

Parental Control on Purpose of Using Internet of Adolescents in Relation to their Psychological Hardiness and Peer Relationships

Abstract

Present study was conducted to find out the effect of three independent variables parental psychological control, Psychological hardiness and peer relationships on the internet usage (purpose of using internet) of adolescents. Sample of the study consisted of 600 adolescents. Descriptive survey method of research was employed to study the variables. Results of the study revealed that adolescents experiencing high and low parental control differ significantly on purpose of using internet. However no significant effect was observed for other independent variables viz., psychological hardiness and peer relationships on purpose of using internet of adolescents.

Keywords: Parental psychological control, psychological hardiness, peer relationships, Internet usage, adolescence.

Introduction

The increasing pervasiveness of the Internet in the lives of adolescents is by now well established. But there remains a dearth of research on what exactly youth are doing when they are online, with whom, and why—and moreover, how these aspects of Internet use may be related to young people's well-being and development (Lam, 2010). Media reports on incidences of abuse on the internet, particularly among teenagers are growing at an alarming rate causing much concern among parents of teenagers (Sengupta & Chaudhari, 2008). Various techniques (installing filtering/ blocking software) are in much vogue among the educated and digitally literate parents to monitor and restrict the internet activities of their children. But in case of developing country like India, children are generally more technologically savvy than parents. Therefore parents may have to resort to monitoring or socially prohibiting the children so as to protect the children from the potential dangers of internet.

Parental Psychological Control

Since the 1990s, developmental research has shown a strong interest in the construct of parental psychological control, a parenting dimension characteristic of parents who pressure their children to comply with their own agenda through insidious and manipulative tactics (Barber, 1996). Such tactics include guilt induction, shaming, and love withdrawal (i.e. making parental care contingent upon the child's compliance to parental demands). Although parents may not always be consciously aware of their own use of psychological control, psychologically controlling tactics coerce children into compliance by appealing to internally pressuring feelings in children's functioning, such as shame, guilt, pride, and separation anxiety (Barber et al., 1996). Parental psychological control has been shown to predict a variety of adjustment problems and internalizing problems particular in children and adolescents. Research has shown positive associations between psychological control and depression (Barber et al., 1996) and low self-esteem (Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyten, Duriez & Goossens, 2005).

Internet Usage

Internet has a double-edged sword characteristic for children. Internet not only provides significant benefits for children, such as research access, socialization, entertainment, and a communication tool with families, but it also connotes negative aspects such as violence, pornography, hate sites, isolation, predators, and commercialism. There



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is an increasing concern among educators about the negative effects of using the Internet on adolescents (Cheon, 2005) Therefore, it becomes essential to study the purpose for which youth access internet and factors which may affect their usage.

Psychological Hardiness:

The concept of hardiness dates back to 1975 when Salvatore R. Maddi, founder of the hardiness concept, began his research at Illinois Bell Telephone Company. Defining three components of hardiness Maddi (2007) says –

1. A person high in commitment thinks of themselves and their environment as interesting and worthwhile and thus can find something in whatever they are doing that is their curiosity and it seems meaningful.
2. Persons high in control believe that they can, through effects have an influence on what goes on around them.
3. And persons high in challenge believe that what improves their lives is growth through learning rather than easy comfort and security.

Peer Relationships

Peers are children of about the same age or maturity level. They fill a unique role in child's development. One of the most important functions is to provide a source of information and comparison about the world outside the family. Children receive feedback about their abilities from their peer group. They evaluate what they do in terms of whether it is better than, as good as, or worse than what other children do (Santrock, 2008).

Review of Literature

Li, Li, and Newman (2013) found negative relationship between behavioural control (in terms of parental restriction) and problematic internet use. Positive relationship was observed between parental control (love withdrawal) and Problematic Internet Use. Further analysis revealed non-significant effects of guilt induction and authority assertion (another component of parental control) on problematic internet use.

A study by Davis (2012) revealed that online peer communications helps in the inculcation of sense of belongingness and self disclosure with peers. It was also found that adolescents' offline relationships also influence their online relationships to a great extent. Face book, or instant messaging provides the adolescents the opportunity to stay connected with their friends and gives them a sense of belongingness.

Huang, Unger, Soto, Fujimoto, Pentz, Jordan-Marsh, and Valente (2014) found that peers significantly influence the various drinking and smoking habits of adolescents. The study has revealed direct impact of risky online content on adolescents' risk behaviours and its significant interaction with risk behavior of their friends.

Kaur and Singh (2011) Found that home environment can play a significant role in developing hardiness level and creativity among adolescents. Creative adolescents having more protectiveness and permissiveness component of home environment possess high level of hardiness than their counterparts with low level of these home environment dimensions.

Maddi, Erwin, Carmody, Villarreal, White, and Gundersen (2013) reported that psychological hardiness emerged as a significant negative predictor of internet addiction Results also showed that hardiness was a better protective factor against gambling.

Rationale for the Study

In our country, there has been an exponential growth in the number of young internet users during the past decade. Research studies have shown that overwhelming presence of technology in the lives of adolescents may have negative impact on teenager's well being in terms of increased loneliness, anxiety, loss of real life friends (Hardie & Tee, 2007), (Eedogan 2008), (Serin, 2011), (Bhagat, 2012). The situation becomes worse if the parents/ guardians of adolescents are not much techno-savvy. They are unable to check the internet activities of their wards. During adolescence, most of the time is spent with the peers then with any other group. Parents directly influence adolescents' selection of peer group and clique influence and membership (Noller, 1994.) Research studies have shown that sometimes close intimate relationships formed online sometimes may transform into close relationships in real life (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002). While reviewing the literature investigator came across many studies, which discussed the variable under consideration in isolation (Kiran Esan, 2010) found that internet addiction is directly related to peer pressure, higher the peer pressure, internet addiction increases. Offline peer relationships may extend into the on-line domain (Mikami et al., 2010). Velcke et al. (2009) found that parenting styles significantly affects internet usage of children. Lowest internet usage is perceived when parents adopt an authoritarian style. Subramanian et al., 2009 found that poor peer relations tend to have very low correlation with hardiness. Therefore inconsistent and contradictory results of the research studies probed the investigator to carry out the research to find the intricate relationships between the variables of parental control, purpose of using internet of adolescents, in relation to their peer relationships and psychological hardiness.

Method of the Study

The present study employed descriptive exploratory method of research. This method enabled the researcher to study the impact of independent variables viz., parental psychological control, Psychological hardiness, Peer relationships on the dependent variable, internet usage. The present study employed a 2x2x2 factorial design wherein the data was analysed through 2x2x2 ANOVA. Following Following 8 groups were identified and analysed through ANOVA

Group I: HPC/HPH/WPR

Group II: HPC/HPH/HPR

Group III: HPC/LPH/WPR

Group IV: HPC/LPH/HPR

Group V: LPC/HPH/WPR

Group VI: LPC/HPH/HPR

Group VII: LPC/LPH/WPR

Group VIII: LPC/LPH/HPR

Asian Resonance

Sample

For the current investigation, Stratified Random sampling technique was employed for selecting the representative student sample from the sampling frame of 7 selected schools. 600 students of eleventh class were selected randomly

Tools

1. Parental psychological control scale (PPC scale) developed by the investigator.
2. Internet usage questionnaire Developed by the investigator
3. Psychological Hardiness scale by Noavck (1990) adapted by the investigator
4. Peer Relationships questionnaire (Gay & Armesden, 1990) adapted by the investigator.

Statistical Techniques Used

1. Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD)
2. Inferential statistics includes ANOVA, t test
3. Significant F ratios were followed by t test wherever required

Delimitations of The Study

1. The sample was taken from government model senior secondary schools of U.T. Chandigarh only.
2. The sample consisted of 600 adolescents both boys and girls of class IX only.
3. Adolescents belonging to intact families only were selected in the final sample.
4. From the inventory of parent and peer attachment, only peer version was used to assess peer relationships of the adolescents.

Hypotheses

H₀ 1 There is no significant difference between adolescents with high and low parental control with respect to their scores on purpose of using internet.

H₀ 2 There is no significant difference between adolescents with high and low psychological hardiness with respect to their scores on purpose of using internet

H₀ 3 There is no significant difference between adolescents with warm and hostile peer relationships with respect to their scores on purpose of using internet.

H₀ 4 There is no significant interaction between parental control and psychological hardiness to yield differences in the scores on purpose of using internet.

H₀ 5 There is no significant interaction between parental control and peer relationships to yield differences in their scores on purpose of using internet.

H₀ 6 There is no significant interaction between and psychological hardiness and peer relationships to yield differences in the scores on purpose of using internet.

H₀ 7 There is no significant interaction between parental control, psychological hardiness and peer relationships to yield differences in their scores on purpose of using internet.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1 Descriptive analysis on purpose of using internet scores of Internet usage

Groups	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VII
Mean	27.19	31.73	32	26.77	27.97	21	26	22.24
SD	8.59	7.34	7.4	10.06	7	6.033	8.96	11.41

Table 2: 2 ×2×2 Anova on 'Purpose of using internet' scores of various groups

Source of variation	S.S.	Df	M.S.	F
Main Effects	754.799	1	745.799	9.732
A. Parental Control (High/Low)				**
B. Psychological Hardiness (High/Low)	1.383	1	1.383	.018
C. Peer Relationships (W/Hst)	231.405	1	231.405	3.020
Two Order Interactions:	.593	1	.593	.008
Parental Control* Psychological Hardiness (A*B)				
Parental Control* Peer Relationships (A*C)	179.146	1	179.146	2.338
Psychological Hardiness * Peer Relationships (B*C)	76.65	1	76.65	1.00
3 order interaction	298.800	1	298.800	3.899
Parental Control* Psychological Hardiness* Peer Relationships (A*B*C)				
Error	10498.367	137	76.630	
Total	116774.00			

Table 3: Mean and SD of adolescents with high and low parental control

Variable	N	Mean	SD
HPC	157	27.32	8.964
LPC	162	24.51	7.489

Table 2 shows that F ratio for the differences in the total scores on 'purpose of using internet' of adolescents with high and low parental control was found to be significant at 0.01 LOC which means that two groups of adolescents differ significantly from each other on 'purpose of using internet' beyond the contribution of chance. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected at the specified level. So we may infer that means of two groups of adolescents on 'purpose of using internet' may not be considered equal. An examination of the means of two groups (Table 3) reveals that adolescents with high parental control has higher mean (27.32) than adolescents with low parental control (24.51).

A glance at the table 2 shows non-significant results with respect to effect of Psychological hardiness and peer relationships on purpose of using internet of adolescents. Therefore the corresponding hypotheses 2 and 3 were not rejected at the specified level. Similarly

second order interaction and three order interaction between the independent variables of Parental control, Psychological Hardiness and Peer relationships was not found to be statistically significant. Therefore the corresponding hypotheses H0: 4,5,6,7 were not rejected at the specified level.

Discussion of the results

Results of the study showed that parental control significantly affects the purpose with which adolescents use the internet. Adolescents experiencing high control from parents were found to be using internet extensively for different purposes. The results are in line with the study conducted by Xiuqin, Huimin, Mengchen, Jinan, Ying, and Ran (2010). A study by Park (2011) reveals that Parents' active involvement can reduce the risks of internet use, not only in terms of time spent online but also the type of content children get exposed to. Therefore parents instead of exercising psychological control on the adolescents to check their internet activities, should use more friendly and justified methods. Because researches also have proved that it has negative effect on psyche of the children. Adolescents may at times become rebellion and may not comply with parental attempts to curb their internet activities.

Conclusion

At last we can conclude that parents exercise a significant influence on the lives of their wards. Instead of adopting a parenting style such as psychological control which disturbs the mental peace of the adolescents. They can use a more democratic method of parenting style so that adolescents may share their worries and anxieties with them. This will surely result in the judicious use of different applications of internet.

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