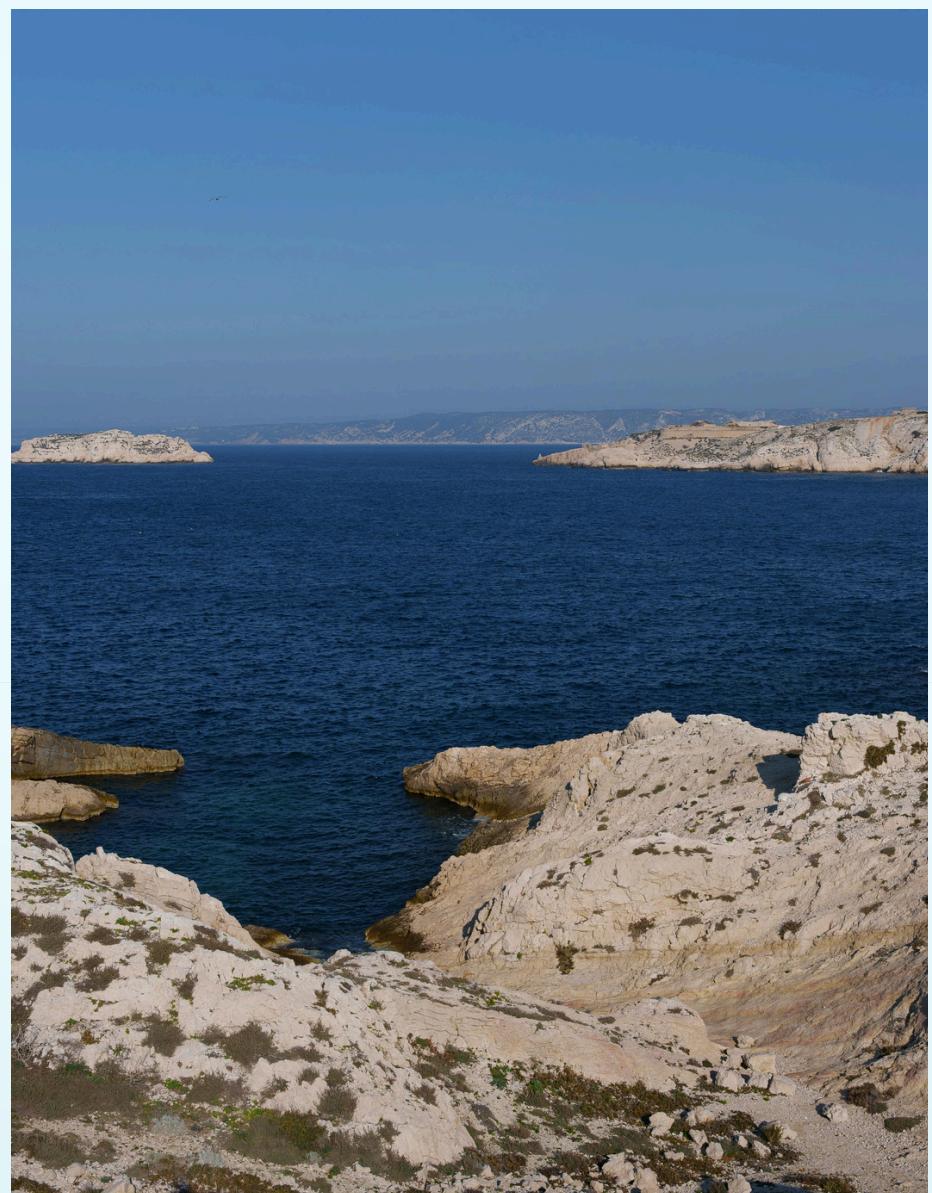
Even some reforms meant to address the issue often fall short. The International Labor Organization has collaborated with governments and NGOs to write reform policies, but implementation is difficult to enforce across all firms. Many reform policies are also inaccessible to all migrant workers due to an intentional lack of awareness perpetuated by employers.

### A Call Before Saudi 2034

Saudi Arabia, the host of the 2034 FIFA World Cup, still employs over half of its labor force from abroad and is notorious for the systemic abuse of migrant workers. Learning from the Qatar World Cup, the international community must be proactive and enforce measures to protect migrant workers long before FIFA preparation begins in Saudi Arabia. We cannot afford to wait for another media spectacle to protect migrant workers—we must start creating protective and equitable systems today.

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## IS GENERATION ALPHA RUINED BY THE INTERNET?

Harshitha J

By age two, 40% of Gen Alphas already own a tablet, and one in four show signs of internet addiction between ages 11 and 15.

### ***So, to address the elephant in the room, is Generation Alpha—the tech-savvy generation—really ruined by their exposure to the internet?***

Generation Alpha is the term given to the cohort of individuals born between 2011 and 2024. They are “digital natives”, being born into a world seamlessly integrated with technology. Often called “iPad kids” in slang, many have interacted with advanced technology from a very young age.

#### **USAGE AND EXPOSURE:**

Globally, two-thirds of children do not have access to the internet. In low-income families, only 6% of people under 25 have access to it. On the contrary, 87% of people under 25 have internet access in high-income households. In this article, we will be breaking down internet usage focusing on children under 15 who do have access.

Generation Alpha is more exposed to technology than any other generation. In theory, this should be a good thing—the more exposure, the more knowledge. But the real problem occurs when we realize their age—currently between 0 and 13 years old.

In 2024, 36.2 million kids under 11 were using the internet. This is a shocking number, especially when we look at the numbers dealing with teen internet users. Most of these kids use tablets and have an average screen time of 4 to 6 hours.

The most popular search categories among them are for videos, audios, and software, and their top apps—YouTube, WhatsApp, and TikTok—are all social media platforms. This spike was seen after the COVID-19 pandemic, when isolation was soothed by the internet, replacing crucial social, emotional, and cognitive development. Even toddlers were exposed to the internet when they should have been hitting crucial developmental milestones.

#### **RISKS AND SAFETY CONCERN:**

While the digital world offers great opportunities for learning and developing, there have been concerns about its impact on cognitive development for this generation. The average screen time that we see in children is excessive, hindering cognitive development in many ways. Reported effects include reduced attention span, poorer academic performance, and delay in language and socioemotional development. Corollary, the content that is consumed by the children on the internet in abundance (i.e., videos and games) hinders a child's ability to engage in imaginative play and hands-on learning, activities which are considered crucial for cognitive development.

Content exposure is another safety concern, especially violent and sexual content. This type of content, when consumed by kids too young to be exposed to it, can lead to several consequences regarding behavior and mental health.

Cyberbullying adds another layer of risk. Young children, with less real-world knowledge, are more vulnerable to online harassment, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and other health issues. In the U.S., childhood anxiety and depression rates rose between 9% and 13% among Gen Alpha, with the internet likely playing a role.

#### **IS GEN ALPHA RUINED BY THE INTERNET?**

Not yet.

The internet has broken barriers between people. It gives fantastic opportunities for learning and growing. It gives exposure to the real world in many aspects, and provides us with entertainment. So while the internet has its benefits, it is mandatory to limit and supervise internet consumption by the younger generations, considering that they are born into a tech-saturated world.

So, no, Gen Alpha isn't ruined by the internet. But there is a high possibility of it if we don't bring changes to guide a safer exposure of the internet to them.

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## BEYOND MISCONCEPTIONS: THE REALITY OF LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA

Rhoda Akinola

Living with disabilities is not a limitation, but a reality. According to the World Health Organization's 2011 World Disability "Report", approximately 15% of Nigeria's population or around 25 million people have a disability. People with disabilities are more likely to experience extreme poverty in Nigeria than those without disability. People with disabilities in Nigeria persistently face stigma, discrimination, and barriers to accessing basic social services and economic opportunities. Today, they face greater barriers brought about by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. For one, people with disabilities may experience negative attitudes at the family and community levels, including name-calling, negative beliefs, and misconceptions surrounding the causes of disabilities (usually associated with religious or cultural norms and beliefs). As a person with a disability, I can recall one such experience where a woman saw me on the street and said the reason why I am a person with disability is because my mum changed from Muslim to Christian so Allah was punishing my mum through me. These negative attitudes manifest in rejection, neglect, loss of respect, and denial of identity or self-worth, and often result in low self-esteem, depression, and isolation. This, along with structural limitations and challenges, also reinforces barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing basic services such as education, health, public transport, and social safety nets. These challenges often lead to undesirable consequences for people with disabilities such as social exclusion, negative stereotypes and perceptions, financial hardship, and challenges in the areas of both physical and mental health.

***Unemployment rates among people with disabilities are almost double that of the general population, owing to attitudinal, mobility-related, technological, and physical barriers (lack of accessible workplaces).***

Assistive devices are expensive and not easily available, which limits the mobility and access to technology for persons with disabilities. In addition, many will experience frequent denial of job opportunities, employers' negative attitudes, inappropriate job placement, lower expectations at work, and a lack of reasonable accommodation. These challenges among others compound the vulnerability of persons with disabilities, and especially during COVID-19. A distinct absence of data pertaining to disability prevalence and the different forms of disabilities persists in Nigeria, which in turn challenges effective policy responses and data driven programming.

It is important that government officials, policymakers, and decision makers are aware of the importance of disability as a development issue and enhance data collection on disability. A concerted effort to raise awareness surrounding disability issues would serve to shift negative perceptions and stigma against persons with disabilities among families and communities. Furthermore, investments in inclusive employment and livelihood interventions are critical to addressing unemployment challenges among persons with disabilities. These could include entrepreneurship training and business advisory services, as well as the promotion of locally produced assistive devices and accessible workplaces. Disability-focused organizations in Nigeria should be empowered to support this process and provide services to persons with disabilities and caregivers. In the face of challenges, people with disabilities show remarkable resilience and determination. By fostering a society that values accessibility, inclusivity, and empathy, we can work towards breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for everyone to thrive. Recognizing the strengths and contributions of individuals with disabilities not only enhances their lives but also enriches our communities as a whole. As we move forward, let's continue to advocate for a world where everyone has the chance to participate, contribute, and live with dignity and purpose.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF SEX EDUCATION

Thảo Nhi Đàm

Early and proper sex education is needed. Sex education is a teaching and learning process aimed to equip children and adolescents with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values about relationships, sexuality, and reproductive health. But in some countries like Vietnam, when this phrase is mentioned, some people still feel embarrassed and want to avoid it. Therefore, it leads to many children's incorrect perceptions about gender and sexuality.

### ***Sex education can help to achieve gender equality.***

To achieve gender equality, girls must be given the same opportunities as boys, which can begin with sex education. Girls who receive proper education can identify signs of illness or harassment and seek assistance. Advancements in females' education between 1990 and 2009 saved 2.1 million children under the age of five. Additionally, when they obtain suitable sex education, girls are less likely to get HIV or sexually transmitted diseases. On the other hand, a lack of sexual education might result in early pregnancy and abortions. Not only would this limit a young woman's future livelihood and independence, but in many cases, the young women's bodies are not ready to give birth. Adolescent mothers are more likely to experience eclampsia or infections during pregnancy and delivery, which can put the mother at significant risk and give the child a difficult start in life. Educating children about their sexuality enables them to respect each other and understand their options.

Sex education helps children understand their bodies and those of others, therefore preventing misconceptions. During the years of puberty, a child goes through many physical changes. Proper sex education not only helps deal with fundamental issues of puberty but also helps children understand the development of their bodies. Only when children are adequately educated can they take good care of their health. Additionally, child pornographic content is increasing on the Internet, and children tend to access it early, so it is essential for early and accurate sex education that can help them recognize/avoid inappropriate online encounters.

Sex education helps protect children from sexual abuse or violence. Reports from the organization Sahil showed that during the first six months of 2023, 12 children on average every day were the victims of sexual abuse. According to RAINN statistics, out of every 1000 sexual assaults, only 310 are reported to the police. That means there are still perpetrators of sexual abuse on the loose out there. Sex education can help children understand their sexual rights, which makes it possible for them to identify impending sexual abuse or violence, therefore preventing it from happening to themselves.

Although many school administrators have added sex education to their curricula, their approach often proved to be inconsistent, outdated and often inadequate. Some programs focus on abstinence-only strategies, while others emphasize anatomy and reproduction, leaving out crucial topics such as consent, emotional well-being, LGBTQ+ identities. According to the Guttmacher Institute, only 26 states in the USA require that sex and HIV education be medically accurate and, shockingly, 7 states require instruction that portrays non-heterosexual orientations and gender identities as shameful, unacceptable or illegal. This kind of patchwork system means that students receive incomplete or biased information, leaving them ill-equipped to navigate real life situations.

To improve the current state of sexual education, schools need to make it comprehensive and inclusive. Covering topics like consent, contraception and LGBTQ+ identities leads to significantly better outcomes, such as a 40-60% reduction in teen pregnancies according to ScienceDaily. Moreover, incorporating emotional, relational, and real-life skills into sex education programs is essential. Learning about healthy communication, relationships, and navigating peer pressure are crucial for young people to form respectful, consensual, and fulfilling relationships. Students who receive instruction on emotional intelligence and boundary-setting also report greater confidence in managing sexual situations and making safer choices.

Children have the right to understand and know the changes their body will experience during puberty, as well as gender - related issues, to protect themselves. Conversations around sex education shouldn't just be a one-time thing. Parents should be continually involved to create a safe, understanding space for their children to ask questions and address their doubts and insecurities about things related to sex/gender. Sex education is most effective when paired with sexual healthcare. Early and proper sex education will benefit society and ensure a safer future for children.

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## GENE-EDITING TECHNOLOGIES: ETHICAL APPROACH IN MEDICINE AND AGRICULTURE

Donya Fouriner

In consequence of recent biotechnological advances like CRISPR, ethical considerations have been placed into perspective in several approaches to science. In agriculture, a main concern is how much genetic editing is ethically acceptable and whether it should be used to create an “ideal” product. Although gene editing can promote sustainability in natural resources like crops, its power can be overused and abused.

Gene-editing within the world of agriculture is supervised by government organizations all over the world. In the United States, these agencies control how much genetically modified organisms (GMOs) make it onto our dinner plates. On the other hand, European countries like France choose to offer nutritious options with less chemicals involved. It is necessary in both cases to examine the positives and negatives of the governments’ choices. The U.S. offers longevity in terms of food preservation, but at the cost of higher chemicals exposure; Europe delivers healthier and more vitamin rich crops, but with a shorter shelf life.

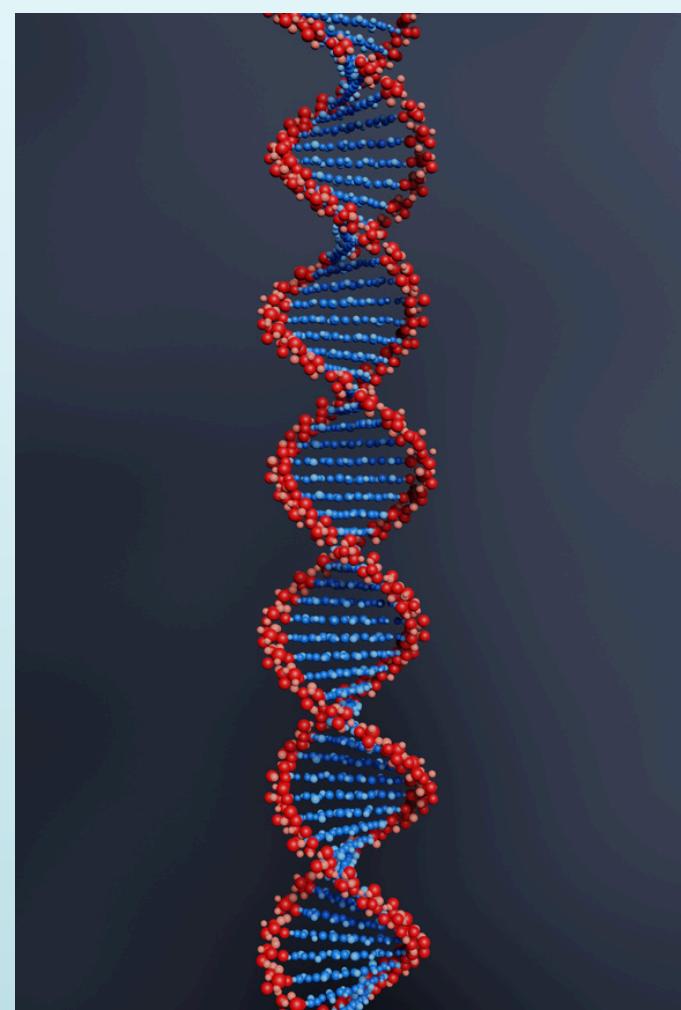
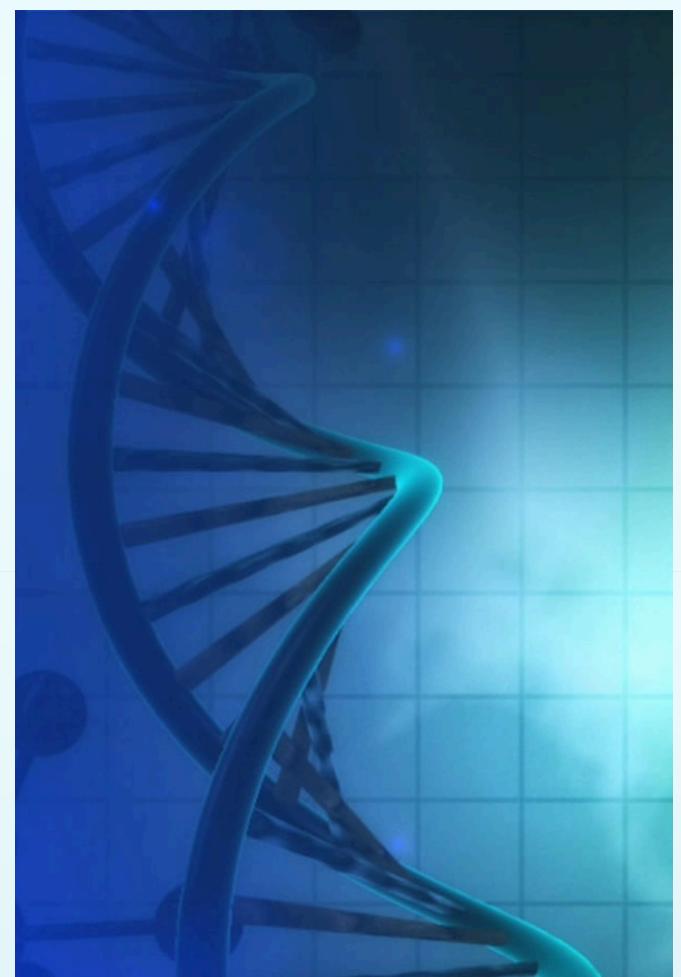
Historically, crops have played an important role in the economy, so one country’s standards for genetic engineering may affect trade. Environmental impacts are another concern, with government organizations overseeing the environmental consequences as well as the capacity of ecosystems to handle such modifications. On an international level, organizations like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provide countries with a general guideline for GMO products. This organization specifically made the Cartagena (2000) and Nagoya (2010) Protocols to address environmental and biosafety concerns within agriculture but also health sectors. Over 170 countries have adopted these protocols, though notably, the United States has not.

In spite of national and international efforts to minimize the abuse of GMOs in agriculture, loopholes exist. Some countries bend their own guidelines to maximize production, while some companies withhold full transparency from consumers about the reality of the cultivation or conditions of a product. This is the unfortunate reality of a vast amount of companies— they know that if they are entirely transparent with their customers, they will lose revenue and competitive advantage.

As genetic-editing technologies continue to evolve, it is crucial that both national and international organizations make an effort to minimize the abuse of power of this tool but also tighten loopholes that allow corporations to sidestep ethical and safety standards.

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## THE EFFECTS AND DAMAGE CAUSED BY BRAIN ROT

Khoa Võ

Social media is a powerful tool used by the majority of people in society, making it one of a kind when it comes to utility and popularity. It is packed with multiple functions, making it suitable for all age groups, including children. Knowing that children are still learning and are easily addicted to content made with little to no effort at all, many have taken advantage of this for personal gain. This article will discuss what brain rot is and how it is affecting our lives.

But what exactly is brain rot? Well, the phenomenon of content, memes, or internet trends that have zero content and true meaning hidden behind them is usually referred to as brain rot, or in other words, slop. This type of content is usually characterized by oddly bright and saturated colors combined with excessively loud sound effects.

Although its nature may seem pointless at first glance, there is actually science behind its design. Children's eyes are still developing and are especially sensitive to bright colors, which stimulate their visual senses. Oversaturated visuals instantly grab their attention, while loud sound effects further immerse them into the digital world, as their brains are extremely responsive to intensity. However, children's brains—though capable of learning at an unprecedented pace—cannot fully grasp complex ideas.

Combining these factors, we get videos filled with flashing colors, loud noise, constantly changing scenes, and meaningless context. The purpose? To keep children in a never-ending cycle of consuming sloppy, low-effort content. Bright colors grab their attention, loud sounds keep them engaged, constantly changing scenes cater to their short attention span, and the illusion of "learning" disguises the lack of substance. To put it simply, brain rot uses proven stimuli to farm views and quick cash, while providing nothing of real value. With the definition of what brain rot is out of the way, let us dive deeper into its effects and aftermath.

Despite backlash, brainrot is still being generated because it has the ability to generate massive profits in little time. The reason is simple: children do not care about online arguments, they only care about their entertainment and safety. But the effects of brain rot can be damaging, sometimes irreversible if severe enough, including: decreased memory, difficulty focusing, and lowered attention span.

Firstly, low attention span and difficulty focusing caused by brain rot occur due social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Youtube shorts, and Instagram reels that rely on rapid-fire pacing—short, constant bursts of content that train our brains to expect instant gratification. The expectation of instant gratification means that our brains do not engage in processing information, but rather to quickly shift its attention if it finds something unengaging. Over time, the constant consumption of surface-level content reinforces the habit of seeking superficial entertainment, making it extraordinarily harder to do complex and longer tasks. Difficulty doing prolonged, sophisticated objectives equates to challenges in concentrating, which is also referred to as "continuous partial attention".

Secondly, brain rot consumption can lead to decreased memory, the most detrimental effect out of the three. Our memory works best when we process information deeply, analyzing it beyond its surface level meaning. However, brain rot completely goes against this principle—its quick, superficial delivery means our brains never truly engage with the content at all. Instead, we passively skim and consume the content without ever using up any cognitive resources to integrate the information. In addition, when we encounter information that is processed superficially, our brains store it as sensory impressions using sound and visual effects, not the actual content. Memories formed like this are highly unstable and easily fade away.

Furthermore, brain rot leads to lowered productivity and cognitive impairments, causing serious setbacks in academic and professional life. In a society where productivity is prioritized more than anything else, reduced efficiency will hinder success. Higher-ups will constantly yell at their subordinates to work harder and faster, being under the impression that they are lazy, when in reality, these individuals are just mentally drained to the point where not having dopamine constantly flood their brains is considered a "low". This can lead to mental strain, stress, and withdrawal from social interaction. Over time, withdrawal often turns into social disconnection, where individuals will struggle to maintain conversations, forget basic details, and misunderstand others. This can further foster unhealthy relationships, trigger frequent conflicts, and push individuals further into isolation. And prolonged solitude, as humans are inherently social creatures, can slowly fuel emotional instability and depression.

In conclusion, brain rot is a great tool to temporarily escape reality when consumed in moderation, but overconsumption is all it takes to trigger a chain reaction that harms memory, focus, productivity, and mental well-being. This is a widespread and growing phenomenon that spares no one.

**We need to take actions to stop this apocalypse once and for all.**

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## ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY MORE FRAGILE? – A FAIR LOOK BETWEEN CRITICISM AND REALITY

Trang Uyên



A long time ago, the public was left shocked after an incident in Hanoi, Vietnam, where a young couple took their own lives by jumping from a high-rise apartment building. It was believed that the decision stemmed from their families' disapproval of their relationship. This death of the young couple left many people heartbroken. However, there were also many opinions saying: "Young people nowadays are too fragile. It was just a small problem, and they already think about ending their lives?"

### **"The snowflake generation": When tears are no longer rare among the young**

Try scrolling through social media and you'll find countless confessions, midnight status, emotional breakdowns,...and more. Young people today are talking about stress, depression, burnout, and other psychological problems more often and openly than ever before. So the question "Are young people today weaker than previous generations?" now provokes debate and discussion, yet also calls for empathy and sincere reflection, particularly in an era when mental health issues are becoming more and more prevalent. According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s 2023 report, depression is currently the third leading cause of disease burden worldwide. But what is truly alarming is that the age of those affected is decreasing, shifting from middle-aged adults to adolescents. Moreover, a 2022 study led by Harvard University found that young adults reported the lowest levels of well-being across all age groups, even when it came to self-rated physical health. According to Tyler VanderWeele, director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science and senior author of the study, "Across every dimension of well-being that we looked at — happiness, health, meaning, character, relationships, financial stability...those who are 18 to 25 felt they were worse off."

### ***Given these revealing numbers, a new nickname has emerged for Generation Z – "the snowflake generation".***

In the Cambridge dictionary, the word "snowflake" is defined as "an insulting way of referring to someone who is considered by some people to be too easily upset and offended". These "snowflakes" are more likely to experience psychological challenges and tend to seek out various ways of healing themselves. In fact, it is not difficult to come across comments like: "Back in our day, we had nothing, but we still managed to succeed," or "We did not have all these things you have now, but we still tried our best." But how many parents simply believe that providing their children with material comfort means they truly love them? And how many are willing to spend time listening to their children's thoughts without judgment?

### **The reasons behind the increasing fragility of young people are various:**

Commenting on the notion of labeling Generation Z as the "snowflake generation," Mr. Nguyen Anh Khoa, a psychology lecturer at the University of Economics and Finance in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam emphasized that this is a subjective perspective. He stated: "Gen Z today are unafraid to express their emotions and seek external help to address psychological problems. This may be why society often views them as vulnerable. In fact, however, it reflects their willingness to confront their emotions, rather than silently enduring them." Indeed, nowadays, with the rapid advancement of technology and medicine, public awareness of mental health issues has significantly improved. Despite being regarded as a fragile generation, Generation Z is also seen as a pioneer in understanding and prioritizing mental health. Knowledge gained from schools and social media platforms has helped young people better understand the seriousness of conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders, as well as how to seek surrounding support and cope with their mental problems. Unlike previous generations, today's generation pays more attention to their mental health and expresses their emotions more often and honestly, especially on social media platforms.

### **A sad issue is: Today's youth will have to deal with problems that the previous generation did not.**

For previous generations, happiness was as simple as having enough to eat and clothes to wear. But in the contemporary world, that simplicity no longer suffices. So what is their happiness? The younger generation now needs more than just a full stomach and better than nice clothes. The world today has changed drastically compared to the past, so have the aspirations of young people. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a motivational theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, clearly illustrates this transformation:

## ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY MORE FRAGILE? – A FAIR LOOK BETWEEN CRITICISM AND REALITY

Trang Uyên



As we all know, contemporary media and popular culture have bombarded young people with many unrealistic standards, gradually diminishing their self-esteem by making them feel as if they are not intelligent, attractive and rich enough. In a society filled with perfection and exceptional individuals, falling behind even slightly can easily lead to feelings of inadequacy and overwhelming pressure. Therefore, the fact that so many young people experience internal struggles is not surprising. Judging a generation as weak is easy, but few are willing to live their reality and understand their struggles. This, in itself, is proof that the younger generation is not vulnerable at all and deserve receiving recognition for their resilience.

***After all, who has not been a child trying to grow up? Everyone faces their own storms, and each of us is trying our best to overcome them. We are all strong in our own unique ways!***

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## RESULTS DAY: THE MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS

Tyra Awuku

### Introduction

Yearly, the British public is reminded of the event that is Results Day. According to the Education Policy Institute, last year's results showed a degree of "stability" after "two years of falls as the grading system unwound" due to the pandemic. Post-pandemic, society is reclaiming the norms of Results Day, including live news coverage within a select few schools across the country.

This coverage often appears on major news outlets such as Sky News, BBC News, and ITV. Segments usually feature students opening their results for the first time on camera, or individuals speaking to reporters after reviewing them privately. On the surface, this comes across as a public celebration acknowledging the hard work of students nationwide. But behind the scenes, more often than not, many students experience feelings of anxiety and dread, as they come to terms with the fact that these grades will have a direct impact on their futures.

### The Lead Up to the Day:

Even in the midst of summer's calm, unrest within students grows as Results Day approaches. For many it is a vulnerable moment as their futures hang in the unknown. Publicising Results Day arguably exploits this vulnerability. Even without the presence of a filming crew, many students often opt to move to a quieter space to open their results. The arrival of camera crews and broadcasting equipment within the school can disrupt this choice, making such broadcasts a hindrance rather than a celebration of the students. Unfortunately, students rarely have a say in whether their school will allow the Results Day experience to be televised. That decision lies with school leadership, whose opinions generally differ from those of their students.

### Utilising the Media

Whilst some students may be irritated by the media on results day, many schools are choosing to utilise it in a different way by allowing students to access their results online. For students who may not be physically available to receive their results, this would be a more efficient solution compared to having their results posted to them, as is done by many schools today.

However, not all educators agree with the shift. Teacher Nadine Asbali expressed her thoughts on the idea in an article, referring to the change as a "massive step backwards" because it removes opportunities for students to access immediate guidance and support from staff if results are disappointing. The change appears to be in favour of the former education minister Stephen Morgan's belief that it is "high time exam records were brought into the 21st century". Yet in doing so, the input of media takes away from the emotional aspect of Results Day replacing the shared, emotional release of a physical reveal with a more despondent, solitary reaction.

### Comparison Culture:

More often than not, live reports highlight students with top grades and clear plans for their new chapter of life. But what isn't always recognised, are the opportunities created for students to start comparing themselves to their peers.

***By disproportionately featuring "presentable" results, news outlets risk perpetuating bias for the sake of the screen.***

This bias can cause other students to form unattainable goals for themselves to match that of their peers. Although this could be interpreted as encouraging, the process of reaching these goals may lead to excessive stress and anxiety causing more harm than good. Globally, people worry about the implications of social media and the growing nature of "cancel culture" and when the concept is applied to education, students will start to aim high out of the fear of rejection or shame, rather than a genuine passion for their chosen paths.

### Moving Forward:

The focus of Results Day should be on celebrating students for closing one chapter of their lives and stepping into another, regardless of their grades. Media outlets should aim to be more inclusive, showcasing stories on alternative routes, like apprenticeships or gap years, alongside the stories of top academic achievers. By slowly incorporating social media through posts and live broadcasts, the natural emotional responses we give to such events lessen, despite live broadcasts providing efficient documentation for the future. National coverage should strive to celebrate students as a collective, provide an inclusive, uplifting space for everyone at the end of the academic year, and avoid sending unintended messages about what constitutes "success".

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## INTRAPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE: A RANK OUTSIDER YET TO BE HARNESSSED

Cat Tuong Tran Nhu

Howard Gardner (a psychologist) posits that human intelligence is not a single general ability but comprises various distinct modalities. Linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existentials are the 8 types of intelligence. However, human bias comes into play as we humans often venerate most those with high logical-mathematical intelligence (which is reflected in high scores on IQ tests). Among them, intrapersonal intelligence is the most abstract and underestimated, but it has more to offer.

### HOWARD GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES



### 1. Definition of intrapersonal intelligence

According to Wikipedia: intrapersonal intelligence "refers to having a deep and accurate understanding of the self; what one's strengths and weaknesses are, what makes one unique, being able to predict and manage one's own reactions, emotions and behaviors.

Activities associated with this intelligence include introspection and self-reflection. Intrapersonal skills can be categorized in at least four areas: metacognition, awareness of thoughts, management of feelings and emotions, behavior, self-management, decision-making and judgment".

### How rare is intrapersonal intelligence?

Intrapersonal intelligence ranks the third rarest type among the nine. This is because of the fact that it is quite personal. Howard Gardner, in *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons* (2006), notes: "Intrapersonal intelligence is perhaps the most private and difficult to observe of the intelligences. It is harder to assess than others."

Moreover, this is substantiated by the education system nowadays. At school, kids are taught maths, science and languages, and physical education--thus developing logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence, however, can only be shaped and perfected through the acquisition of maturity and kids' changing perspectives of themselves and others.

**"Intrapersonal intelligence is perhaps the most private and difficult to observe of the intelligences. It is harder to assess than others."**

Additionally, while the three aforementioned types of intelligence can be elevated through practising exercises regularly like problem-solving questions, language exercises, and workouts, intrapersonal intelligence can only be enhanced through the process of self-reflection and self-talking in solitude, which is considered a luxury in today's world of rat race.

### Intrapersonal intelligence in people

### 2. Signs that you may possess high intrapersonal intelligence

1. You have a clear idea of what you like/dislike/ or what your strengths/weaknesses are.

Not many people can do this. According to a research by psychologist Tasha Eurich, only 10-15% met the criteria for true self-awareness, though 95% believed they were self-aware. Articulating what you like/dislike/ or what your strengths/weaknesses are is a sign that you understand yourself really well, you spend quality time nurturing your inner soul, listening to your inner thoughts.

**"10-15% met the criteria for true self-awareness, though 95% believed they were self-aware" - Tasha Eurich**

2. You're well emotions-conscious

This means you understand how your emotional mechanisms are working. Plus, you're conscious of how you feel in given contexts and can easily name those emotions: anger, sadness, excitement

3. You don't abstain from solitude

You enjoy being reclusive and spend little time socializing. When left lonesome, you know how to make use of the time to self-reflect, embracing your inner thoughts and listening to the echoes of your heart.



To illustrate, you imagine yourself in different situations and how you would feel/do in those. Perhaps when you're sufficiently personally aware, you can sense it yourself that you have a high intrapersonal intelligence quotient.

## INTRAPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE: A RANK OUTSIDER YET TO BE HARNESSSED

Cat Tuong Tran Nhu

### 3. How to elaborate on intrapersonal intelligence

Here are some strategies:

#### 1. Identify your value/motivations/ideologies and your role models

Knowing what distinguishes you from others, what makes you worthy, who motivates you and what makes this life meaningful to you is extremely important. When you're perceptive of these things, that's when you're starting to embrace the "inner you" and nourish your soul.

#### 2. Make Time for Yourself

A mindful moment of self-reflection and self-talking can help you dig deeper into your inner soul, thus developing intrapersonal intelligence. In the 1930, Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky hypothesized that vocal self-talk was key to development. By repeating conversations children have had with adults, they practice managing their behaviors and emotions on their own. In addition, writing out your inner thoughts in a journal alone can help you understand more about yourself. Looking back on your journal entries can be a great way to pinpoint problems, notice patterns, and remind you of your progress.

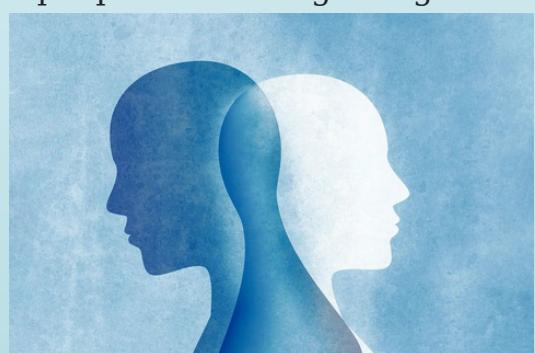
#### 3. Treat Yourself Kindly

Being kind to yourself can help you build a deeper, more positive connection with how you are feeling. Pay attention to how you are feeling and look for ways to improve how you are feeling and address your needs.

### 4. Reasons why intrapersonal intelligence should be well exploited

It is quite fathomable how intrapersonal intelligence is left out of people's recognition as it is so abstract and subtle. Nevertheless, intrapersonal intelligence has a role to play in shaping people's decision-making ability, self-awareness and emotional regulation. Life is fraught with deceptions and negative lusts. If people are determined and consistent with what they want and the moral rightness that they possess, it will be a sheer struggle to drive those people into wrong-doings.

Possessing high intrapersonal intelligence also assists one in developing good leadership and independence. Howard Gardner claims in his book *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*:



**"Individuals with high intrapersonal intelligence have an accurate picture of themselves, are aware of their inner moods and motivations, and can use this knowledge to regulate their behavior".**

This means people with high intrapersonal intelligence are fully aware of their inner force and can easily articulate and inspire others in their teams. With self-confidence and self-awareness, people are more successful in leading a team than anyone with self-doubt (low intrapersonal intelligence).

People say: "He who sees through life and death will meet most success". To know others well is just a matter of time spent with them, while understanding oneself is a sheer difficulty (interpersonal intelligence proves to be more common in people than intrapersonal intelligence). Furthermore, intrapersonal intelligence does wonders for your personal statement when applying for scholarships at prestigious universities like Oxford. An impressive personal statement is the one that reflects your real person, your story and your perspective of life, proving why intrapersonal intelligence is especially crucial.

Therefore, I proclaim that intrapersonal intelligence should be valued more by people.

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## FAMILY VLOGGING: SHOWCASING GENUINE FAMILY CONNECTIONS OR INVADING CHILDREN'S PRIVACY?

Teu-Khanh Phuong

In 2008, "The Shaytards" - a family with a self-titled YouTube channel - were documented as one of the first families to post videos of their life online, which quickly skyrocketed with millions of views and followers; specifically, their daily vlogs had amassed 4.9 million subscribers. Their content varied from Christmas specials and family fights to unwrapping presents; each video contained a sense of humor and a touch of authenticity that significantly engaged viewers from across the world. Over time, family vlogging has emerged as a widespread culture on different social media platforms, ranging from long-form to short-form content.

However, the rise of family vlogs has sparked debate on whether they significantly inspire families and unravel the truth behind parenthood or exploit children for views and profits. While it is undeniable that these channels offer an entertaining and exciting glimpse into the lives of their creators, they also bring up a legal issue concerning children's privacy rights and welfare being featured in these family channels. In this article, we will dive deeper into the nature of family vlogging, explore the positive and negative aspects of family vlogs, and answer one of the most contentious questions: Is banning family vlogging the solution?



Instead, they are involved in "sharenting," which is the practice of "parents uploading images, videos, and information about their children for worldwide consumption." According to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center, "In 2019, videos that featured a young child had on average three times as many views as videos that did not feature a young child." Therefore, children or teenagers play a pivotal role in family channels, ultimately attracting worldwide fans.

**"In 2019, videos that featured a young child had on average three times as many views as videos that did not feature a young child."**

**Pew Research Center**

### 1. The nature of family vlogging

Family vlogging, or family video blogging, is known as the creation of family-oriented content to be shared or posted on social media or video streaming platforms. As digital sharing sites continue to gain popularity as one of the means of earning a considerable income for many users, many families have gradually switched to vlogging as a steady and full-time job. Specifically, families who have children open up doors to various types of content and can considerably generate a large number of followers for the channel. Therefore, family vlogs generally document the daily lives of families and heavily feature the family's children as the main stars of the show. These vlogs offer a unique insight into the lives of families, documenting the children's remarkable achievements and a variety of families' adventures. Whether it is a video about the children's first day at school or a family trip to Universal Studios, audiences enjoy the ability to connect with these families as they watch the kids grow up with their own eyes, making them feel like a part of a loving family.

As a result, family influencers are becoming increasingly popular, along with the emergence of child personality. It is crucial to recognize that family vloggers do not merely capture moments of their lives for reflection during family gatherings.

### 2. How family vlogging spread positivity and benefits family creators

YouTube, TikTok, and other video-sharing sites have long been platforms for freedom of expression and speech, giving individuals from diverse backgrounds opportunities to voice their opinions and share their unique experiences with viewers globally. Not only can family vlogs be entertaining for audiences who enjoy raw and natural content, but they also benefit family creators by providing them with a lucrative source of income and further strengthening the bond between family members.

Firstly, family vlogging can be a source of entertainment for viewers, giving them an in-depth understanding of different family issues and a deeper appreciation of family's precious moments. Moreover, family vlogs can foster a sense of community and belonging among viewers who relate to the family's experiences and hardships. Secondly, families can make a profit while spending quality time with one another. Making videos on a daily basis is one of the best ways for family members to bond and gain a better understanding of each other's habits and interests. When family members create videos, they learn how to effectively communicate and listen actively to reach common ground. Besides, many family vloggers can generate striking revenues from multiple social media platforms or from sponsorships and branded merchandise.

## FAMILY VLOGGING: SHOWCASING GENUINE FAMILY CONNECTIONS OR INVADING CHILDREN'S PRIVACY?

Teu-Khanh Phuong

This in turn gives them more motivation to make inspiring videos and quit their nine-to-five jobs to become full-time influencers or vloggers. A well-known example of this is Ryan's parents, the ones behind the screen, supporting Ryan and his YouTube channel called "Ryan's World." As his channel grew and obtained millions of subscribers, his parents eventually dedicated full time to supporting Ryan and helping him balance his life.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that genuine connection in family vlogs only stems from authentic interactions between parents and children, not staged or exaggerated performances for views and likes.

### 3. The potential dark side of family vlogging

Imagine a reality when a video of your most embarrassing childhood moment went viral online, but your family earned millions from it. Would you think it did more harm or more good? It's common for parents to keep a record of their children's milestones growing up, but there's an underlying issue of whether it is ethical for families to make a living from those memories, especially over the lives of their children. With brand deals and ad revenue on the rise, there's no doubt that more and more families have become interested in the idea of starting a family channel. With this comes a cost.

To exemplify this problem, let's look at a recent case of a family vlog channel called "8 Passengers." Ruby Franke is the convicted abusive mom behind this successful channel, who has pleaded guilty to four counts of abuse towards two of her children. In her channel, Ruby would give an insight into how she handled household issues and bad behaviors from her children and give out advice on parental wisdom. Over time, viewers started noticing flaws inside her videos and critiqued Ruby on how she educated her children.



Chad Franke (son) & Ruby Franke

Specifically, many former "child stars of YouTube" have also spoken out on how difficult it had been for them to grow up in front of a camera and constantly face the eyes of the public.

The case of "8 Passengers" does bring up the ethicality of whether recording or publicly posting key moments of childhood for parents' monetary benefits is justified. It is important to note that not every vlog channel commits the same crimes Ruby did, and this case is just one of many cases on the emotional and physical impact children can face when they may have to conform to certain behaviors when filming videos. However, the dark side of family vlogging is obvious: Child influencers may lack legal protections from parents who can easily exploit their children's ability to yield profits from social media through engaging and interactive videos with audiences.

To begin with, the well-being and dignity of children should be the highest priority in media and content creation. However, children do not have the capacity to give informed consent to content that features them, especially when millions of strangers from every corner of the globe can view their videos.



This means they can easily be manipulated and exploited for content without acknowledging the long-term consequences of having their lives publicly shared. From an ethical standpoint, heavily featuring children in family YouTube channels can affect their well-being and future development in various ways. If a person looks at this through an outsider's lens, would he/she want that information or embarrassing childhood moments being discussed once they turned 18? How would these children feel towards these videos? These are fundamental questions to consider when mentioning the perspectives of children. Furthermore, the major attraction of family channels is the children themselves. Apart from the mental implications, children are also in danger when it comes to financial exploitation, especially for channels that amass a large following and make money through brand deals or Adsense. What is special about social media algorithms is that they can determine whether a video becomes popular or not.

## FAMILY VLOGGING: SHOWCASING GENUINE FAMILY CONNECTIONS OR INVADING CHILDREN'S PRIVACY?

Teu-Khanh Phuong

Therefore, family creators can never guarantee if their content will remain popular on the platform. By no longer showcasing their children in daily vlogs, they risk losing viewership and priority in the algorithm.

### 4. Is banning family vlogging the solution?

In the famous case of Ruby Franke, the mom behind the YouTube channel "8 Passengers," the eldest daughter, Shari Franke, addressed lawmakers in Utah on how her end goal is to "ban family vlogging." According to ABC News, she emphasized how having her childhood "plastered all over the Internet" has completely "ruined her innocence." Overall, while one cannot guarantee the abolishment of family vlogging, what we undeniably need is a clearer discussion on ethics and consent. There should be forums and conversations with children and young adults and a willingness to actively make their voices heard through different platforms.

### "Ban family vlogging" - Shari Franke

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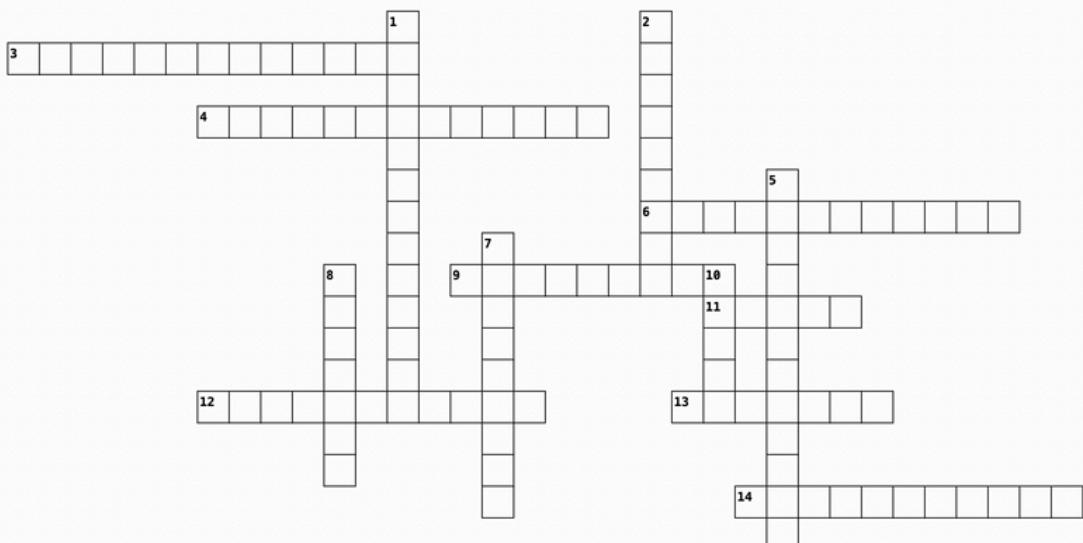
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Shari Franke



## Crossword: *Changing Climate*



### Across:

- 3. global warming is a key part of this larger phenomenon.
- 4. invisible gas that traps heat in the atmosphere.
- 6. the variety of life on earth.
- 9. rising \_\_\_ are linked to climate change.
- 11. gas layer protecting earth, damaged by chlorofluorocarbons.
- 12. development that meets present needs without harming the future.
- 13. long periods without rain.
- 14. limited natural resource formed from ancient organic matter.

### Down:

- 1. cutting down large areas of forest.
- 2. energy from naturally replenishing sources like sun and wind.
- 5. harmful emissions contaminating the atmosphere.
- 7. process of turning waste into reusable material.
- 8. potent greenhouse gas produced by livestock.
- 10. alternative energy source from sunlight.

## Word Search: *Fields of Music*



## Crypto-Quote: *Smart Start*

NYX STY FGTZY BMFY NY NX  
NYX FGTZY BMFY NY HFS  
GJHTZR  
- IW XJZZX YMJ QTWMC

### Instructions:

Figure out the quote from one of these articles by figuring out a simple code. In this code one letter will replace another, (it will be the same letter throughout the puzzle). Example: KLFRFLP = SYNONYM. Solution is found through trial and error.

### Word Bank:

|       |         |
|-------|---------|
| pop   | reggae  |
| rap   | jazz    |
| rock  | country |
| blues | disco   |
| folk  | ballad  |







