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Research Article

LIFE SKILLS OF ADOLESCENTS ACCORDING TO INTERNET USAGE

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Abstract

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development that generally begins with the onset of physiologically normal puberty to the age of legal adulthood. This period of development corresponds roughly to the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years, which is consistent with the World Health Organization's definition of 'adolescence'. During this period adolescents need life skills to face the realities of life. Life skills help the young people to take positive actions to protect themselves and to promote health and meaningful social relationship. Social media like internet is playing a major role in maintaining social relations by becoming an integral part of many adolescents' lives. The Internet can be known as a kind of global meeting place where people from all parts of the world can come together. The present study was conducted to assess the life skills of adolescents according to the usage of internet. The sample were adolescent students studying 7th, 8th and 9th standards in Chittoor district. Multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data. In the first stage, one private and one Govt. school were identified randomly from four towns of Chittoor district Viz., Chittoor, Madanapalle, Srikalahasti and Tirupati. In the next stage 7th, 8th and 9th standard students were selected from each school giving equal choice to girls and boys using systematic random sampling technique. Thus, 90 students from each school, 180 students from each town and 720 from four towns constituted the sample of data collection. The tools used were Internet Usage Questionnaire and Life Skills Self Rating Scale. Adolescents differed significantly in their life skills score based on their internet usage. Comparatively low internet users have more life skills score than heavy internet users. Results also revealed that there was significant negative correlation between amount of time spent in internet usage and life skills scores of adolescents.

Key words: Adolescents; Life skills; internet usage

Introduction

Adolescent is a transitional stage of development from childhood to adulthood. This period is characterized with dramatic changes in physiological, social, emotional and cognitive aspects. According to World Health Organization (WHO) adolescence covers the period of the life between ten and eighteen years of age (www.who.int/en).

Adolescence is also an important phase of transition which lays for future success in directions including not only academics but also life skills. During adolescent period the students develop skills that will help them to grow into caring and responsible adults. WHO has defined life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". UNICEF, defined life skills as, "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills". Thus, life skills are essentially those abilities that help to promote mental wellbeing and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. WHO and UNICEF have identified a

core set of ten major life skills. The ten core life skills are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective-communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress, and coping with emotions. With these life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others. Developing life skills helps adolescents in translating knowledge, attitude and values into healthy behavior that makes their life fruitful. Life skills also help in empowering girls by imparting healthy reproductive behavior and helping them to avoid risks and to make appropriate decisions at the right time (WHO, 1996).

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link several billion devices worldwide. It is an international network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government packet switched networks, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking

technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents and applications of the World Wide Web (WWW), the infrastructure to support email, and peer-to-peer networks for file sharing and telephony (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet>).

Overall Internet usage has seen tremendous growth. From 2000 to 2009, the number of Internet users globally rose from 394 million to 1.858 billion. By 2010, 22 percent of the world's population had access to computers with 1 billion Google searches every day, 300 million Internet users reading blogs, and 2 billion videos viewed daily on YouTube (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/internet>).

Ninety-one percent of adolescents in the United States report occasional or daily Internet use (Gross, 2004). While there are great benefits to Internet use, adolescent online interpersonal communications are arousing great public concern. Specifically there is concern over giving out personal information and interacting with strangers.

Life skills help to tackle issues of adjustment, influence of mass media etc. If present day adolescents are well equipped with life skills there is no need for parents, teachers and educators to worry more about internet use of adolescents. With this background the present study was conducted to know the relationship between internet usage and life skills with the following objectives.

Objectives

- To measure life skills among adolescents according to grade, gender and type of school studied.
- To find out internet browsing time of adolescents according to grade, gender, and type of school studied.
- To find out significant difference between heavy and light internet using adolescents and their life skills.
- To find out significant association among adolescents internet using and life skills.
- Based on the above objectives the following null hypotheses were framed.

Hypothesis

- Adolescents did not differ in their life skills scores according to age, gender and type of school.
- Adolescents did not differ in their internet browsing time according to grade, gender and type of school.
- Heavy and light internet using adolescents did not differ significantly in their life skills scores.
- There is exists no relation between internet using time of adolescents and their life skills.

Methodology

Sample

The sample were adolescent students studying 7th, 8th and 9th standards in Chittoor district. Multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data. In the first stage one private and one Govt. school were identified randomly from four towns of Chittoor district Viz., Chittoor, Madanapalle, Srikalahasti and Tirupati. In the next stage 7th, 8th and 9th standard students were selected from each school giving equal choice to girls and boys using systematic random sampling technique. Thus, 90 students from each school, 180 students from each town and 720 from four towns constituted the sample of data collection.

Tools used

- The sample students were interviewed using Internet Usage Questionnaire to find out their internet browsing behavior and general information.
- Life skills self-rating scale (LSSRS) developed by Anuradha (2009) was used to assess life skills of the sample.

Results and Discussion

The data was pooled and subjected to suitable statistical analysis. Table 1 shows the distribution of sample according to Life skills Scores across age, gender and type of school.

From Table 1 it is clear that the life skills scores of adolescents increased with the increase of age. Comparatively boys have more life skills than girls. Children studying in private schools have more life skills than the government schools.

Table 2 shows the distribution of total sample according to internet usage and place of residence. From Table 2 it is known that out of 720 sample 45 per cent were using Internet and 55 per cent of sample adolescents were not at all using any Internet. Among those using internet (n=324), comparatively boys were using internet more than girls. In all towns more than 60 per cent of boys were using internet whereas only around a quarter of girl students were using Internet. Subrahmanyam *et al.* (2001a) found that boys were heavier users of the Internet in comparison to girls during adolescence.

As a next step of analysis the data was further treated into different groups to perform statistical tests.

The mean internet usage time is 674.81 minutes (S.D. 184.413).

Table 1: Distribution of sample according to Life skills Scores across Age, Gender and Type of School

S. N.	Variables	Life Skills Scores of sample Adolescents							
		Chittoor		Madanapalle		Srikalahasti		Tirupati	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	Grades								
1	7 th Std	152	19	150	12	135	23	152	14
	8 th Std	149	20	159	21	141	25	153	20
	9 th Std	156	17	161	22	154	27	154	18
	Gender								
2	Boys (n=240)	153	18	156	15	144	28	155	18
	Girls (n=84)	151	20	152	29	144	22	150	17
	Type of School								
3	Govt (n=106)	148	19	156	11	142	37	155	24
	Private (n=218)	155	18	154	23	145	21	152	14

Table 2: Distribution of Sample According to Internet Usage and Place of Residence

S. N.	Place of residence	Gender	Usage of Internet				Total
			Not using		Using		
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1	Chittoor	Boys	36	40.0	54	60.0	90
		Girls	72	80.0	18	20.0	90
2	Madanapalle	Boys	32	35.6	58	64.4	90
		Girls	68	75.6	22	24.4	90
3	Srikalahasti	Boys	38	42.2	52	57.8	90
		Girls	71	78.9	19	21.1	90
4	Tirupati	Boys	14	15.6	76	84.4	90
		Girls	65	72.2	25	27.8	90
Total			396	55.0	324	45.0	720

Based on the amount of time spent in internet browsing the sample adolescents were divided into heavy and light internet users considering Mean and SD.

Table 3 shows the sample distribution of sample according to grade, gender and type of school. From the table it is clear that comparatively more number of boys were heavy internet users than girls. Similarly children studying in private schools were heavy internet users than the government school children. Subrahmanyam *et al.*, (2001b) reported that, among youth from ages 10 to 19, more boys than girls were active users of the Internet and spent more time with it.

Gencer and Koc (2012) found that internet abuse differed significantly based on gender and perceived academic achievement, place and frequency of internet use and on the contrary no significant differences were found based on perceived socio-economic status and type of school attended.

To test the significant difference between heavy and light internet using adolescents and their life skills scores t-test was conducted and results were presented in Table 4.

It divulges from Table 4 that adolescents differed significantly in their life skills score based on their internet usage. The t- value is significant at 0.001 levels. Comparatively low internet users have more life skills score than heavy users. Hence, there is a need to consider heavy internet using adolescents with poor life skills scores. They can be trained through life skills education as adolescent can be trained in life skills.

To find out the significant correlation between internet using time of adolescents and their Life Skills Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of correlation (r) was computed and presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that there is significant negative correlation between amount of time spent in internet usage and life skills scores of adolescents. Students with poor life skills have been spending more time in internet usage. This call for attention and the students should be trained to overcome the negative impact of internet.

Table 3: Distribution of Sample According to Light and Heavy Internet Users Across Grades, Gender and Type of School

S. N.	Variables	Type of Internet users							
		Chittoor		Madanapalle		Srikalahasti		Tirupati	
		Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy
Grades									
1.	7 th Std	2	11	5	9	8	2	19	5
	8 th Std	6	19	9	20	16	9	28	0
	9 th Std	14	20	8	29	26	10	13	16
Gender									
2.	Boys (n=240)	7	47	5	53	32	20	50	26
	Girls (n=84)	15	3	17	5	8	1	20	5
Type of School									
3.	Govt (n=106)	4	15	5	23	16	7	29	7
	Private (n=218)	18	35	17	35	34	14	41	24

Table 4: Life Skills of Adolescents According to Internet Use and t-value

S. N.	Type of internet usage by the sample	Life Skills				t-test (P<0.001)
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
1	Light users	164	159.96	14.274	1.115	7.889**
2	Heavy Users	160	143.14	23.177	1.832	

Table 5: Correlation between Amount of Time Spent in Internet Browsing and Life Skills Score of Adolescents

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlation co-efficient (r)
Amount of time spent in internet usage (n=324)	674.81	184.413	-.433**
Life Skill Score(n=324)	151.65	20.934	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

- Comparatively boys have more life skills than girls. Children studying in private schools have more life skills than the government schools.
- In all four major towns of Chittoor district more than 60 per cent of boys were using internet whereas only around a 25 per cent of girl students were using internet.
- Children studying in private schools were heavy internet users than the government school children.
- Adolescents differed significantly in their life skills scores based on their internet usage. Comparatively low internet users have more life skills score than heavy users. Hence, there is a need to consider heavy internet using adolescents with poor life skills scores.
- There is significant negative correlation between amount of time spent in internet usage and life skills scores of adolescents.

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