

IED18

No Space for Third Place: An analysis of the impact of third spaces on teenagers social lives.

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Abstract

Social isolation and loneliness play a huge role in many people's lives. The World Health Organization declared loneliness a global health concern in 2023 (Johnson, 2023). Despite each generation being affected by this loneliness epidemic, Gen Z has been hit the hardest and in a survey conducted by Forbes 73% of Gen Z participants reported feeling alone constantly or sometimes. A constant feeling of loneliness should not be overlooked as it is as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and increasing the risk of early death (Bakhtiari, 2023). Teenagers are more connected than ever (technology-wise) but, due to the constant social comparison and addicting algorithms of popular social media sites, one can't blame this generation for disconnecting from the real world. In-person third places are a great option for teens to socialize and make connections with many people. However, physically getting to a park or library requires permission and a mode of transportation whereas the internet can be accessed with the click of a button. This research paper aims to answer the question, to what extent do third places impact the social lives of teenagers in the South Bay? My hypothesis is that teenagers who spend more time in third spaces feel more satisfied with their social lives than teenagers who don't. The results are based on data obtained from interviews and surveys of teenagers asked to assess the affordability, safety, and accessibility of physical third places and how it impacts their social lives.

Conference Track

Innovative Education