

Parenting Styles and Its Influence on Internet Usage among Young Children

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ABSTRACT

The use of internet at a very early age advances the child's exposure to certain topics that also hinder their maturation process and understanding moral conventions of the society. The Idea behind the study is to link the internet usage of the children and their parent's style of parenting through exploratory research design so as to provide parents awareness. The Independent variable of the study is Internet usage of children and the Dependant variable is parenting style of their parents. Along with which Age of the parent, Occupation of the parent, Economic status is collected as the demographic data. 100 parents from Chennai city with school going children between the age group 3- 13 are chosen as the representative sample by using Purposive sampling technique. The study analysed the data descriptively by using percentage analyses, and also inferentially by using t-test to know the gender difference. The finding showed that it was observed that parents reported that their children's Internet usage is high. It is noted that parents have also reported that their parenting controls are high with regards to internet usage despite of having taken high security actions.

Keywords: *internet usage, parenting styles, parental behaviours*

The Internet is a vast network of networks. It is used in connecting millions of computers worldwide. Internet usage has now become a mandatory need in every family as once it was a luxury. The internet usage among children has started for the purpose of certain other educational needs to be fulfilled which eventually lead every family having a personal computers and laptops. Since the last decade had a sudden rise in mobile world which demanded every individual to have one personally. Children also became a victim for internet usage slowly. Parenting is a process of upbringing the children in a sociably accepting manner teaching all the moral values and equipping the child until they start living independently also to ensure children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values. There are different ways in which parents

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take this process through with their children. There are four major recognized parenting styles: authoritative, neglectful, permissive, and authoritarian. Each one carries different characteristics and brings about different reactions in the children which they are used on. Baumrind (1966) was the first person to come up with three types of parenting styles.

- Authoritarian, which is too hard
- Permissive, which is too soft
- Authoritative, which is just right

Authoritarian parenting is a style of child rearing that is very demanding and rigid. Authoritarian parents are extremely strict and expect their orders to be obeyed. Abusive parents almost always fall into this category. The permissive parent is extremely responsive to a child's needs and does not enforce many rules or punishments. Permissive parents tend not to portray themselves as authority figures. An authoritative parenting style is characterized by a combination of expectations and warmth. Authoritative parents present themselves as authority figures and expect their children to behave but they are also caring, loving and responsive. Authoritative parents might punish their children if they misbehave. The current study focuses deep into parenting behaviour which is a step ahead of parenting styles. Reason to look at behaviour is to analyse which behaviour causes or prevents their children's internet usage. Some of the behaviours looked in the study are Positive Parenting, Parental Involvement, Poor Parental Monitoring/Supervision, Inconsistent Discipline, Corporal Punishment, and Other Disciplines respectively which is given by Frick P J (1991).

Rationale of Study

The usage of mobile phones, computers and accessible internet (electronic gadgets) has become part and parcel of present generation in any culture and more so India. It could also be observed that child rearing practices play an important role in the usage of electronic gadgets and there are many reasons attributing to the same. It is indeed a proud and happy moment for parents to watch their children using these gadgets at very early age starting from 3 years which also becomes dangerous when children get access to pornography sites accidentally and continue to watch in the absence of parents. Also parents do not understand the reparations that would follow. However, children are able to learn their academics in a more easy way with usage of these gadgets. It could further be observed that children get addicted to the gadgets as a result the creativity and normal maturity hinders their development process. Hence the present study concerns on creating awareness among the parents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to M valcke (2013) dealt with internet parenting styles and impact on internet use of primary school children involving 533 parents from children in primary school whose internet usage was studied. Results found that the internet usage among their children was high when they were at home. The study also observed dominance in authoritative parenting style. The study also found that the parenting style significantly affects the child's internet usage. Denise Ante-Contreras et.al (2016) by using Survey method addressed parents in

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various parenting groups and online chatting boards regarding social media usage, number of hours on their devices, and parenting styles. Results concluded a positive relationship between hours of social media usage and a high score on authoritarian parenting techniques. Matthew S (2017) conducted *survey through telephone among single and married mothers of teenagers and examined the influence of parenting styles and level of Internet access in the home have on parenting mediation of online content and time spent on the Internet, how authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles as well as home and bedroom Internet access influence the evaluative and restrictive mediation techniques used by parents was investigated and found that parenting style has a significant effect on almost all mediation techniques, whereas increased access only influences time online. Additionally, technological blocking as a restrictive mediation technique was found to be highest among authoritative parents, followed by authoritarian and neglectful.* Davie et.al, (2004) investigated mobile phone ownership and usage among pre-adolescents that has revealed that the mobile phone, for adolescents is a medium which permits communication without the surveillance of parents, families and teachers. However, communicating with family members appeared significant for 10 to 11 year old children. Majority of the sample possessed mobile phones, half of their calls were used for chatting with family or friends. The study also considered the amount of money that the pupils claimed to spend on their mobile calls every month. Sook-Jung Lee (2013) has researched parental restrictive mediation of children's internet use. Data was obtained through a survey method among children from fourth to ninth grade along with their parents. The findings suggests that the age of a child, parental perception of the negative influence of the internet, parental perception of their child's low self-control, and parental internet skills were significant predictors of restrictive mediation. Restrictive mediation was significantly associated with reduced online risks and time spent online, and was not associated with addictive use. The effects of restrictive mediation on online time and online risks were greater for a child with low self-control

Significance

The current study aims at establishing the relationship between parenting styles and the amount of internet usage in Indian population. It could be observed the research findings of each studies that there is a lacunae in literature as far as Indian studies are concerned hence to fill in the gap that exist in literature the present study was undertaken.

Research Objective

1. To study the parent's evaluation of their child's amount of internet usage.
2. To know if there is a difference between parenting patterns among mothers and fathers based on their child's internet usage.
3. To know the difference in parenting patterns and internet usage that might exist based on the age groups of the children.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To know if there is a relationship between the parenting style and internet usage among their children in Indian population

Objective

The study questions the relationship between parenting style and internet usage. The analysis looks at the differences and relationship as well as the impact each variable as on one another along with specific demographic variables like age of the parents, age of the child, gender, economic status, occupation of the parent.

Variables

Independent variable: Internet usage

Dependant variable: Parenting style

Demographic variables: Age of the parent, Occupation of the parent, Economic status

Sample

The sample consisted of Parents from the age group of early adulthood (20-30 years) and middle adulthood (31-40 years).

Sample Size

One hundred and fifty parents from Chennai city with school going children between the age group 5- 13 served as sample for present study The convenience sampling was used to select the participants. It used simple random sampling method to collect the data.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the Parents are that their children should be between 5-13 years of age. Parents, whose children have, access to the internet either through personal computers or mobile phones at home are included in this study.

Exclusion Criteria

Parent's of children's who are below 5 years of age and above 13 years of age.

Operational Definition

Parenting style: Parenting style is the different approaches used by the parents to rear their children. Parenting style is a process of preparing one's child to live independently by teaching them societal and familial conventions. The study also based the understanding of parenting style on positive involvement with children, supervision and monitoring, use of positive discipline techniques, consistency in the use of such discipline and use of corporal punishment given by Frick P J (1991) Internet usage: According to the researcher internet usage refers to the amount of time spent and different aspects of internet being used along with corresponding purpose to access internet.

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Research Design

The research design used for the study was an Ex-post facto design. This type of empirical approach was used to study the topic with factual and scientific validation for the findings.

Tools

Alabama parenting questionnaire (APQ), is a parent self-report and as a child report on the same parental practices. The 42 item scale contains six individual factors like Positive Parenting, Parental Involvement, Poor Parental Monitoring/Supervision, Inconsistent Discipline, Corporal Punishment, and Other Discipline. The average reliability across the APQ scales is .68. The other items are taken from a survey questionnaire called EU kids online originally developed at London. It has both parent and child form that address the internet usage. The parent form is incorporated for this study.

Procedure

The researcher approached individuals eligible for the study and requested for the participation in the study. It was made sure that anonymity was guaranteed and that participation was voluntary. The sample was gathered at 5 different schools and the tools were administered by the researcher in order to maintain the validity of the test. A date was fixed with the school depending upon the parent's convenience. On that particular day the parents were asked to come. The researcher gave the instructions to the participants and collected the data by administering the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

It is observed that among the sample of 100 parents 66 of them were mothers and 34 were fathers.

CHART 1

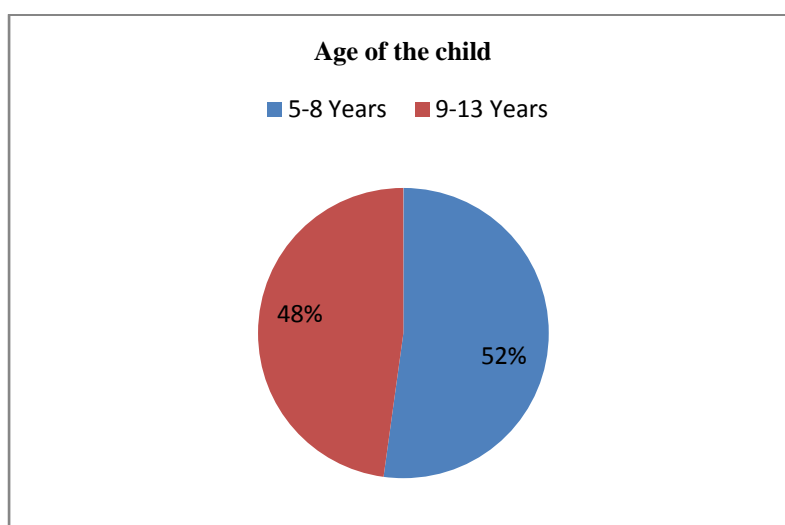


Chart 1 show that 48% of parents had children under age group 5-8 and 52% of parents had children under age group 9-13

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CHART 2

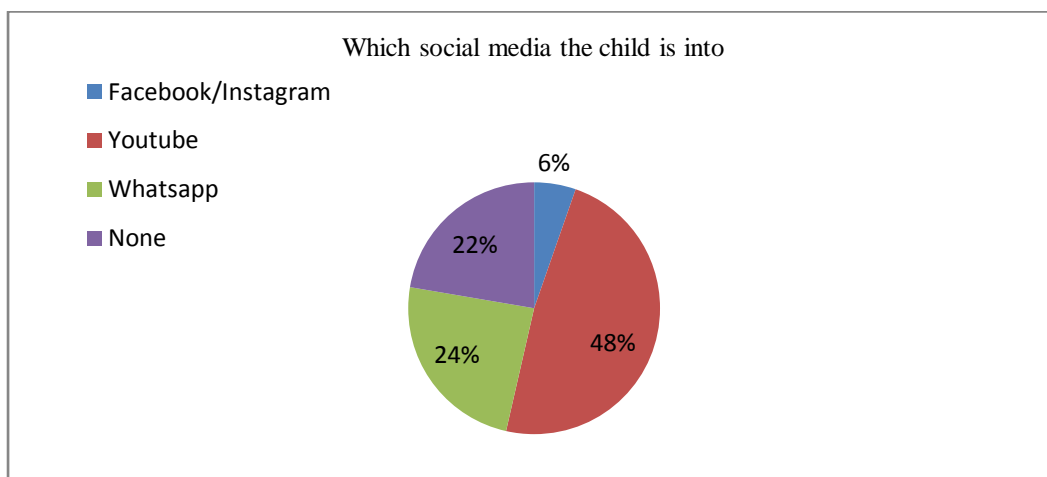


Chart 2 shows that 6% of children use face book/ Instagram, 22% of children are not using any social media, 24% of children uses what's app and 48% of children uses Youtube.

CHART 3

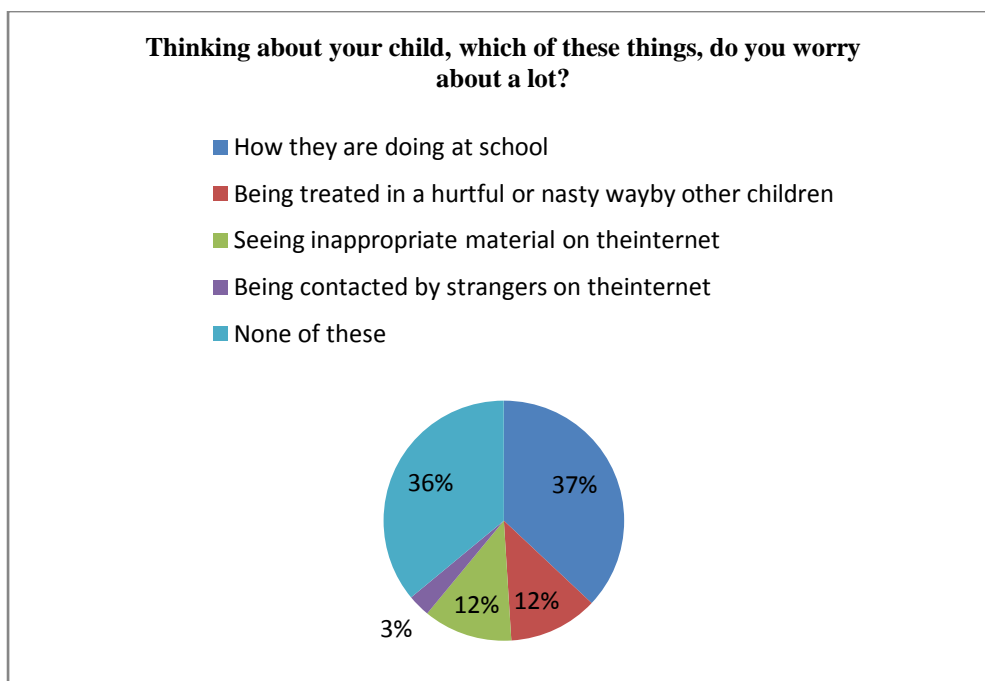


Chart 3 indicates that 3% of parents worry about their child being contacted by strangers on the internet, 12% of parents worry that their child might see inappropriate material on the internet, 12% of the parents worry that their child might be treated in a hurtful or nasty way by other children, 36% of the parents worry about none of those mentioned. And 37% of them worry about how their child is doing at school.

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CHART 4

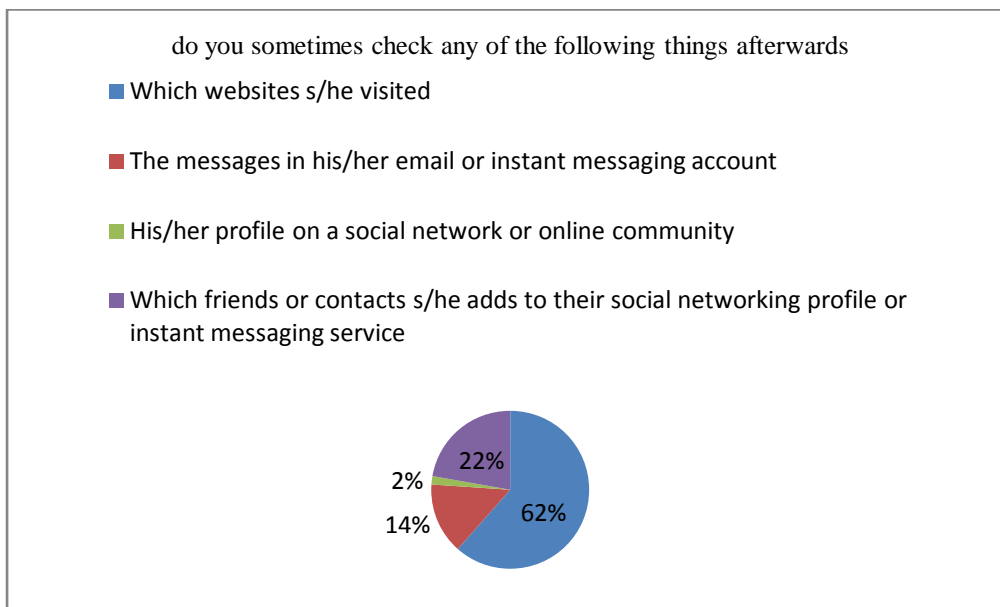


Chart 4 shows that 2% of parents check their child's profile on social network. 14% of parents check the messages that their children send, 22% of parents check which friend or contact their child adds to their profile on social network and 62% of parents check which website their child uses.

CHART 5

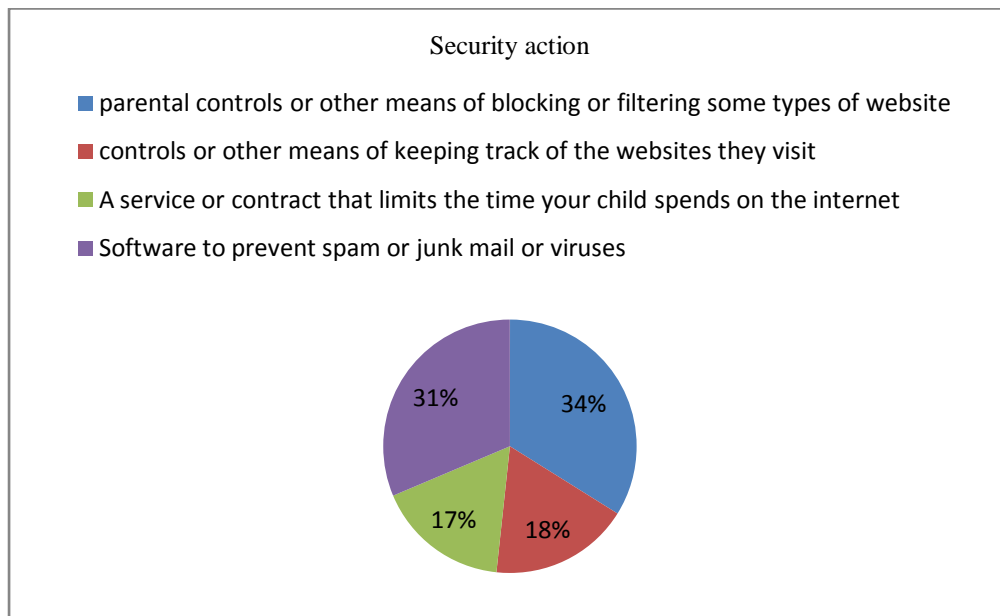


Chart 5 shows 17% of parents have installed a service or contact that limits the time spent on internet. 18% parents control their child's usage by keeping track of the websites they visit. 31% of parents have installed software to prevent spam or junk and 34% parents use parental control by blocking or filtering some websites.

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CHART 6

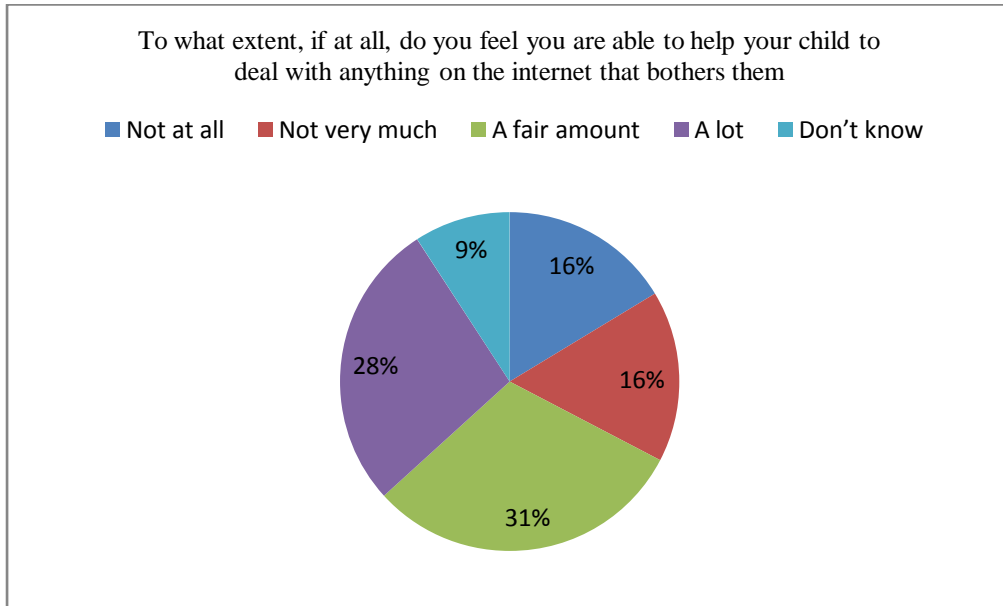


Chart 6 shows that 9% of parents said that they don't know to what extent they are able to help their child to deal with anything on the internet that will bother them. 16% of parents indicated that they think not very much that they can handle a problem that arises due to internet. 16% of parents indicated that not at all that they can do to help their child to deal with anything on the internet that bothers them. 21% of parents indicated a lot that they can handle the internet hustles and 31% agreed that to a fair amount that they can provide help to deal with the internet hustles.

CHART 7

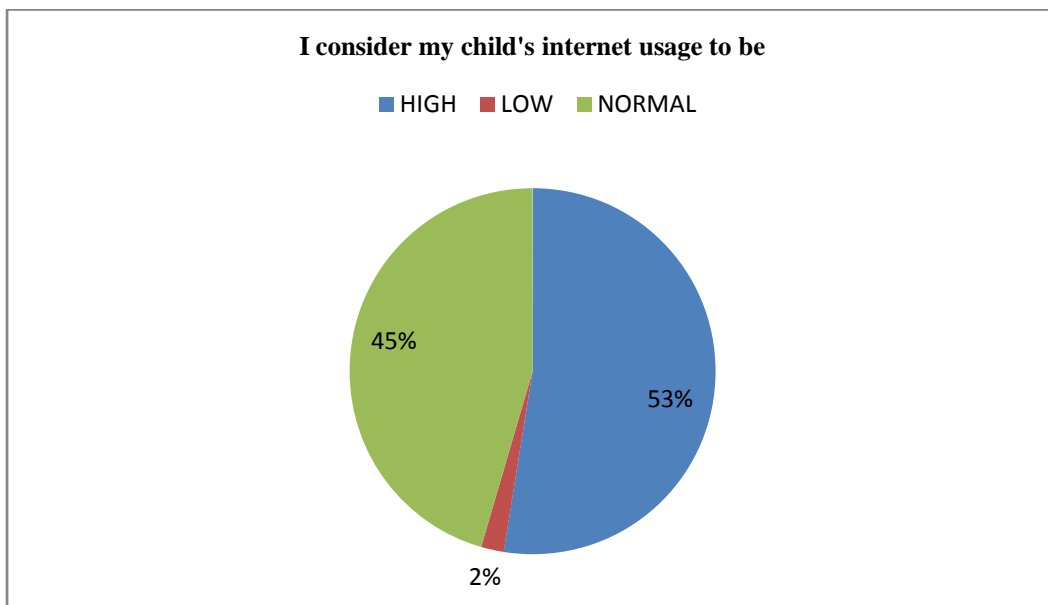


Chart 7 indicates that 2% of parents consider that their child uses internet at a lower amount, 45% of parents indicated that they consider their child's internet usage to be normal and 53%

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of parents consider that their child's internet usage to be high based on the purpose and amount of time spent on internet each day.

TABLE: Parenting behaviour based on gender and age group of your child.

Variable	Demographic variable	N	Mean	SD	t value	
Parenting behaviours	Gender	Male	34	124.92	16.35	0.500 ^{NS}
		Female	66	123.21	14.49	0.517 ^{NS}
	Age group of child	5 -8years	48	92	13.32	124.92 ^{NS}
		9-13years	52	75.72	17.59	123.21 ^{NS}

NS-Not Significant

To answer to the research objective that if there is a difference between mothers and fathers a t-test was conducted that found the calculated mean values for parenting styles are found to be 123.21 and 124.92 for female and male parents respectively. From the mean values, males and females don't differ significantly with regards to parenting behaviours. The calculated S.D. values for parenting behaviours are found to be 16.35 and 14.49 for female and male respectively. The calculated 't' value is 0.500 which is not significant. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant difference in parenting behaviours between male and female.

The calculated mean value for parenting style is found to be 92 and 75.72 for parents who has children un age group 5-8 years and of 9-13years respectively. It indicates that parents with children of both age groups don't differ significantly. The calculated S. D. values for parenting qualities are found to be 13.32 and 17.59 for parents with children of age group 5-8 and 9-13 respectively. The 't' value is 1.249 which is not significant. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant difference in parenting behaviours based on age group of the child.

Ethical Considerations

It was made sure that the participants were volunteering to expose their personal information and their willingness to take part in the research. By ensuring all these participants were chosen as samples for the research.

DISCUSSION

Majority of the parents consider that their child's internet usage to be high this can happen because of the accessibility with no difficulty. Since life became handy and compact in hand to know everything from single access, the child's curiosity can be a factor that leads for their early exposure to internet. It also shows parent's inadequacy to a certain point that they become permissive in allowing their child to access internet. Most of the parents agreed to the fact that their children use what's app and YouTube most often than when compared to others. This shows the level of instant messaging that is most predominantly seen in children of age group 9-13 and the use of You Tube to watch new videos to learn facts in a different way that is most commonly seen among children between age groups of 5-8. The study also found that parents worry about their child being contacted by strangers on the internet to very low amount which indicates that they have more control over their child's online activities.

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Most of them also responded that they worry about how their child is doing at school and to an equal proportion of parents reacted that they are not worried about any online activities of their child and their performance at school this signifies their control over their child's behaviour related to internet usage in spite of the study also suggesting that parents report high internet usage of their children. In relation to monitoring behaviour of parents many of them agreed that they do check which friend or contact their child adds to their profile on social network and check which website their child uses. According to the security aspects with regard to internet usage parents have responded that they have installed a service or contact that limits the time spent on internet also they control their child's usage by keeping track of the websites they visit. And most importantly they parents use parental control by blocking or filtering some websites that their child might eventually get in contact with. Minority of the Parent population have also said that they don't know to what extent they are able to help their child to deal with anything on the internet that will bother them. Majority of them indicated that they can handle the internet hustles and can provide the needy assistance. By analyzing the data inferentially it suggest that there is no significant difference between the parenting style based on parent's gender and age group of the child.

CONCLUSIONS

1. It is observed that parents reported that their children's Internet usage is high.
2. It is noted that parents have also reported that their parenting controls are high with regards to internet usage despite of having taken high security actions.
3. Parents have also reported that their children major use in internet is You Tube.

Implications of the Study

The results of the study shows that this area should be widely researched in order to develop new theories and interventions on parenting behaviours in relation with internet usage by them and that of their children which might interrupt in the process of their communication patterns. This study also gives a bird view about the most prevalent and existing patterns of internet usage and parenting behaviours that can be helpful to understand the interaction between the both which will eventually be helpful in counselling processes, behaviour modification in children and parents. The need and purpose of internet usage can be studied more to formulate new versions of psychotherapy and counselling parents and children.

Limitations of the Study

1. The size of the sample was only 100.
2. The study can be stronger with regards to statistics by using standardised scales.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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