

## ATTITUDE OF YOUNGSTERS AND THEIR PARENTS TOWARDS INTERNET

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study is based upon the attitude of youngsters as well as their parents towards the use of internet. The aim of this study is to find out the acceptability of internet in the family. A sample of 246 male and female respondents is taken and the responses of the respondents are recorded based on the questionnaire. The data is analyzed on the basis of tabulation. The result of the study shows that both parents and youngsters have balanced approach towards internet. It means that both of them are aware that the effect of internet depends upon the purpose for what it is used.*

### INTRODUCTION

In 2013, **Turkle**<sup>1</sup> coined the term of “together but alone”, or “connected but alone”. The term is often used since she published her book, “Alone Together”, on how this era of technology shapes human relations with others (May,2013). This term describes how people spend more time with their gadgets compared to family or others even though they are meeting and gathering together. It referred to “together but alone”, because although they are physically close to their family, they rarely spend quality time together as each of them are busy with gadgets (**Chasanah, A.M.,2018**)<sup>2</sup>. The use of gadgets among children sometimes makes parents worry because of their less time being spent with family members or the negative effect on their academic performance. And on the other hand it seems natural for families to use gadgets when it is quality time with family, also parents and children both can be seen engaged on their personal phones. Social networking sites has increased the interests of parents too as they find it handy to get connected to their friends and relatives. This has led to the

situation where family members are physically present with each other but they do not share any communicational space with each other. Based on their experiences parents build their perception on the use of electronic devices and internet, these experiences can be negative as well positive. Also, it has been seen that tremendous use of these devices and internet has led to the digital divide between parents and children

### MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY THEORY

It was developed by Sandra Ball- Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. It studies media and their audiences in the context of larger social systems. It interrelates social systems, mass media and the individuals. The basic dependency hypothesis states that the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important media will be in a person’s life, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person.

Dependency on media emerges from three relationships:

- 1) The relationship between the society and the media.
- 2) The relationship between the media and the audience. This affects how people might use a mass medium and this relationship is the key variable in this theory.

The more salient the information needs, the stronger are the motivation to seek mediated information and the dependency on the medium. In result, the likelihood for the media to affect audiences becomes greater.

- 3) The relationship between the society and the audience. The societies influence consumer's needs and motives for media use and provide norms, values, knowledge and leave for their members.

Three types of needs decides how important media is to a person:

- 1) The need to understand one's social world (surveillance).
- 2) The need to act meaningfully and effectively in that world (social utility).
- 3) The need to escape from that world when tensions are high (fantasy-escape).

When these needs for media are high, the more people turn to media to meet these needs, and therefore the media have a greater opportunity to affect them. None of these media needs are constant over long period of time. They change and

these changes are based on the aspects of our social environment.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study is based on the primary data collected from a total sample of 246 respondents, among those 163 are the males and 83 are the females. The respondents are the residents of the hostels of Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna University, Srinagar, Pauri Garhwal. As respondents stay away from their family that's why they are more prone to internet use to communicate their parents, so they are chosen for the study. A questionnaire is used to record the responses of the respondents. Tabulation was done with the help of SPSS Software to analyze the data. The respondents are the above 18 years of age group and are from the under-graduation, post-graduation and Ph.D class. The data analyzes the perception and attitude of parents towards internet. Also, it analysis the perception of youngsters towards the use of internet in the family. The analysis will help us to know the awareness on the internet use by both the generations.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data is based on the responses given by the respondents according to their own experiences. The data has been categorized among male respondents and female respondents. The responses are tabulated and calculated on SPSS. Thus, the findings are based upon the tabulation of data done below.

**Table- 1.1 Gender wise response of respondents on what sense parents take electronic media and Internet.**

Sex of the respondents	In what sense do your parents take electronic media and Internet?				Total	
	Positive sense	Negative sense	Balanced	They don't know about it		
Male	Count	54	16	79	14	163
	% within Sex of the respondents	33.1	9.8	48.5	8.6	100
	% within the variable	62.8	76.2	69.3	56.0	66.3
	% of Total	22.0	6.5	32.1	5.7	66.3
Female	Count	32	5	35	11	83
	% within Sex of the respondents	38.6	6.0	42.2	13.3	100
	% within the variable	37.2	23.8	30.7	44.0	33.7
	% of Total	13.0	2.0	14.2	4.5	33.7
Total	Count	86	21	114	25	246
	% within Sex of the respondents	35.0	8.5	46.3	10.2	100
	% within the variable	100	100	100	100	100
	% of Total	35.0	8.5	46.3	10.2	100

The above table shows the majority of 48.5% males said that their parents have balanced attitude towards the use of electronic device and internet, whereas the majority of 42.2% females said the same. It means that their parents consider its use having both positive and negative consequences. This shows that the parents are aware of the fact that internet can prove advantageous when used judiciously and can also prove dangerous when used inappropriately. The second majority of 33.1% males said that their parents took it in positive sense and 38.6% of females said the same. This can be because of the reason that they know or have seen their children doing most of the educational and informative tasks on it. Only 9.8% of males said that

their parents take the electronic media and internet in negative sense and 6% females said the same, which is least in their category. It means that they are quite skeptical towards its use or may have bad experience related to it. 8.6% of males said that their parents do not know much about electronic media and internet and 13.3% of females said the same. It shows those parents who are not much educated or are in their oldage. As according to **Valcke (2010)<sup>3</sup>** age and education are important factors that relate to internet access in homes. Younger parents often have more knowledge about the internet and therefore use more internet restrictions and older parents tend to have less knowledge of internet and are more lenient internet restrictions (Valcke,2010).

**Table 1.2- Gender wise response on regulating online activities of respondents on internet.**

Sex of the respondents	Do your parents try to regulate your online activities on internet?				Total	
	Yes	Sometimes	Not bothered	They don't know about internet		
Male	Count	28	65	45	25	163
	% within Sex of the respondents	17.2	39.9	27.6	15.3	100
	% within the variable	96.6	59.6	67.2	61.0	66.3
	% of Total	11.4	26.4	18.3	10.2	66.3
Female	Count	1	44	22	16	83
	% within Sex of the respondents	1.2	53.0	26.5	19.3	100
	% within the variable	3.4	40.4	32.8	39.0	33.7
	% of Total	0.4	17.9	8.9	6.5	33.7
Total	Count	29	109	67	41	246
	% within Sex of the respondents	11.8	44.3	27.2	16.7	100
	% within the variable	100	100	100	100	100
	% of Total	11.8	44.3	27.2	16.7	100

Older parents who tend to have less knowledge of the internet are more lenient in placing restrictions and the age of the child is important when it comes to internet restrictions because it is expected that children become more responsible with age (Valcke,2010).

In the above table majority 26.4% of male respondents said that their parents try to regulate their activities on internet sometimes only while the majority of 17.9% female respondents said that. This can be because of the fact that the respondents are residing away from their parents, or lower use of internet access may also relate to a lower rate of internet knowledge, which means that parents may be less likely to regulate or monitor their child's internet use outside the home (Valcke,2010). Also,

as said earlier parents may feel that the child has now matured enough to handle his online activities.

26.4% of male respondents said that their parents 'sometimes' try to regulate their activities on internet, whereas 17.9% female respondents said the same. 11.4% males said 'yes' to the question that their parents try to regulate their online activities, while only 0.4% females said so. This shows that parents may think that females are more responsible in handling internet, or their parents must have carried out restrictions since childhood so that must become responsible 'cyber citizens'. According to **Livingstone (2008)**<sup>4</sup> there are three broad categories in internet protection, namely (1) *active* is when a parent talks to their child about media content while the child engages in it, (2) *restrictive* is when a parent sets rule that restricts

things like time spent or location of use, and (3) *co-viewing* is when a parent is present while the child uses the internet. 10.2% males said that their parents

do not know much about internet and 6.4% females said so.

**Table- 1.3 Age wise response of respondents on Television and internet affects family culture or not.**

Age of the Respondents		Do you think that television and internet affect your family culture?				Total
		Yes	No	Sometimes	Can't say	
18-20 years	Count	29	22	34	10	95
	% within Age of the Respondents	30.5	23.2	35.8	10.5	100
	% within the variable	33.7	34.4	46.6	43.5	38.6
	% of Total	11.8	8.9	13.8	4.1	38.6
21-23 years	Count	36	34	21	7	98
	% within Age of the Respondents	36.7	34.7	21.4	7.1	100
	% within the variable	41.9	53.1	28.8	30.4	39.8
	% of Total	14.6	13.8	8.5	2.8	39.8
24-26 years	Count	9	5	16	2	32
	% within Age of the Respondents	28.1	15.6	50.0	6.3	100
	% within the variable	10.5	7.8	21.9	8.7	13.0
	% of Total	3.7	2.0	6.5	0.8	13.0
27-29 years	Count	6	3	1	2	12
	% within Age of the Respondents	50.0	25.0	8.3	16.7	100
	% within the variable	7.0	4.7	1.4	8.7	4.9
	% of Total	2.4	1.2	0.4	0.8	4.9
Above 29 years	Count	6	0	1	2	9
	% within Age of the Respondents	66.7	0.0	11.1	22.2	100
	% within the variable	7.0	0.0	1.4	8.7	3.7
	% of Total	2.4	0.0	0.4	0.8	3.7
Total	Count	86	64	73	23	246
	% within Age of the Respondents	35.0	26.0	29.7	9.3	100
	% within the variable	100	100	100	100	100
	% of Total	35.0	26.0	29.7	9.3	100

The domestication of both television and internet in household has led to the mix of responses. The concept of domestication is a two-way process, in which the consumer changes the meaning and influence of technologies and in the process the

family culture and patterns of interaction are affected (Mesch, G., 2008)<sup>5</sup>.

The dominant image of the relationship between family and television is one in which the media are seen as having a primarily disruptive effect on

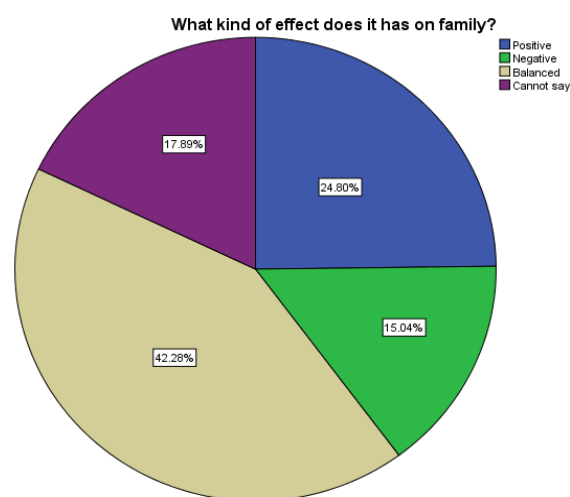
household routines and family relationships. In this picture media is seen as primarily negative and disruptive. However, it is perfectly possible to pose this issue the other way round. Rather than simply thinking of television having a disruptive effect on the household, one can examine the ways in which television provides family members with different schedules for gathering and the ways in which television programming does not so much intrude on existing family activities as provide organizing centres or focuses for new types of communicative contexts (Morley,D.,1986)<sup>6</sup>. In higher density families, T.V. viewing may function as a way of avoiding conflicts or lessening tensions in lieu of spatial privacy (Lindlof and Traudt,1983)<sup>7</sup>.

For some households connected to internet it can be a medium of engaging in the opportunities for family collaboration and communication and for some its use can be seen as an activity that reduces the time that parents and children spend together.

In the above table the majority of 13.8% respondents in 18-20 years of age group said that 'sometimes' television and internet does affect their family culture. This is because they feel that in some contexts television viewing and internet activities affects the culture of Indian families, like they

cannot watch some things comfortably with family or feel that those things pass on bad messages to the society. The second majority of 11.8% respondents said 'yes' in response to the question, because they think that the new age media has led to so much openness and boldness that it affects the distance of respect towards elders in family. Also, television and internet nowadays shows the kind of programmes that makes their parents speculative towards their own children. 8.9% said a straight 'no' in response to the question, while 4.1% were unable to say anything on it. In the 21-23 age group, the majority of 14.6% said 'yes' as a response and the second majority of 13.8% said 'no' in response. In this category the difference between these responses is not much and shows a balance between the respondents those saying 'yes' and 'no'. in the 24-26 age group, the majority of 6.5% said that television and television 'sometimes' affect their family culture, while the second majority of 3.7% said 'yes' in response. In the age group of 27-29 the majority of 2.4% said 'yes' in response and the second majority of 1.2% said 'no' in response. The majority of above 29 years of age respondents said 'yes' in response to the question and no one thinks that television and internet affects the family culture.

Fig- 1.4: Pie-chart showing the type of effect of electronic media and internet on children.



According to E.M. Rogers (2005)<sup>8</sup>, both positive and negative outcomes are possible when an individual or organization chooses to adopt a particular

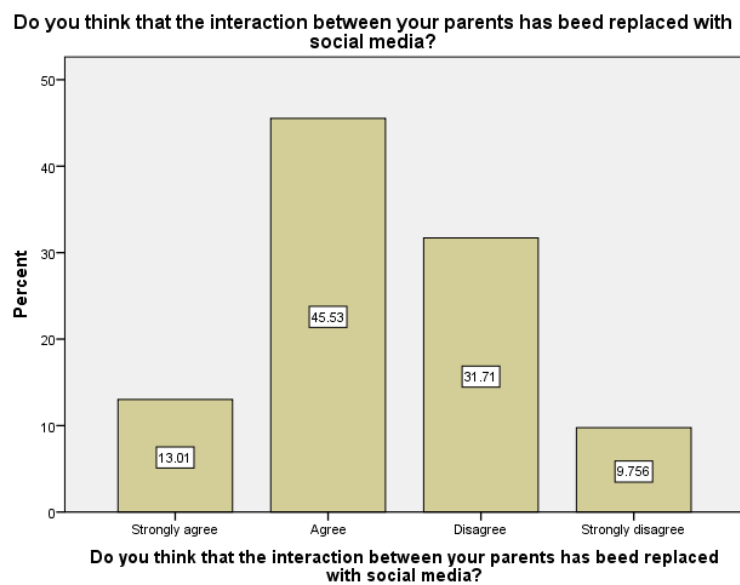
innovation. Also the cultivation theory (Gerbner,G.,1970)<sup>9</sup> states that the more time people spend "living' in the television world, the more likely

they are to believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on television. So, it is clear that electronic media and internet has so much to give ease and pamper the users. The type of its use decides its impact. Its effective and efficient use leads to communicative and informative exchange but it proves to be disadvantageous when becomes an addiction.

In the above figure, the majority of respondents (42.28%) accepted that electronic

media and internet has balanced effect on family. It means the respondents feel that it is on us that how we handle mass media and adopt it in our lives to influence us. The second majority (24.80%) of respondents said that it has positive effect on family. 17.89% cannot say anything on it and the least percentage of students i.e. 15.04% said that electronic media and internet has negative effect on family.

**Figure: 1.5 Response of respondents on their thoughts on “ Interaction between parents has been replaced with interaction on social media”.**



It has been argued that internet use is negatively associated with family time. The main contention is that time spent on one activity cannot be spent on another (Nie et al.,2002<sup>10</sup>). Internet use is a time-consuming activity, and in families that are connected to the internet , high frequency of use might be negatively associated with family time and positively associated with family conflicts (Mesch, G.,2006)<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the reduction in family time was higher for the average internet user than for the average TV watcher (Nie et al.,2004)<sup>12</sup>. The technological revolution has led to many societal changes and the main social setting that have been affected is that of the family. Internet activities are diminishing family and individual leisure time and keeping them ‘plugged in’ more often, creating less face-to-face interactions (Leung & Lee,2005)<sup>13</sup>.

The above figure indicates that majority of 45.53% respondents agreed to the statement that interaction between parents has been replaced with social media. However the second majority of 31.71 % respondents disagreed to the statement. It may be because of the fact that majority of respondents in the chapter 5 have told that internet has enhanced their social relationships and likewise they might have felt close connectivity with their parents because of internet, especially when they are residing away from them. Because on other hand ICT can provide positive results too, by allowing family members to keep in touch, make plans in real-time, ensure children’s safety as they allow communication in emergency situations ( 13.01% still strongly agree with the statement and the least

percentage of 9.75% of respondents strongly disagreed.

## RESULTS

We have seen parents been reporting of dull academic grades of their children because of excessive internet usage. Also, it is affecting the interactive culture of the family as the children as well as parents spend their extra time on internet calls, chatting, scrolling videos etc. this creates a kind of parent-child distancing and sometimes render the old aged generation living in the family alone. The majority of respondents (46.3%) said that their parents have balanced approach towards internet, depending upon the purpose of its usage, they decide its advantages and drawbacks. Majority of respondents (44.3%) from both male and female category said that their parents 'sometimes' try to regulate their online activities, but not fully. This means that parents do keep a check on them and nag them sometimes to avoid their over indulgence in online activities. So, it depends on the content they watch that what they are going to adapt from it. That's why the majority of (42.28%) respondents said that electronic media and internet has balanced effect on children. If positive content is watched it will have positive effect and if negative content is followed they will have negative effect. Many respondents told that in today's scenario internet has become a big learning hub too by having various study apps like Byju's and all, so it is not only children but the adults too who can upgrade themselves by its use or can deteriorate themselves by its bad addiction. Majority of respondents said that television and electronic media affects family culture and the majority of 45.53% respondents agreed to the fact that interaction between their mother and father has been replaced with social media.

These results show that parents and youngsters too have perception that more we depend on media the more it affects us. Thus it depends on a person how he uses internet and what will be the level of dependency on it.

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