A Study on Adolescent Perceptions about Technology Usage

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ABSTRACT

The present study is a exploratory research study on perceptions of adolescents about technology usage. The study was carried out in Hyderabad with 200 students randomly selected from different colleges. The results of the study indicated that adolescents perceived mobile phone is useful to maintain contacts and helps them to be safe. They perceived that internet information gathering was the best thing and becoming addicted was the worst thing about the internet.

Mobile phone with Internet as a tool for daily life can facilitate searching for information gathering, job opportunities, news and entertainment (music downloads). Given that the adolescent population continues to use mobile phones more heavily than older age groups (Horrigan, 2008).The value and meaning of a mobile phone for an adolescent will most likely carry strong social implications within their peer group. Erikson's earlier stages of trust, autonomy, initiative and industry may be affected by the possession or use of a mobile phone. The Mobile phone has rapidly become an integral and for some an essential communication tool that is being used worldwide. Much of the research surrounding mobile phones have been exploratory in nature viewing mobile phone use from a functional perspective in an effort to identify factors related to mobile phone use such as fashion, affection, safety, mobility, relaxation, reassurance, planning instrumentality and immediate access (Fortunati & Leung 2001).

The Internet is a vital part of the education process; resources for learning and educating are implemented into lesson plans and homework every day. Students and teachers can access unlimited amounts of information to broaden their education. With Internet access in colleges, there is almost no limit to what students can learn. Traditional teaching methods might not be the norm any more. The Internet has become a basic tool for trading, entertainment and communication as well as education in the contemporary world. Sending and receiving e-mails is

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the most frequent use of the Internet. Internet users, via e-mail, Instant messaging or social network platforms communicate not only with their family, friends or colleagues but also with anonymous people.

The Internet is actually a new means of communication and socialization that can supplement face-to-face or telephone contacts. Adolescents access the Internet but there is need to know how often the adolescent uses the Internet for general purposes (talk with friends, meet new people, look things up for college, research a product, listen to music or play games).The above mentioned changes are making the adolescents use mobile and internet, mostly the studies were conducted abroad and less number of studies were conducted in India.

The main thrust of the present study is on Adolescent's perceptions on use of mobile phone and internet.

MATERIALS &METHODS

Exploratory research design was used for the present study. The study was carried out in Hyderabad city.

Selection of sample
1. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select sample for the present study.
2. Sample comprised of 200 adolescents with equal number of boys and girls.

Sampling procedure
Criteria for sample selection are:
1. Age range of adolescents should be between 18-22 years.
2. Students doing graduation from professional and non-professional colleges.

Measurement Tool
A Questionnaire was developed for the study which includes the general information of respondents. Questionnaire covers questions on pattern of use of internet and mobile phone in a day.

The data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section gives details on the adolescent perceptions on usage of mobile phone and internet.

Table 1 Adolescent perceptions on use of mobile phone (N=200)

S. No	Statements	18-19 years								20-21 years								Total			
		Boys				Girls				Boys				Girls							
		Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%
1	Mobile phone use is allowed in college	30	60	20	40	29	58	21	42	33	66	17	34	26	52	24	48	118	59	82	41
2	Mobile phone disturbs attention in class	25	50	25	50	26	52	24	48	27	54	23	46	24	48	26	52	102	51	98	49
3	Mobile phone ring gives excitement	30	60	20	40	19	38	31	62	25	50	25	50	15	30	35	70	89	44	111	55
4	It is boring without mobile phone	30	60	20	40	25	50	25	50	34	17	16	32	23	46	27	54	112	56	88	44
5	It is difficult without mobile phone	29	58	21	42	23	46	27	54	35	70	15	30	24	48	26	52	111	55	89	44
6	Safe to go out alone with mobile phone	36	72	14	28	35	70	15	30	40	80	10	20	38	76	12	24	149	74	51	25
7	Passion to buy new mobile phone	25	50	25	50	19	38	31	62	28	56	22	44	21	42	29	58	93	46	107	53
8	Like to share mobile phone with others	29	58	21	42	34	68	16	32	31	62	19	38	27	54	23	46	121	60	79	39
9	Mobile phone is useful to keep contacts with friends and family	40	80	10	20	49	98	1	2	49	98	1	2	40	20	10	20	178	89	22	11
10	Get benefits by chatting with friends	33	66	17	34	28	56	22	44	38	76	12	24	32	64	18	36	131	65	69	34

11	Mobile phone is used to access social networking sites like face book	36	72	14	28	27	54	23	46	36	72	14	28	26	52	24	48	125	62	75	37
12	Speak to strangers when mobile phone is connected accidentally	25	50	25	50	11	22	39	78	22	44	28	56	13	26	37	74	71	35	129	64

Adolescent perceptions on the use of mobile phone is obvious from the table (4.4.1) that high percent of boys (80%) and girls (98%) of lower age group perceived that mobile phone is useful to maintain contacts with family and friends. Seventy two percent of boys and 70 percent of girls perceived that it is safe to go alone with mobile phone. Mobile phone is useful to access social networking sites ways the strong perception of boys (72%) which was not the same for girls (54%). About 68 percent of girls and 58 percent boys opined that they would like to share mobile phone with others.

High percent of boys (66%) perceived that it was beneficial to chat with friends but girls differed by 10 percent less on the same. Sixty percent of boys perceived that it was boring without mobile phone. The perceptions of girls and boys were slightly different on the statements like it's exciting when the mobile phone rings, mobile phone is distracting attention in the class and Passion to buy new mobile phone etc. Perceptions on speaking to strangers when it gets connected automatically ranged from 58-22 percent for boys and girls.

Perceptions of the higher age group adolescents is evident from the table that high percent of boys (98%) thought that mobile phone is useful to maintain contacts with the family and friends whereas less percent of girls (20%) had the same perception. About 80 percent boys opined that it is safe to go alone with mobile phone which was also the opinion of high percent of girls (76%). Mobile phone is used to access social networking sites like face book was the perception of boys (72%) and girls (20%).

On the whole it is conspicuous that majority adolescents perceived that mobile phone is useful to maintain contact with friends and family as well as safe to go alone with mobile phone. So, it can be understood that mobile phone is being seen as the source of safety and communication by adolescents not only as a tool for entertainment or information.

Table 2. Adolescents' perceptions on use of internet (N=200)

S. No	Statements	18-19 years								20-21 years								Total			
		Boys				Girls				Boys				Girls							
		Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%	Y	%	N	%
1	Have Email ID	48	96	2	4	46	92	4	8	49	98	1	2	46	92	4	8	189	94	11	5
2	Feel ease to use internet	38	76	12	24	28	56	22	44	43	86	7	14	43	86	7	14	152	76	48	24
3	Like to stay on the internet for long time	19	38	31	62	11	22	39	78	22	44	28	56	10	20	40	80	62	31	138	69
4	Internet makes a great contribution to human life	40	80	10	20	42	84	8	16	42	84	8	16	38	76	12	24	162	81	38	19
5	Look in to the website that parents desire to abstain/object/disapprove	16	32	34	68	15	30	35	70	21	42	29	58	12	24	38	76	64	32	136	68
6	Internet lessens the importance of people's jobs	39	78	11	22	30	60	20	40	34	68	16	32	39	78	11	22	142	71	58	29
7	Internet is responsible for many of the good things we enjoy	39	78	11	22	44	88	6	12	40	80	10	20	42	84	8	16	165	82	35	17
8	Social networking sites take away privacy	29	58	21	42	22	44	28	56	26	52	24	48	24	48	26	52	101	50	99	49
9	Downloaded information is Shared	34	68	16	32	40	80	10	20	43	86	7	14	22	44	28	56	139	69	61	30
10	Download information that is not shared with others	24	48	26	52	18	36	32	64	29	58	21	42	14	28	36	72	85	42	115	57

11	Have better relationships with people when you talk online or on the phone compared to people you meet face to face	28	56	22	44	24	48	26	52	33	66	17	34	18	36	32	64	103	51	97	48
12	Hide if someone comes while Online	22	44	28	56	10	20	40	80	21	42	29	58	11	22	39	78	64	32	136	68
13	Made long term friendships through the internet	25	50	25	50	6	12	44	88	23	46	27	54	10	20	40	80	64	32	136	68
14	It is possible to choose life partner through internet	22	44	28	56	3	6	47	94	19	38	31	62	2	4	48	96	46	23	154	77

Majority of boys (96%) and girls (92%) have Email ID. Eighty percent of boys of lower age group thought that internet made a great contribution to human life. While girls (88%) perceived that internet is responsible for the many of the good things they enjoy. About girls (80%) share the information which they download. Seventy six percent of boys feel ease to use internet. Seventy eight percent of boys opined that internet lessens the importance of people's job but only 60 percent girls had the same opinion. More number of boys (58%) felt that the social networking sites take away privacy while only 44 percent girls agreed with the same. The rest of the aspects like staying on internet for long time, looking into websites that parents not desire or object, download information that is not shared with others, hide if someone comes online, choosing life partner through the internet where boys and girls differed.

In the higher age group adolescent boys (98%) and girls (92%) have Email Id. Equal percent of boys and girls feel at ease to use internet. Eighty percent boys thought internet made a great contribution to human life and the same percent of girls thought internet was responsible for many good things they enjoy. Eighty six percent of boys shared the information which is downloaded but only girls (44%) and 78 percent of girls opined that internet lessens the importance of people's job.

On the whole it can be concluded that adolescent boys and girls have Email Id and were good at using internet as they feel ease to use internet. So from these results it can be understood that adolescents have access and using the internet

Table 3. Perceptions of sample on the best things about mobile phone   (N=200)

S. No	Best things about the mobile phone	18-19 years				20-21 years				Total	
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Contacts	13	26	0	0	3	6	0	0	16	8
2.	Entertainment	12	24	16	32	13	26	12	24	53	26
3.	Chatting	8	16	0	0	3	6	0	0	11	5
4.	Communication	15	30	28	56	25	50	27	54	95	47
5.	Down loading	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
6.	Secure	0	0	6	12	0	0	11	22	17	8
7.	Knowing things	0	0	0	0	6	12	0	0	6	3
	Total	50		50		50		50		200	

The information in the table indicates that nearly half (47 percent) of the students mentioned that communication was the best thing about the mobile phone, because they like to be in contact with others. Entertainment was the second best thing about the mobile phone.

There could be multiple reasons for the above statements. The diverse uses of mobile phone for adolescents are well known such as to communicate with others, to keep in touch with old and new friends, use for their safety and also use for entertainment like listening to music, playing games, watching movies and video songs.

Table 4 Perceptions of sample on the worst things about mobile phone (N=200)

S. No	Worst things about the mobile phone	18-19 years				20-21 years				Total	
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Radiation effects	14	26	14	28	23	46	15	30	66	33
2.	Money waste	4	8	8	16	9	18	7	14	28	14
3.	Wrong calls	13	26	13	26	11	22	14	28	51	25
4.	Addiction	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3
5.	Time waste	13	26	11	22	7	14	14	28	45	22
6.	Un necessary chatting	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	4	2
	Total	50		50		50		50		200	

The information given in the table indicated that both boys and girls in the age group 18-19 years (28%) mentioned that radiation was the first worst thing about the mobile phone. Twenty five percent samples felt that wrong calls were the next negative point about mobile phones. Another

22 percent students expressed that time is being wasted due to mobile phone and least percent (2% only) mentioned that mobile phone lead to involvement in unnecessary chatting. The reasons for the above perceptions are clear that while using mobile phone, radiation affects might damage the health of the people heavily like head ache etc.

Table 5 Perceptions of sample on best things about the internet   *(N=200)*

S. No	Best things about the internet	18-19 years				20-21 years				Total	
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls			
1.	Entertainment	13	26	13	26	8	16	14	28	48	24
2.	Social networking	6	12	3	6	4	8	0	0	13	6
3.	Down loading	4	8	7	14	9	18	6	12	26	13
4.	Information gathering	22	44	27	54	20	40	17	34	86	43
5.	Communication	5	10	0	0	9	18	9	18	23	11
6.	Improving knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	4	2
	Total	50		50		50		50		200	

From the above table the results revealed that, 43 percent of the students mentioned that information gathering was the best thing about the internet. Thirty four percent students felt entertainment was second best thing about the internet. Thirteen percent students felt, down loading was the third best thing about the internet. Only few (8 percent) students mentioned that internet is for improving knowledge.

It was evident from the figure given below that 54 percent of lower age group of girls and 44 percent of lower age group of boys mentioned that information gathering was the best thing about the internet.

The best possible reasons for stating information gathering was the best could be that the graduate students require and get each and everything needed for the education on the internet and also for entertainment like videos through the you tube and listening songs are possible through internet.

Borzekowski and Rickert (2001) have explored adolescents' perceptions and experiences of using the Internet to find information about health and medicines. These studies show that the Internet is the primary general information source for adolescents, regardless of their socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, and that most health information is accessed through search engines with a high success rate.

Table 6. Perceptions of sample on worst things about the internet (N=200)

S. No	Worst things about the internet	18-19 years				20-21 years				Total	
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Addiction	15	30	17	34	17	34	17	34	63	31
2.	Time waste	11	22	6	12	12	24	14	28	46	23
3.	Radiations	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	4	2
4.	Low thinking ability	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
5.	Un necessary chatting	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3
6.	Misuse	14	28	12	24	8	16	0	0	34	17
7.	Money waste	0	0	8	16	0	0	8	16	16	8
8.	Un known contacts	0	0	3	6	0	0	11	22	14	7
9.	Un wanted information	0	0	0	0	13	26	0	0	13	6
	Total	50		50		50		50		200	

From the above table the results revealed that, about thirty one percent of the students mentioned that addiction was the worst thing about the internet. Another twenty three percent mentioned that waste of time was second worst thing about the internet. Around seventeen percent mentioned that misuse was the third worst thing about the internet. About 12 percent of boys of 18-19 years said that unnecessary chatting is done due to internet.

On the whole the table depicts that students twenty two percent feel that it is waste of time going online and also ending up in addiction. The reasons for perceiving worst things about the internet could be fear of addiction, time waste and involvement in unnecessary chatting. Some other reasons could be because the adolescent students are sticking to the internet to chat with others and not using their talent in studies and not showing interest to spend with their family members.

Chou's and colleagues' (2000) suggested that pleasure seeking was indeed one of the major motivations for heavy Internet users; increased symptoms of depression.

Wolaket al., (2008) suggested that many youth interact online with unknown people with little risk. It is rule-breaking behavior, depression and social problems that may manifest during online interaction with unknown people.

CONCLUSION

Adolescents perceived that mobile phone is useful to maintain contacts with family and friends and girls perceived that it is safe to go alone with mobile phone. Mobile phone is useful to access social networking sites to chat with friends and felt life would be boring without mobile phone. The perceptions of girls and boys were slightly different on the statements like it's exciting when

the mobile phone rings, mobile phone is distracting attention in the class and Passion to buy new mobile phone etc. Adolescents perceived that internet made a great contribution to human life and that internet is responsible for the many of the good things they enjoy.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

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