

ATTITUDE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET CHATTING ON PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The present study is focused on the attitude towards Internet chatting on personal development of college students in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The investigators used the normative survey method for the study. The sample consists of 200 college students from two Arts and Science and two Engineering colleges in Coimbatore district. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The investigators themselves developed a tool to measure the attitude towards Internet chatting on personal development. The data were analysed using 't' test. The major findings of the study reveal that the college students in Coimbatore district have favourable attitude towards Internet chatting on personal development and their attitude differed in terms of gender and locality of college.

INTRODUCTION

Internet is an invaluable communication tool and a critical adjunct in disseminating and exchanging information among people. Development of the Internet has started a revolution in communication that is providing new opportunities for delivering instruction. Started as an arcane device of communication, today the Internet represents a social device: not only does it enable almost every human activity, but it also gives its users psychological support and guarantees an important sense of belongingness. College students are early adopters and heavy users of Internet compared to the general population. Among the applications of Internet, chatting has an important role for students in their studies and personal development. Internet chatting is a form of synchronous online communication between two or more people to engage in real-time discussion and creates close relationship among persons who share their interests. As there are differences between 'online' and 'traditional' human relationships, the formation of relationships by Internet chatting will continue till the individual's will and wish. The college students are using Internet chatting for their personal benefit while it gives mutual help to all those involved in chatting. The present study is based on a survey to investigate the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on their personal development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Albert L. Ingram, Lesley G. Hathorn and Alan Evans (2000) conducted a study on "Beyond chat on the Internet". From this study it is found that graphical chat programmes can be used effectively to hold discussions with students over a distance, to bring together people who may not otherwise communicate, and to create environments that encourage role playing, conversation and collaboration.

Keith J. Anderson (2001) conducted a study on "Internet Use among College Students: An Exploratory Study" to identify how the students' use of the Internet has affected their social or academic lives. Although the typical Internet-using student uses the Internet for 100 minutes per day, a small group of students use the Internet to a degree that interferes with other aspects of their lives. Most of them are men and are found among the hard science academic majors. Some ideas for dealing with this problem are suggested.

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Uwe Wolfradt and Jörg Doll(2001) conducted a study on “Motives of Adolescents to Use the Internet as a Function of Personality Traits, Personal and Social Factor”. This study investigates the relation between personality traits, personal (innovativeness, self-efficacy) and social (expectations of relevant reference groups) Internet related factors on the one hand and three motives (information, entertainment and, interpersonal communication) for going on-line on the other hand among 122 adolescent Internet users. The specificity hypothesis was supported in that Internet-specific personal and social factors together accounted for more variance of the Internet use motives than the global personality traits. With regard to the personality traits, neuroticism was found to be positively associated with the entertainment motive and with the interpersonal communication motive and extraversion was positively associated with the communication motive only.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In modern times, with the development of computer technology, Internet chatting has gradually become a popular way of gaining knowledge, getting and entertainment. A growing number of people spend a lot of time on communicating on the Internet, and many of them regard it as a part of their life, for education, business and entertainment. All the students are gathered together with shared interest and willingness to articulate their views or needs, whether in real time or within a particular time span. Chatting on the Internet comes in many forms. We can have one-on-one chatting via instant messaging software. We can also have group discussions via a chat room or a forum.

Internet chatting is of great popularity and importance due to its attractive advantages. It can shorten the distances between people, offer much entertainment and knowledge and provide a virtual community with many new friends. It is really one of the most useful functions the Internet brings to us. Students’ usage of Internet chatting shows growth on their personal characters, social mingling, educational and emotional development. Students can work on projects with national and international partners through Internet chatting for their all-round development. However, as with anything, we can find

advantages and disadvantages to having Internet chats. But every thing depends on students’ attitude towards it.

So the study on the topic “Attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on their personal development” is more significant.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following objectives;

1. To find out the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on their personal development.
2. To find out if there is any significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on their gender.
3. To find out if there is any significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on their locality.
4. To find out if there is any significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on the type of college.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on their locality.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on the type of college.

METHODOLOGY

The investigators used the normative survey method to study the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development.

Population

The population under investigation included the college students of Tamil Nadu who are having computer science as one subject.

Sample

A total sample of 200 college students from two Arts and Science and two Engineering colleges in Coimbatore district were taken up for the present study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The stratification has been done on the basis of gender, locality of the college and type of college. Fifty respondents were selected randomly from each college. Accordingly 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the students.

Tool

The investigators developed and validated a tool containing twenty statements to measure the attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical technique-'t' test was employed for analysis and interpretation of the data.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1

ATTITUDE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET CHATTING

Attitude	N	Mean	%
	200	59.68	59.68

Table - 1 shows that the college students have favourable attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting on their personal development.

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 : There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of

Internet chatting on personal development based on their gender.

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Table 2

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET CHATTING BASED ON THEIR GENDER

Variab les	Categori es	N	Mean	%	SD
Gender	Male	116	61.23	61.23	9.27
	Female	84	56.90	56.90	10.33

Significance at 0.05 level is 1.96

Table - 2 shows that the calculated value of 't' (3.01) is greater than the table value (1.96). Hence the null hypothesis-1 is rejected. It means that there is significant difference between the mean scores of male and female college students in their attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development. Male college students have more favourable attitude than the female college students towards the influence of Internet chatting.

Hypothesis 2 : There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on their locality.

Table 3

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET CHATTING BASED ON THEIR LOCALITY

Variables	Categories	N	Mean	%	SD
Locality	Rural	100	61.8	61.8	8.31
	Urban	100	57.55	57.55	11.07

Significance at 0.05 level is 1.96

From the above table it is clear that the calculated value of 't' (3.06) is greater than the table value (1.96). Hence the null hypothesis-2 is rejected. That means, there is significant difference between the mean scores of rural and urban college students in their attitude towards the

influence of Internet chatting on personal development. Rural college students have more favourable attitude than the urban college students towards the influence of Internet chatting.

Hypothesis 3 : There is no significant difference in the attitude of college students towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development based on the type of college.

Table 4

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET CHATTING BASED ON THE TYPE OF COLLEGE

Variables	Categories	N	Mean	%	SD
Type of College	Arts & Science	100	59.44	59.44	9.59
	Engineering	100	59.91	59.91	10.42

Significance at 0.05 level is 1.96

Table-4 shows that the calculated 't' (0.33) value is less than the table value (1.96). Hence, the null hypothesis – 3 is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of arts and science college students and engineering college students in their attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting on personal development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the present study, it is found that the college students have a favourable attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting and they agree that improvements are clearly visible in their personal life by the same. The study reveals that male students have a more favourable attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting than female students. This may be due to less restrictions given to male students to do Internet chatting than to female students. The present study also shows that rural college students have a more favourable attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting than urban college students. It may be due to the interest taken by the rural college students for improving their personal skills by doing Internet chatting. Also their parents who didn't have many good chances

for learning and improving at their time might have been more interested to give freedom and opportunity to do Internet chatting for their children and thereby get more personal development. The study shows that there is not much difference between Arts and Science college students and Engineering college students in their attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting. Nowadays all the students are doing Internet chatting for getting self identity and the latest information for their studies. Therefore we can conclude that irrespective of gender, locality, or type of college, the students show a positive attitude towards the influence of Internet chatting on their personal development. The study reveals the awareness of college students that Internet chatting positively influences their personal life. With the help of all the 20 statements of the attitude scale the investigators could learn about the attitude of college students towards Internet chatting.

CONCLUSION

The Internet provides significant benefits for students, such as research access, socialization, entertainment, and a communication tool with families and friends. Most of these facilities can be acquired through Internet chatting. College students are heavy users of the Internet. Irrespective of gender or their branch of study, they involve in Internet chatting and it will change their quality of life. Also it will improve their self knowledge and awareness, realizing dreams and fulfilling aspirations. Thus Internet chatting increases the personal development of an individual. Thereby the attitude towards Internet chatting among college students also simultaneously improves. When the chatting goes excessive, it will lead the individual into Internet addiction. If the students' attitude towards Internet chatting and their usage is watched over the Internet addiction can be prevented by giving proper guidance and counselling to them.

REFERENCE

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