

Communication Skills in Middle and Late Adolescents Internet Users

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ABSTRACT

Communication skill is a set of skills that enable the person to convey information so that it is received and understood. The main purpose of this research is to identify the communication skills in adolescents with reference to use of internet and adolescence period. The data was collected purposively from 400 male and female adolescents resides in Gandhinagar and Mehsana district of Gujarat state with the help of Internet Addiction Test (I.A.T.) developed by Mr. Young (1998) and Communication Skills Scale, a sub scale of Social Skill Rating Scale (SSRS) developed by Vishal Sood, Arti Anand and Suresh Kumar. Two-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data by applying 2x2 factorial design. No significant difference is found between normal and problematic internet user ($F= 0.02$) as well as between middle and late adolescence group ($F= 0.27$) on communication skill. The interaction effect between use of internet and adolescence period regarding communication skill is also found to be non-significant ($F=1.19$). However, all adolescents exhibit moderate communication skill.

Keywords: *Internet Addiction, Adolescence Period, Communication Skill*

Communication skill is the ability to use language and express information. It is referred to the repertoire of behaviors that serve to convey information for the individual. The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals and it is the ability to communicate that distinguishes one individual from another. Good social skill requires good communication skills. Because, we communicate verbally and non-verbally, both of these types of skills contribute to how well students relate to their peers. Students with language problems often have trouble socially because they have difficulty understanding the words that other students use and putting their ideas into words to express these ideas to others.

According to APA dictionary of Psychology in addition to general language proficiency (adequate vocabulary and knowledge of syntax), effective communication involves the ability to listen and read with comprehension, to present one's thoughts clearly both in speech and in writing, to accept that the perspectives of others may differ from one's own, and to anticipate the effect of what one says or writes on listeners or readers.

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The widespread use of the Internet, especially among adolescents, has led to a growing number of negative behaviors in today's adolescents. At present, the only desire of the youth is to be engrossed in social media. Adolescents become addicted to the internet to create and upload and download various videos on YouTube to fulfill his curiosity, such as craving for likes, posting different types of photos on Instagram, craving to increase followers on social media, etc.

Excessive internet use causes many types of psychological problems in adolescence such as social fears, aggression, lack of self-awareness, lack of communication skills, etc. The trend of playing online games on mobile instead of physical games is on the rise. In order to become popular on social media and gain publicity, young people risk their lives to post a variety of dangerous videos or photos. There are frequent reports of young people losing their lives. Excessive use of internet also causes some physical and mental disorders in individuals such as nomophobia, phantom vibration syndrome, eating disorder, nervosa etc. Ansari et al. (2017) found out the prevalence of internet addiction was 52.1% in males and 37.0% in females of high school students in Tabriz, Iran.

Recent research has shown that people with Internet addiction are more likely to have problems in communication skills. Excessive internet use adversely affects the communication skills. Internet addiction adversely affects face-to face interactions, enhance dependency on digital communication platforms and hinder interpersonal interaction. Individuals who suffer from internet addiction are likely to have difficulties in starting and sustaining conversations, misinterpreting social cues, and face difficulty while interpreting complex social situations (Yadav and Bansal, 2024). The excessive use of internet highly affects the life skills of secondary school students. Choudhary and Ladwal (2022) found out highly negative correlation between the internet addiction and life skills of secondary school students.

Francisca et al. (2023) investigation on a sample of adolescents towards internet addiction, sleep habits and family communication indicate that 64.1% of the adolescents had mild to moderate addiction to the internet. The main results suggest that internet addiction in adolescents is negatively associated with family communication and positively associated with excessive daytime sleepiness. It was also observed that gender had a significant effect on daytime sleepiness, with female participants having more excessive daytime sleepiness. Regarding age, the results indicate higher values of internet addiction among younger adolescents.

Ali and Mehrzad (2014) examined the impact of excessive internet use on communication skills and mental health in cafe internet users. The results showed no difference between adolescents' communication skills regarding the use of internet games. There was a difference between adolescents' mental health in terms of frequency of using the internet games. Those who spend fewer (less than 6) hours using the internet games exhibited lesser physical symptoms, reduced level of anxiety and depression and were more socializing. Results also showed that excessive internet use impact on the physical and mental health of internet users.

A meta-analysis of effect of social media addiction on communication skills carried out by Hidir (2023) indicates that social media addiction has a moderate negative effect on communication skills. The average effect was tested in the context of moderator variables.

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Accordingly, the average effect does not show a significant difference according to disciplines, while it shows a significant difference according to countries.

Sahin and Gulsah (2024) investigated the relationship between university students' internet addiction levels, social anxiety, and communication skills and found that there was a low negative relationship between internet addiction and communication skills, and a moderate positive relationship between internet addiction and social anxiety among university students. Ayar and Gurkan (2021) determined that there was a significant negative relationship between the communication skills of undergraduate nursing students and their smartphone addiction and the status of phubbing behaviors.

Duygu et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between internet addiction, communication skills and difficulties in emotion regulation in nursing students. It was found that internet addiction had an effect of 18.6 % on difficulty in emotion regulation and 0.27 % on communication skills. The students who were in risky group in internet addiction had worse communication skills and higher levels of difficulties in emotion regulation.

A study carried out by Omer (2023) showed that social and communication skills are strongly negatively related to digital game addiction, while communication skills are a solid mediator between social skills and digital game addiction. Holistically, it is thought that digital games are an important escape area for individuals with low social and communication skills.

The prime aim of this study is to identify the impact of use of internet and adolescence period on the communication skills in middle and late adolescents. The use of internet and adolescence period were considered as independent variable of the study. To what extent the normal and problematic/excessive use of internet can impact on communication skill of the adolescents was a first objective of this study as well as the study conducted to fulfill the second objective of the study that how the adolescents period plays a significant role in development of communication skill in adolescents.

Objectives

The prime objectives of the study are as under:

1. To identify the impact of use of internet on communication skills of adolescents.
2. To identify the impact of adolescence period on communication skills of adolescents.
3. To identify the interactive of use of internet and adolescence period on communication skills of adolescents.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested to fulfill the objectives of the study:

1. There will be no significant difference between adolescents having normal and problematic use of internet on communication skills.
2. There will be no significant difference between adolescents having middle and late adolescence period on communication skills.
3. There will be no significant interactive effect of use of internet and adolescence period on communication skills of adolescents.

Sample

The sample of the study was comprised of total 400 adolescent following the 2x2 factorial design as two level of each independent variable i.e. use of internet (normal and

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problematic) and adolescence period (middle and late). As per the requirement of sampling and research design the adolescents were purposively selected from schools of Gandhinagar and Mehsana district of Gujarat state. The distribution of adolescent in the group of normal as well as problematic use of internet was decided through the score achieved on Internet Addiction Test developed by Dr. Kimberly Young.

Tools

Following standardized tools were used for collecting the data.

- 1. Internet Addiction Test:** To identify excessive or mild use of internet the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) developed by Dr. Kimberly Young (1998) was used. It comprises 20 items rated in a five-point Likert scale (from 1 - not at all, to 5 - always). As with the first diagnostic questionnaire, this measurement is derived from the DSM-IV criteria for pathological gambling and alcoholism and it measures the extent of individual's problems due to the Internet use in daily routine, social life, productivity, sleeping patterns, and feelings. On the basis of the total score obtained on the test, the individual is placed into one of three categories: average online user (from 20 to 39) who has a full control of his or her usage; experiences frequent problems because of excessive Internet use (from 40 to 69); or has significant problems because of Internet use (from 70 to 100). Gujarati version of the IAT was used for collecting the data. The highest score of the IAT obtained 100 and lowest can be 20. The test-retest reliability of the scale was 0.82. The content and convergent validity and internal consistency of the IAT was 0.88 and bisection 0.72. This scale is meant for adolescents and adults.
- 2. Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS):** The communication skill of adolescents was identified with help of Communication Skills Scale a sub scale of Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS) developed by Vishal Sood, Arti Anand and Suresh Kumar. This sub scale consists 17 items. It is Likert type five-point scale scoring from 1 to 5. The minimum score on the sub scale is 17 and the maximum is 85. The higher score on the sub scale indicates higher level of communication skill possessed by the subjects. Gujarati version of the sub scale was used for collecting the data. Test-Rest Reliability of the scale was reported 0.71 and internal consistency of the communication sub scale was found to be 0.50 which is significant at 0.01 level.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Analysis of variance for communication skills in relation to use of internet and adolescence period.

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Use of Internet (A)	1.21	1	1.21	0.02	NS
Adolescence Period (B)	19.36	1	19.36	0.27	NS
A x B	84.64	1	84.64	0.19	NS
Error	27975.64	392	71.37		
Total	1596952.00	400	-		
Corrected Total	28195.75	399	-		

Significant Level: 0.05 level 3.85 (df= 1) & 0.01 level 6.66 (df= 1)

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Table 2: Mean of communication skill reported by various groups of adolescents.

Variable	Group	N	Mean Score	F-Value	Significant Level
Use of Internet	Problematic Use	200	62.57	0.02	NS
	Normal Use	200	62.68		
Adolescence Period	Middle Adolescence	200	62.41	0.27	NS
	Late Adolescence	200	62.85		
Use of Internet & Adolescence Period	Middle Adolescence Problematic Users	50	62.81	0.19	NS
	Middle Adolescence Normal Users	50	62.00		
	Late Adolescence Problematic Users	50	62.33		
	Late Adolescence Normal Users	50	63.36		

It can be seen from the table 1 that the use of internet and adolescence period do not significantly impact the level of communication skills of the adolescents. The F value regarding normal and problematic internet users on communication skill is found to be 0.02 which is non-significant. Similarly, The F value regarding adolescents having middle and late adolescence period is on communication skill is found to be 0.27 which is also non-significant. The interaction between use of internet and adolescence period is also found to be non-significant (F= 0.19). Therefore, all three null hypotheses study are accepted.

As it is clearly state from table 2 that the mean score of problematic internet users on communication skill is 62.57 and normal internet users is 62.68. The differences between the mean score of both the group is 0.11. This difference found to be non-significant (F= 0.02). However, the group of normal internet users have slightly higher mean score on communication skills than the group of problematic internet users. Results also indicate that both the group have average/moderate communication skills. These findings support to study carried out by Halil Eksi (2011) which revealed that students' perceived communication skill levels did not differ with respect to their main internet use purposes but that the levels of their problematic internet use did. In this respect, it was also found that in terms of basic internet use purpose, the problematic internet use levels of the students who "use the internet for entertainment purposes" and of those who "use the internet to establish social relationships with unfamiliar people" were significantly higher than that of those who "use the internet to obtain information." This result points out that the use of the internet for entertainment and social interaction constitutes an important risk factor for the emergence of the problematic internet use symptoms.

Table 2 also indicates that the mean score of adolescents having middle adolescence on communication skill is 62.41 and having late adolescence is 62.85. The differences between the mean score of both the group is 0.44. This difference found to be non-significant (F= 0.27). However, the group of late adolescence have slightly higher mean score on communication skills than the group of middle adolescence. Results also indicate that both the group have average/moderate communication skills. Similar results reported in Ozcinar (2011) study where younger high school students were found to have the highest rate of internet addiction, followed by university students. Males were shown to have significantly higher rates of internet addiction than females for all age groups. Academic, interpersonal and physical problems were all found to be associated with internet addiction. A study

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carried out by Rekha et al. (2024) indicates that internet addiction disorder is in increasing trend among late adolescence in the recent pandemic and post pandemic era. They found that around 55% of the study population had internet addiction. Among them around 2 % had severe internet addiction disorder. As internet addiction disorder is associated with a lot of behavioral disorders, hence it is high time that we have to identify this population and provide proper counselling and seek psychiatric help at the right time to avoid complications.

As seen in table 2 the differences among mean scores on communication skill as held by the group of use of internet and adolescence period is found to be non-significant ($F=0.19$). The group of normal internet users having late adolescents have higher mean score ($M=63.36$) on communication skills compare to other three groups; while normal internet users having middle adolescence period exhibit low mean score ($M=62.00$) as compared to other three groups.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Use of internet does not have significant impact on communication skills in adolescents. However, normal use of internet has a positive impact on communication skills.
2. Adolescents period does not have significant impact on communication skills in adolescents. However, there is increment in communication skills during late adolescence compare to middle adolescence.
3. Adolescents have moderate communication skills during the late and middle adolescence. It is need to be improved by an interventive program so they can develop various social skills.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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