Research Article

Effect of Parenting Styles on Internet Addiction among Adolescents

Nimisha Shukla[a], Dr. Shikha Srivastava[b]

[a] Ph.D Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, School of Liberal Education, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, India

[b] Associate Professor, Department of Applied Psychology,School of Liberal Education, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, India

Abstract

Parents play a significant role in molding the behavior and attitude of their children. The present study aimed to investigate the effect of Parenting Styles on Internet Addiction among adolescents of Delhi, India. For this purpose, a sample of 200 adolescents was collected from Delhi using random sampling method, wherein, 100 adolescents were Internet Addicted and 100 were Non-addicted adolescents. The Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998) and the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991) were used to assess Internet Addiction and Parenting Style, respectively. The results indicated significant difference in the Authoritarian and Permissive Parenting Styles in both the groups – Internet addicted and Non-Addicted.

Keywords: internet addiction, adolescents, parenting styles

Introduction

During the last decade, there has been an enormous development and diffusion of new forms of Internet based services. In today's time people of all age range use and rely on internet for different purposes. In almost everything we do, we use the internet. It is used for online shopping, ticketing, instant messaging, banking, socializing, information surfing and even to order a pizza! We can't ignore the way this technology has transformed and revolutionized our way of living. However, there is a need to keep a check on the usage of this great technology as anything in excess can be harmful. The one section of the population that seems to the most vulnerable is adolescents. Without the right guidance and supervision, internet exposes children to the risk of Internet addiction. In the year 1995, Dr. Ivan Goldberg proposed the term "internet addiction" for pathological compulsive internet use. It is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviours regarding computer use and internet access that lead to impairment or distress. Internet addiction is considered a psychological problem worldwide because of its negative effect on behavior, such as preventing social interactions and reducing academic performance (Scherer, 1997; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2000; Young, 1998) impairing personal functions (Tsai & Lin, 2003), and harming personal relationships (Beard, 2002).

The prevalence of internet addiction among adolescents has been recognized globally. Various studies from India as well as abroad confirm the presence of addiction of internet among adolescents. Prabhakaran et al. (2016) checked the usage of internet and prevalence of internet addiction among students of Vadodara. The results highlighted that Internet use prevalence was found to be 98.9%, whereas, prevalence of addiction was 8.7%. A similar study was done by Vandana Chauhan, Balvinder Kaur & Ramesh Singh (2017) on 52 adolescents of Haridwar, Uttarakhand. As per the

results, 53.8% of the participants had moderate level of internet addiction and 7.7% had severe level of internet addiction.

Adolescence is a time of great change and challenge. During this tender age, parenting plays a significant role in molding the behavior and attitude of their children. In this transitional phase the Parenting style as practiced by the parents determines the amount of emotional warmth and control that is offered to the child. A lot of factors have been researched to have a relationship with internet addiction among adolescents. Parenting style is defined as a constellation of parents' attitudes and behaviors toward children and an emotional climate in which the parents' behaviors are expressed (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Parenting is classified into four types based on responsiveness and demandingness (Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1991). The four styles are – Authoritative parenting style characterized by high demandingness and high responsiveness; Authoritative parenting style characterized by high demandingness and low responsiveness; Permissive parenting style characterized by low demandingness and high responsiveness and Uninvolved parenting style characterized by low demandingness and low responsiveness. Studies have found significant relationship between the parenting styles and level of addiction. Elahe Sadat Tabatabaeirad & Afzal Akbari Balootbangan (2017) studied 400 high school students of Iran and found a positive correlation between the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and Internet addiction. Parents who are unconcerned by rules and grant their children complete freedom are more prone to Internet addiction (Chou & Lee, 2017; Eastin, Greenberg, & Hofschire, 2006). In another study, the authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting were found to be a high risk for the child's problematic internet use (Anandari R., 2016). In another research, Yi-Ping Hsieh et al., (2018) found authoritarian parenting to be positively associated with Internet addiction.

On the basis of previous research, it can be suggested that parenting style does play a significant role in Internet addiction among adolescents. However, with the aim to explore more on the topic in an area like Delhi the researcher planned and carried out the research.

Objective

The objective of the study was to understand the role of Parenting styles in Internet Addiction among Internet Addicted and Non Addicted adolescents of Delhi.

Methodology

A comparative study was conducted with a sample size of 200 adolescents of age group 15 to 17. Among these 200 respondents 100 were Internet Addicted adolescents and 100 were Non-addicted adolescents. The sample was selected using random sampling method from 4 different schools of Delhi. Permission was taken from the respective school authorities for data collection and subsequently consent was taken from the adolescents who were willing to participate in the research. The Internet Addiction Test (Young, 1998) was used for assessing the level of Internet Addiction and the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991) was used to assess Parenting Styles. The data was collected from 200 respondents and scored according to the manual. Descriptive statistics were applied to commute Mean and Standard Deviation (SD). In the present study, the most dominant and the least dominant parenting style in both the groups were taken into consideration and analysed further. Analysis of Variance was used to check the significance of difference with respect to Internet Addiction and Parenting Styles among the two groups – Internet Addicted and Non-Addicted. The data was compiled, tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 21.0.

Results And Discussion

In the present study out of the total 200 adolescents 100 (50%) adolescents were Internet Addicted and 100 (50%) were Non-Addicted adolescents. Among the 100 Internet-Addicted adolescents, 53

(53%) adolescents were male and 47 (47%) were female. Out of the 100 Non-Addicted adolescents, 41 (41%) of adolescents were male and 59 (59%) were female. The Internet Addiction and Parenting Styles were assessed using the above mentioned standardized tools.

Table-1(a)Mean score and SD score of the two groups: Internet Addicted Adolescents and Non-Addicted Adolescents on Internet Addiction Test

Group	N	Mean	SD
Internet Addicted	100	50.70	12.29
Non-Addicted	100	28.05	13.28

Table- 1(b) One Way ANOVA of Internet Addiction

	Sum OfSquare	*df*	*MeanSquare*	*F*	*Significance*
BetweenGroup	25651.12	1	25651.12	221.24	0.01
WithinGroups	22955.75	198	115.93		
Total	48606.875	199			

Table-1(a) shows that the mean score of Internet Addiction in Internet Addicted adolescents is 50.70 (SD = 12.29) and the mean score of Internet Addiction of Non-addicted adolescents is 28.05 (SD = 13.28). The mean difference was found to be 22.65.

In order to find out the significance of difference One Way ANOVA was applied. Table-1 (b) shows result of ANOVA which is significant at 0.01 level indicating significant difference between the means of the two groups on the level of addiction.

Furthermore, the mean scores indicate that on an average the internet addicted adolescents fall under the category of "Moderate level of Internet addiction" (IAT score 50-79) and Non-addicted adolescents fall under "Normal use of internet" (IAT score<31).

Table-2(a)Mean score and SD score of the two groups: Internet Addicted and Non-Addicted adolescents on Parenting Styles: Authoritarian and Permissive.

Parenting Style	Group	N	Mean	SD
Authoritarian	Internet Addicted	100	23.36	9.69
	Non-Addicted	100	30.02	8.47
Permissive	Internet Addicted	100	32.53	10.52
	Non-Addicted	100	24.05	11.26

Table-2(b) One Way ANOVA of Parenting Styles: Authoritarian and Permissive with respect to Internet Addicted and Non-Addicted adolescents

Parenting Styles		Sum ofSquare	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Authoritarian	BetweenGroup	2217.78	1	2217.78	26.76	0.01 (with p<.00001)
	WithinGroups	16407	198	82.86		
	Total	18624.78	199			
Permissive	BetweenGroup	3595.52	1	3595.52	30.24	0.01 (with p<.00001)
	WithinGroups	23535.66	198	118.86		
	Total	27131.18	199			

Table-2(a) indicates the results obtained on descriptive statistics on the parenting style Authoritarian and Permissive. The results show that Permissive parenting style is the most dominant parenting style in the Internet addicted group, whereas Authoritarian parenting style is observed to be the least dominant parenting style in the Internet addicted group. On the contrary, Authoritarian parenting style is seen to be the dominant parenting style in the Non-addicted group and Permissive parenting style is the least dominant parenting style in the said group.

For the Authoritarian parenting style, it is observed that the mean score of Non-addicted adolescents is 30.02 (SD=8.47) which is higher than the mean score of Internet addicted adolescents 23.36 (SD = 9.69). The mean difference was found to be 6.66 and the result of ANOVA indicates a significant difference between the Authoritarian parenting style of single child adolescents and non-single child adolescents at 0.01 level (Table-2(b)).

The high scores obtained by Non-addicted group on the Authoritarian parenting style depicts that their parents have a high control on their activities. Authoritarian parenting style is characterized by high control and low warmth. Parents practicing this parenting style are rigid, demanding and punitive. Children are not given the freedom to make their own choices and are bounded by rules, which in turn could be the reason for low internet usage among these adolescents. Low scores obtained by Internet addicted adolescents on this parenting style indicate children with authoritarian parents do not have an easy access to the internet. Shek et al. (2018) found a similar result in an investigation on how parental behavioral control predicted the level of internet addiction across adolescents of junior high school in Hong Kong and the results found negative association between parents' behavioral control with the initial level of internet addiction. Chien-Hsin Lin, Shong-Lin Lin & Chin-Pi Wu (2009), studied 1,289 adolescents and reported parental monitoring is a major inhibitor of Internet addiction. Behavioral control can be regarded as a protective factor for adolescent development, possibly by inhibiting their deviant behaviors such as problematic Internet use and facilitating adolescents to

engage in other meaningful activities (Barber et al., 2005). However, lack of emotional warmth from parent often make the children feel unloved and rejected leading to development of emotional issues (McPherson, 2004).

On the Permissive parenting style, the Internet addicted adolescents scored a mean score of 32.53 (SD=10.52) and Non-addicted adolescents scored 24.05 (SD=11.26). On Permissive parenting the scores of Internet addicted group is higher than Non-addicted group (Table-2(a)). The mean difference is found to be 8.48. The result of ANOVA indicates a significant difference between the Permissive parenting style of Internet addicted group and Non-addicted group at 0.01 level (Table-2(b)).

High scores on Permissive parenting by Internet addicted adolescents reflect that their parents are more lenient and easy. The child lives in an environment with few guidelines and rules. Such parents have low expectations from their child and are inconsistent in setting boundaries which may result in problematic use of the internet by the child. On the other hand, low scores obtained by Non-addicted child indicate their parents are not lax. According to a study by Hess and Pollmann-Schult (2019), a child's problematic behavior has a positive association with the permissive parenting style. Uyun et al. (2021) found permissive parenting style positively contributing to children's gaming addiction. Similary in another research, Maftei and Enea (2020) revealed that the children who receive permissive parenting tend to suffer from Internet gaming disorder. Maccoby and Martin (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010) said that parents practicing permissive parenting style tend to be less demanding and implement less monitoring to their children activities and rarely give control towards their children's behavior. This gives the child a fair chance to be involved in excessive and irresponsible behavior. In a study Rammazi, et al. (2015) aimed to investigate the relationship between parenting styles, and students' internet addiction and findings revealed a positive significant correlation between permissive parenting style and internet addiction. There are many more researches suggesting that the permissive parenting style is associated with delinquency and addiction to internet (Snyder & Sickmund 2000; Jacobson & Crockett 2000).

Conclusıon

In conclusion parental control is seen to play an important factor in Internet addiction among adolescents. Authoritarian parenting style is observed to have high level of control yet for its lack of emotional response, it isn't considered to be an ideal parenting style. This parenting has negative effects to the child's mental wellbeing (Baumrind, 1982, 1991; Buri, 1989; Decovik, 1992 & Chidiebere, 2016). On the other hand, Permissive parenting style is not considered to be ideal for its low control and expectations. Rothrauff, Cooney and An J. S. (2009) investigated that Authoritative parenting is often associated with positive outcomes for children and adolescents. Therefore, in order to avoid addiction among adolescents, the right amount of control is suggested with good emotional response, so that the child gets a healthy environment that is monitored well.

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