



INTERNET USAGE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR GENDER

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Abstract

In the present study, the investigator attempts to find out the significant difference, if any, between the male and female senior secondary students on their internet usage. For this purpose 400 senior secondary students of Haryana were taken as a sample using multistage random sampling. Amount of time spent on the Internet during a week was self reported by the respondents. The findings of the study revealed that male students spend more time on internet surfing than female students.

Keywords: Internet Usage, Senior Secondary Students, Gender



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As stated by Leiner, Clark and Khan et al. (2003), “The Internet has revolutionized the computer and communication world like nothing before it. The invention of telegraphy, the telephone, radio, and computer set the stage for this unprecedented integration of capabilities. The Internet is at once a worldwide broadcasting capability, mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaboration and interaction among individuals and computers without regard for geographic location. The Internet represents one of the most successful examples of the benefits of sustained investment and commitment to research and development of information infrastructure. Beginning with the early research in packet switching, government, industry, and academia have been partners in evolving and deploying this exciting new technology.”

A worldwide system consisting of people, information and computers is Internet. The Internet is used by millions of people all over the world to access and exchange information. Users range from researchers, educators, students, government officials and business personnel to private citizens. It has evolved as a new scholarly communication system. The Federation National Council (FNC) in 1995 referred the Internet, “as global information system that is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the Internet Protocol

(IP). It is a worldwide system of interconnected computer networks. Information is exchanged by these computer networks using TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) to communicate with each other.” In the words of Krol (1995) the Internet is “(1) a network of networks based on the standard sets of protocols, (2) a community of people who use and develop those networks, and (3) a collection of resources that can be reached from those networks.”

Internet has brought a revolution in the way we interact with each other and has provided us with a common platform for communication through the various social networking websites like orkut, facebook etc. News updates can be accessed anytime through internet. The Internet exerts increasingly more influence on our everyday life.

The Internet has made communication much easier than before. Within fractions of seconds, messages in the forms of email can be sent at any corner of the world. Besides that, email also facilitated mass communication which means that one sender can reach many receivers. Some of the services like video conferencing, live telecast, music, news, e-commerce, etc. are made available due to Internet. So, the Internet has made distances shorter and the world smaller.

Now-a-days, the Internet can be accessed by several ways available to us. As technology keeps improving, methods to access the Internet also increase. People can use their cell phone, laptop and various gadgets to access Internet services. In the 21st century, Internet is completely revolutionizing the academic and educational system. Now-a-days, Internet is more and more actively used by teachers as well as students in pursuit of their academic duties and goals. Internet has become a powerful educational tool providing an instant access to information, anywhere and anytime. In fact regardless of time and geographical location, one can access instantly the required information within seconds. Internet has also been turned into the biggest global digital encyclopedia, and every piece of information is just at a ‘finger touch’ distance from the end user. That’s why an increasing number of students are actively using Internet for instrumental purposes like information gathering, school work and social communication. According to a National School Board’s Foundation’s report, the majority of parents consider positively the use of Internet in their children’s lives. They see it as a powerful and effective tool for education. For the current study, senior secondary students are chosen because they have access to the Internet, and therefore are more likely to be Internet users than other populations. In a comparative study of Internet users and non-users, Lajwanti and Sharma, A.P. (2013) found that gender, stream opted by students and Internet usage didn’t exert any effect significantly on the study habits and academic

performance whereas those students not accessing Internet were significantly better adjusted than those Internet users. Students of Science stream were mediocre in their adjustment but students of Arts were maladjusted. A similar type of study was conducted by Thanuskodi, S. (2013) on “Gender Differences in Internet Usage among College Students: A Comparative Study” and no significant difference was found between the groups of male and female students on their Internet usage as they had equal availability of Internet access but significant difference was found in their usage pattern. Male and female students were found using the Internet for different purposes at home.

Objectives of the study

The study intended to attain the following objectives:

1. To compare the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students.
2. To compare the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Arts Stream.
3. To compare the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Commerce Stream.
4. To compare the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Science Stream.

Hypotheses of the study

The following are the hypotheses of the present study:

H₀1 No significant difference exists on the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students.

H₀2 No significant difference exists on the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Arts Stream.

H₀3 No significant difference exists on the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Commerce Stream.

H₀4 No significant difference exists on the Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Science Stream.

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was used to compare the internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of different streams as this method is concerned with surveying, describing and investigating the existing phenomenon or issues.

Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of 400 senior secondary school students of Haryana. The sample included both Male and Female students of Arts, Science and

Commerce Academic Stream. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to collect the data. Haryana was divided in four zones on the basis of commissionerates headquarters i.e. Ambala, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon. In order to draw a representative sample, twelve senior secondary schools from these districts of Haryana State were selected. The schools were selected randomly by the investigator and the subjects within the schools were also selected on the basis of randomization technique of sampling.

Tool Used

After seeking due consent from the principals of the schools, students were supposed to fill personal details regarding name, gender, class, academic stream, school and average amount of time spent on the internet in a week.

Analysis Of Data

After scoring the data, it was analyzed using statistical techniques. Mean and SD were computed and t- test was used to know the significance of the difference between two groups in accordance with the objectives of the study. The results so obtained were tabulated for interpretation and conclusions as follows:

Internet Usage among Senior Secondary Students In Relation To Gender

1. It was hypothesized that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Internet usage between the groups of male and female senior secondary students. The result regarding this hypothesis is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Mean, SDs, SED and t- value of Internet Usage of male and female senior secondary students

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SDs	SED	t-value	Level of significance
Internet Usage	Male	225	5.782	5.892	0.56	3.24	0.01
	Female	175	3.957	5.319	2	6	0.05

$P \geq 0.05 = 1.97, P \geq 0.01 = 2.59$ at df 398

It is evident from the Table 1 that mean scores of male and female senior secondary students are 5.782 and 3.957 with the respective standard deviations of 5.892 and 5.319. The calculated t-value is 3.246 which is greater than 1.97 and 2.59. The t-value is statistically significant at 0.01 as well as 0.05 level of significance (df 398). So, null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is a significant difference between both the groups' i.e. male and female senior secondary students. Further, it is found that mean scores of Internet usage among male senior secondary students are more than female students indicating that the male

senior secondary students spend more time in surfing the Internet as compared to female students.

Internet usage among senior secondary male and female students of Arts

2. It was hypothesized that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Internet usage between the groups of male and female senior secondary students of Arts. The result regarding this hypothesis is presented in table 2.

Table 2 Mean, SDs, SED and t-value of Internet Usage of male and female senior secondary students of Arts

Stream	Groups	N	Me an	SDs	SE D	t- valu e	Level of signific ance
Senior Secondary students of Arts	Male	28	6.1 96	4.081	1.9 74	0.80 8	NS*
	Female	67	3.5 75	6.366			

$P \leq 0.05 = 1.99, P \leq 0.01 = 2.63$ at *df* 93

* *Not significant*

It is revealed by Table 2 that mean scores of male and female students of Arts are 6.196 and 3.575 with the respective standard deviations of 4.081 and 6.366. The t- value is 0.808 which is not significant at any level of significance (df 93). Therefore, null hypothesis that “there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Arts” is accepted. The difference in the mean scores of the two groups is just by chance. It is not significant. It can be said that male and female senior secondary students of Arts do not differ significantly on their Internet usage.

Internet usage among senior secondary male and female students of Commerce

3. It was hypothesized that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Internet usage between the groups of male and female senior secondary students of Commerce. The result regarding this hypothesis is presented in table 3

Table 3 Mean, SDs, SED and t-value of Internet usage of senior secondary students of Commerce

Stream	Groups	N	Mea n	SDs	SE D	t- value	Level of significan ce
Senior Secondary students of Commerce	Male	92	7.33	7.54	1.51 2	1.348	NS*
	Female		5.05	6.91			
		59	1	8			

$P \leq 0.05 = 1.98, P \leq 0.01 = 2.61$ at *df* 149

* *Not significant*

The table 3 depicts that the mean scores of Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Commerce are 7.336 and 5.051. The t- value being 1.348 is not significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance (df 149) that is 2.61 and 1.98 respectively. The result indicates that the two groups do not differ significantly.

Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, we can conclude that male and female senior secondary students of Commerce do not differ significantly on their Internet usage.

Internet usage among senior secondary male and female students of Science

4. It was hypothesized that there exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Internet usage between the groups of male and female senior secondary students of Science. The result regarding this hypothesis is presented in table 4.

Table 4 Mean, SDs, SED and t-value of Internet Usage of senior secondary students of Science

Stream	Groups	N	Mean	SDS	SED	t-value	Level of significance
Senior Secondary students of Science	Male	105	4.309	4.380	0.695	1.942	NS*
	Female	49	3.163	2.729			

$P \leq 0.05 = 1.98, P \leq 0.01 = 2.61$ at df 152

* Not significant

The table 4 depicts that the mean scores of Internet usage among male and female senior secondary students of Science are 4.309 and 3.163. The t- value being 1.942 is not significant at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance (df 149) that is 2.61 and 1.98 respectively. The result indicates that the two groups do not differ significantly.

So, null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, we can conclude that male and female senior secondary students of Science do not differ significantly on their Internet usage.

Findings and Conclusions:

1. Significant difference was found between the two groups of male and female senior secondary students on their Internet usage. Male senior secondary students spend more time in surfing the Internet as compared to female students.
2. No significant difference was found between the two groups of male and female senior secondary students of Arts on their Internet usage.
3. No significant difference was found between the two groups of male and female senior secondary students of Commerce on their Internet usage.
4. No significant difference was found between the two groups of male and female senior secondary students of Science on their Internet usage.

Thus on the basis of findings it may be concluded that male and female senior secondary school students differ significantly on their internet usage but their academic stream do not contribute in their internet usage. The use of Internet has considerable influence on cognitive, social, physical and behavioural development of children and adolescents (Kraut et al., 1998; Subrahmanyam et al., 2001). It can be positive, negative or a mix of both in different proportions. So, it's important to understand the potential benefits and risks of teen Internet use and thus enable a constructive, safe and positive use of Internet. With proper attention and by adopting adequate strategies adolescents can take full advantage and benefits of this ever increasing and omnipresent technology.

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