

## Internet Usage and Life Skills among Adolescents in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development which corresponds roughly to the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years. 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 present study was conducted to assess the life skills of adolescents according to the usage of internet. The sample were adolescent students studying 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and Junior Intermediate 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 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and Junior Intermediate students were selected from each school giving equal choice to girls and boys using systematic random sampling technique. Thus, 120 students from each school, 240 students from each town and 960 from four towns constituted the sample of data collection. The sample students (N=960) were administered with General Information Schedule and Internet usage Questionnaire. In the next stage students who were identified as using internet were selected purposively from the four towns of Chittoor District and thus for final study the sample comprised of 468 students (327 boys and 141 girls) and they were administered with 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:** Internet usage, adolescents, life skills.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Internet has now become an integral part of daily life and the number of internet users has been increasing across the globe. In the past few decades the dramatic entry of the Internet into major avenues in Indian context also has aroused interest and concern about the usage of electronic networks by different populations and especially its usage among children and adolescents has been of concern to parents, educators and psychologists. Students use internet for variety of purposes like entertainment and communication as well as education. To connect with their peers students use a variety of internet applications such as emails, instant messaging, face book, twitter etc., Despite the increasing interest of educators in Internet usage by high school students, many questions such as the purpose, the extent, the patterns of use, gender differences, need to be answered and research in these components is still limited. As excessive internet usage among adolescents has been gradually increasing in Indian context, it is necessary to begin to examine the internet browsing behavior of adolescents [1].

During adolescent period the students need to develop skills that will help them to solve day to day problems and challenges, to grow into caring and responsible adults with psycho-social skills and positive and adaptive behaviour. 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”. 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.

Adolescents are considered to be productive members of a society due to their physical and intellectual capacity. But unfortunately most of the adolescents are unable to utilize their potential to maximum. Due to lack of life skills students are engaging in anti-social activities and spoiling their life. To make life of adolescents valuable and to convert them to individuals with high potential, educational system should be reformed giving due importance to life skill education. [2]. If today’ adolescents are trained with life skills for proper usage of internet they may not fall in scapegoat of cyber bullying and online addiction. Therefore, assessment of life skills helps to understand the range of life skills present among adolescents, and also to provide life skills education in the areas where they have poor skills.

With this background the present study was planned with the following objectives

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To find out internet browsing time of adolescents according to gender, grade and Birth order.
- To measure life skills among adolescents according to gender, grade and Birth order
- To classify students as heavy and light internet users based on internet usage time.
- To assess the relationship between Life Skills scores and internet usage time of sample adolescents.

Based on the above objectives the following null hypotheses were framed.

#### **HYPOTHESES**

- Sample students did not differ in their internet browsing time according to gender, grade and Birth order.
- Sample students did not differ in their life skills scores according to gender, grade and Birth order.
- Heavy and light internet using adolescents did not differ significantly in their life skills scores.
- There was no significant correlation between internet usage time and Life skills scores of sample adolescents.

#### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

##### **Sample**

The samples of the study were adolescents who were studying 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and intermediate (plus one) in Government and Private schools/colleges in Chittoor District. Multi stage stratified random sampling technique and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample. In the first stage one private and one Govt. school/ College were identified randomly from four towns of Chittoor district Viz., Chittoor, Madanapalle, Srialahasti and Tirupati. In the next stage students from 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard and Junior intermediate were selected from each institution using systematic random sampling technique giving equal choice to girls and boys. Thus, 120 Students (30 boys and 30 girls from government 30 boys and 30 girls from Private schools) from each grade and 240 students from each town and 960 from four towns constituted the sample of data collection.

Table-1 shows distribution of students across grades and towns of Chittoor District

Table-1 Grade Wise and Locale Wise Distribution of Sample Students

S.no	Place of Residence	Standard of Study																Total
		7th class				8th class				9th class				Intermediate				
		Govt. School		Pvt. School		Govt. School		Pvt. School		Govt. School		Pvt. School		Govt. School		Pvt. School		
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
1	Chittoor	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	240
2	Madanapalle	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	240
3	Srikalahasti	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	240
4	Tirupati	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	240
	Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	960

The sample students (N=960) were administered with General Information Schedule and Internet usage Questionnaire. In the next stage students who were identified as using internet were selected purposively from the four towns of Chittoor District and thus for final study the sample comprised of 468 students (327 boys and 141 girls) who were using internet.

### Tools

#### 1. General Information Schedule and Internet Usage Questionnaire

This schedule includes personal and demographic information about students, and their parents. Questions related to internet use, kind of internet connection, hours of spending in internet over a week, purpose of usage of internet, awareness of internet services, programmes browsed etc., were included.

#### 2. Life Skills Self-Rating Scale (LSSRS) (Anuradha 2014).

Life Skills Self Rating Scale (LSSRS) developed by Anuradha (2014) was used to assess life skills of the sample. The LSSR scale was developed with 100 items and after item analysis the scale has 65 items and reliability and validity were established.

**Scoring:** Every question had 3 response options on a three point scale ranging from 'Mostly', 'Sometimes', and 'Never'. The minimum possible score was 65 and maximum 195.

**Rationale:** Greater score on LSSRS indicates that adolescent have good life skills and vice versa.

**Reliability:** Test-Rest reliability was established and the reliability co-efficient for all ten areas and total score was found to be above 0.75 and were found to be significant.

**Validity:** The tool was given to experts in the fields of Psychology, Human Development and Education and content validity was established.

#### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on a small sample of forty students studying 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> grades and Junior inter in schools and colleges in Tirupati town to know the suitability of tools. These samples for pilot study were not included in final study.

#### Data Collection

To assess the actual internet usage of sample students, the investigator personally interviewed and questions related to their internet browsing time for the previous one week were probed through recall method. The students were given with diaries to record their internet browsing time over a week period. The students were encouraged to provide more realistic data and they were asked to record their internet browsing in the diaries and it was assured that the data they provide will be maintained with confidentiality.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was pooled, coded and subjected to suitable statistical analysis. The results were discussed in the following tables-

As the browsing time of sample students varied on school days and holidays, average browsing time over a week period was calculated. The mean internet browsing time of students obtained through internet usage questionnaire was 649.57 minutes per week with S.D of 157.08. This shows that the students were spending nearly nine to ten hours per

week in internet browsing. The internet browsing time of students was also obtained through recording in a diary over a week period by the students. Average time obtained through diary method was 708.42 minutes (S.D=215.03). Table 2 shows the correlation of internet viewing time given by the students through interview and diary methods. Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation (r) was computed between the time spent in internet given by students through interview and diary methods and presented in Table 2.

**Table-2 Mean Internet Browsing Time and Coefficient of Correlation between Interview and Diary Methods**

S. No.	Description	Mean	S.D	Coefficient of Correlation (r)
1	Interview method	649.57	157.08	0.897**
2	Diary method	708.42	215.03	

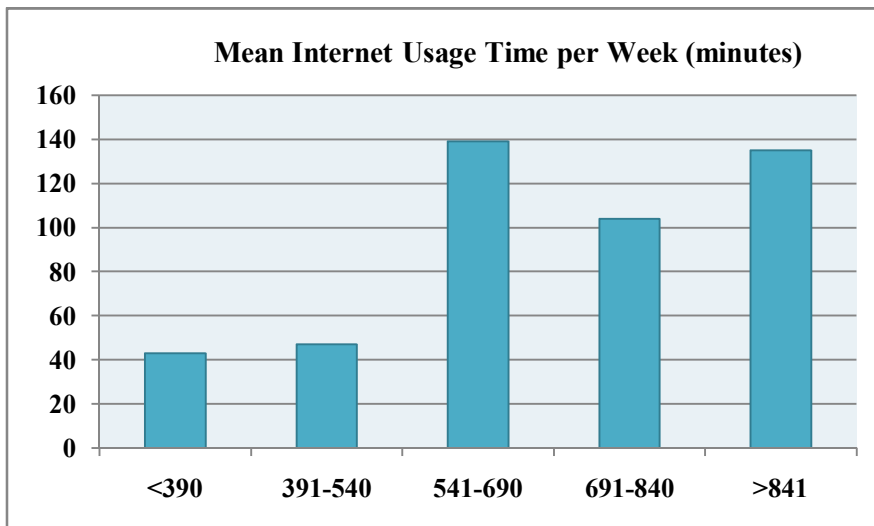
From table, it is evident that there was high degree correlation (0.897) between internet browsing time given by students through interview and diary methods. Hence, average of these was calculated and it was found to be 678.99 (S.D=186.05). This has been used as internet browsing time for further analysis.

Table 3 and Fig. 1 show the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics of internet usage time of the sample students after taking average time obtained through interview and diary methods.

**Table – 3 Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Internet Usage Time Per Week (minutes) of Sample Students**

Internet Usage Time Per Week (Minutes)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<390	43	9.2	9.2
391-540	47	10.0	19.2
541-690	139	29.7	48.9
691-840	104	22.2	71.2
>841	135	28.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Mean – 678.99; S.D. – 186.05; Median – 700, Skewness – 0.422; Minimum – 240, Maximum-980, Range - 740



**Graph 1 Mean Internet Usage Time per Week (minutes)**

From table 3 and graph 1 it is evident that the mean internet usage time of sample students was 678.99 minutes per week (S.D. =186.05) which means the sample students were spending around 11 hours per week in internet browsing. Govindappa (2017) in a study

reported that mean time spent on internet use by adolescents in the previous week was 6 hours. The average time spent in internet browsing by the students was more than that reported.

### Mean Life Skills Scores of Sample Students

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution and descriptive statistics of life skills scores of sample students.

**Table 4 Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of Life Skills Scores of Sample Students**

Life Skills Scores	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
<110	18	3.8	3.8
111-130	16	3.4	7.3
131-150	95	20.3	27.6
151-170	200	42.7	70.3
>171	139	29.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Mean = 156.14; S.D. = 19.74; Median = 60; Skewness = 1.447; Minimum = 70; Maximum = 186

From table 4 it is evident that the majority of sample students (200) fell in the range of average life skills scores.

To test the hypotheses framed for the study t-tests and correlation tests were conducted and presented below.

The first hypothesis framed was "Sample students did not differ in their internet browsing time according to gender, grade, and Birth order".

Table-5 shows mean internet usage time of sample students who were using internet according to student variables and t/f values (n=468)

**Table -5 Mean Internet Usage time of Sample Students according to Students' Gender, Grade, Birth Order and t/f values(N=468)**

S. No	Student Variables	Internet Usage time per week (Minutes)		t/f values
		Mean	S.D	
1.	<b>Gender</b>			5.178** P<.000
	Boys (n=327)	710.24	169.27	
	Girls (n=141)	606.52	202.93	
2.	<b>Grade/Class</b>			1.602@ P<0.188
	7th class (n=61)	658.68	189.91	
	8th class (n=117)	653.93	189.96	
	9th class (n=146)	698.28	175.91	
	Intermediate (n=144)	688.40	190.02	
3.	<b>Birth Order</b>			1.147@ P<0.330
	Single child (n=94)	705.85	183.73	
	First child (n=191)	675.39	182.42	
	Second child(n=159)	673.96	191.29	
	Third child and above (n=24)	635.83	186.84	

@ - Not significant

\*- Significant at 0.05 level

\*\* - Significant at 0.01 level

- same notations are followed throughout the report.

From the table 5 it is clear that boys and girls differed significantly in internet usage time. The t-value was 5.178, significant at 0.000 level. Comparatively boys were spending more time in internet usage (mean=710.24; SD=169.27) than girls (mean=606.52; SD=202.93). Chen and Fu [5] also reported that male and female students differed in their patterns of Internet use. It was also reported that Internet abuse differed significantly based on gender [6]. Providing life skills education helps students to use internet wisely and also to protect them from abuse related to internet usage.

When grade of sample students was considered comparatively students who were studying in Intermediate were spending more time in internet usage followed by students studying in 7th and 8th grades. However, the f-value was not significant.

When birth order was considered comparatively students who were single children in the family were spending more time on internet (mean=705.85; SD=183.73) than children who were having siblings. As number of families have been limiting their family size with single child this data calls for more attention. As the child has no siblings to play or interact more single children seems to be spending time in internet usage. However, f-value was not significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis was partially accepted and it can be said that *sample students differed significantly in their internet usage according to gender but not according to grade and birth order.*

The next hypothesis framed was “*Sample students did not differ significantly in their life skills scores according to gender, grade and birth order*”

To test the hypothesis t/f tests were conducted and table 6 shows the mean life skills scores of sample students according to students’ gender, *grade and birth order*

**Table –6 Mean Life Skills Scores of Sample Students according to Students’Gender, Grade,Birth Orderand t/f values**

S. No	Student Variables	Life Skills Scores		t/f values
		Mean	S.D.	
1.	<b>Gender</b>			1.260@ P<0.208
	Boys (n=327)	156.90	20.34	
	Girls (n=141)	154.39	18.23	
2.	<b>Grade/Class</b>			21.106** P<0.000
	7th class (n=61)	149.28	20.88	
	8th class (n=117)	153.48	21.30	
	9th class (n=146)	154.42	18.82	
	Intermediate (n=144)	166.00	12.71	
3.	<b>Birth Order</b>			4.549** P<0.001
	Single child (n=94)	161.93	17.40	
	First child (n=191)	156.41	20.78	
	Second child (n=159)	152.60	19.16	
	Third child and above (n=24)	154.79	19.35	

It is observed from table 6 that there was no significant gender difference in the life skills scores of sample students. The t-value was not significant. Reported studies also showed no significant difference between boys and girls in life skills [1, 3, 7]. When grade of the sample students was considered the students differed significantly in life skills scores according to grade of study. The f-value was 21.106 which was significant at 0.001 level. As the grade of study increased the life skills scores of students also increased.

With regard to the birth order, students who were single child in the family scored more life skills scores than the students who have siblings. Arati chakra (2016) reported that order of birth had significant influence on interpersonal dimensions of life skills but number of siblings has no significant influence on core affective life skills.

Hence, the null hypothesis was partially rejected, and it can be said that sample ***students differed significantly in their life skills scores according to grade and birth order but did not differ according to their gender.***

The third hypothesis framed was “*Heavy and light internet using adolescents did not differ significantly in their life skills scores*”.

Considering the Mean  $\pm$ 1 S.D, of internet usage time, the sample students were categorized as heavy and light internet users.

To know the significant difference between heavy and light internet users and their life skills scores t-test was conducted.

Table 7 shows the mean difference of heavy and light internet users and life skills scores.

**Table – 7. Means and S.D's of Life skills scores of Heavy and Light Internet Users**

S. No	Type of internet usage by the sample	Life Skills Scores			
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
1	Light Internet Users	242	159.371	14.719	3.704** P<0.000
2	Heavy Internet Users	226	152.694	23.544	

It divulges from table 7 that the sample students differed significantly in their life skills score based on their internet usage. The t- value was highly significant. Comparatively students who were categorized as light internet users have more life skills scores than students who were categorized as heavy internet users.

Therefore, the null hypothesis “heavy and light internet using adolescents did not differ significantly in their life skills scores” was rejected and it can be said that students differed significantly in their life skills scores according to their internet usage.

The fourth hypothesis framed was “There was no significant correlation between internet usage time and Life skills scores of sample adolescents”

To test the above hypothesis Karl Pearson’s co-efficient of correlation (r) was computed between internet usage time and life skills scores, and results are presented in table 8.

**Table - 8 Correlation between Internet Usage Time and Life Skills Score of Sample Students**

S. No.	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlation co-efficient (r)
1	Life Skills Score	156.147	19.749	-0.210** P<0.000
2	Internet Usage Time (minutes)	678.995	186.059	

It is known from table 8 that there was significant negative correlation between life skills score and student’s internet usage time. The r-value was significant ( $r = 0.210$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and it can be said that there was significant correlation between internet usage time and Life skills scores of sample adolescents.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The mean internet usage time of sample students was 678.99 minutes per week (S.D. =186.05) which means the adolescents were spending around 11 hours per week in internet browsing.
- The mean Life Skills scores of sample students was 156.14 (S.D. = 19.74).
- Sample students differed significantly in their internet usage according to gender but not according to grade and birth order.
- *Comparatively boys were spending more time than girls.*
- Sample students differed significantly in their life skills scores according to grade and birth order but did not differ according to their gender.
- *As the grade of study increased life skills score also increased.*
- Sample students differed significantly in their life skills scores according to internet usage time.
- *Comparatively students who were categorized as light internet users have more life skills scores than students who were categorized as heavy internet users.*
- There was significant negative correlation between internet usage time and Life skills scores of sample students.

## IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study had shown that adolescents have been spending reasonably good amount of time in browsing internet. The time spent by them may be increased with phenomenal growth of internet availability in recent times. Hence, parents, teachers and educators must be surveillance about student’s internet usage. The study has shown that heavy internet users have comparatively less life skills score than students who were light internet users. There was negative correlation between internet usage and life skills scores. The students with poor life skills who were heavy internet users may face troubles like addiction or poor academic performance. Reported studies also found that low internet users had lower emotional instability, lower chances of personality disintegration

and lower self-concept [8]. As it has been reported that life skills of students can be improved by proper education and training [4], training programmes can be planned at schools to educate adolescents to use internet in a more sensible way through life skills education.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the study were limited only to those students who were using internet. Hence, generalization of data cannot be made to all school going students. It is difficult to obtain the internet browsing time of students. Though, the investigator tried to get information by different methods like probing questions related to internet, collecting the information through diary recordings etc., the time mentioned by the students may not be the exact.

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