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A STUDY ON THE DIGITAL SAFETY MEASURES OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

The present study has been conducted among 150 higher secondary school students in Chennai to study the awareness of digital safety measures. The researcher used a self-constructed tool for data collection. Data was analysed by t-test. Findings showed that there is a positive relationship between awareness of digital safety measures and real-life safety measures among higher secondary school students. Results also indicated that there is a significant difference in the awareness of digital safety measures with respect to gender, parents' income, and receiving guidelines for online behaviour from parents and teachers. However there is no significant difference in the awareness of digital safety measures with respect to parents' qualification, number of siblings, number of social media used and time spent on social media sites and apps.

KEYWORDS: Digital Safety , Higher Secondary School Students , social media sites and apps.

INTRODUCTION

Man has an intrinsic urge to connect to others. It is this basic need to be in company of others that directed man to discover language, art forms and today ICT. Information Communication Technology has changed how people connect. From the days when people waited for the post man to walk by, humanity has, within one generation moved on to instant messaging anywhere in the world.

This has affected how people relate with each other. The digital space is becoming predominantly where man thrives as a social being. Increasing amount of time spent online is making us digital citizens. More people, more time and more instructions also make the digital space vulnerable. The good, bad and the ugly coexist in the digital space, only the rules of a society are not as easily enforceable there as in the real world. It is becoming a mammoth challenge to keep the digital space safe.

While cyber policing and online safety norms are enforced, it is for all to see how vulnerable our adolescents are. Added to the fact the digital space is not manageable like real space is the anonymity one feels in the digital space making human behaviour more complicated. Under the pretence of anonymity predators roam free in digital space. Cyber bullying, stalking, phishing and sexting, are some of the evils we have never heard of one generation ago. The millions of photo and videos uploaded can all be manipulated to harm.

At this critical juncture it is imperative that our children are trained in safely navigating the digital space. This study is an attempt to study the awareness of digital safety measures of Higher Secondary School students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Michele. J., Shane, G., Adolescents' Safety and



Exposure Online, University of Canberra.

A survey was conducted among 692 Australian 13- to 16-year-olds to examine aspects of their Internet use and, in particular, their exposure to inappropriate material and behaviours online and their online safety practices. Significant differences were found in the amount of exposure to inappropriate material or behaviours online according to sex and frequency of usage, with males and more frequent Internet users showing greater exposure. No differences were found according to whether blocking or filtering software was installed. Significant differences in online safety practices were also found, with younger participants (13- to 14-year-olds) and those participants whose parents had not discussed Internet safety with them being less safety conscious.

Jang, and Jaccard (Nepal, 2014), Online safety begins with you and me: Convincing Internet users to protect themselves, Department of Media and Information, Nepal.

Despite widespread warnings of the dangers of poor online safety practices, a surprising percentage of users are still very naïve about safety. It is important to understand what message cues related to online safety are successful in eliciting protective behaviours through activating threat and coping appraisal processes. This research found the efficacy of a multi-pronged strategy. The safety deficits of the most vulnerable Internet users - those lacking knowledge about how to handle changing online threats might be overcome by stressing personal responsibility for online safety together with providing vicarious experience with protective measures. When personal responsibility was stressed, providing naïve users with vicarious experiences with safe online behaviours had a greater effect on safety intentions than merely telling them that it was easy to protect themselves through safety tips. Among those unfamiliar with online safety protections, emphasizing personal responsibility was more effective than emphasizing the responsibility of others when combined with vicarious experience. Vicarious experience and personal responsibility interventions should be used in concert with one another. Vicarious experience by itself was superior to persuasion in improving coping self-efficacy, previously shown to be a key determinant of safe behaviour on the Internet. This supported the argument that vicarious experience is superior to persuasion as an intervention strategy to bolster coping self-efficacy. However, the vicarious experience manipulation had no direct effect on behavioural intentions. Among naïve users lacking prior knowledge with online safety hazards, a vicarious experience treatment might be too much to them to cognitively process. There is the danger of overloading them with information and having a subsequent "shut down" with them disregarding online safety.

Lawrence J. Magid, (1998), Child Safety on the Information Highway, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

While children need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply while online. If you have cause for concern about your children's online activities, talk to them. Also seek out the advice and counsel of teachers, librarians, and other Internet and online service users in your area. Open communication with your children, utilization of such computer resources, and getting online yourself will help you obtain the full benefits of these systems and alert you to any potential problem that may occur with their use. If your child tells you about an upsetting person or thing encountered while online, don't blame your child but help him or her avoid problems in the future. Remember - how you respond will determine whether they confide in you the next time they encounter a problem and how they learn to deal with problems on their own. While children need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement.

Ralph Gross, (2005), Information Revelation and Privacy in Online Social Networks, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh.

In a study of more than 4,000 users of the Facebook individuals' willingness to provide large amounts of personal information in an online social network, and how unconcerned its users appear to privacy risks, while personal data is generously provided, limiting privacy preferences are hardly used were quantified. Only a small number of members change the default privacy preferences, which are set to maximize the visibility of user

profiles. Based on the information they provide online, users expose themselves to various physical and cyber risks, and make it extremely easy for third parties to create digital dossiers of their behaviour. These risks are not unique to the Facebook. However, the Facebook's public linkages between an individual profile and the real identity of its owner, and the Facebook's perceived connection to a physical and ostensibly bounded community make Facebook users a particularly interesting population for our research.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the relationship between digital safety measures and real-life safety habits of higher secondary students.
- To study the digital safety measures of higher secondary students with respect to gender, parents' education, parents' income and number of siblings.
- To study the digital safety measures of higher secondary students with respect to the number of social media used and the time spent on social media.
- To study the digital safety measures of higher secondary students with respect to the usefulness of the guidelines on social media usage received from parents and teachers.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant relationship between digital safety measures and real-life safety habits of higher secondary students.
2. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary boys and higher secondary girls.
3. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who have both non-graduate parents and those who have at least one graduate parent.
4. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students whose parents' income is less than or equal to Rs.20000 per month and those whose parents' income is more than Rs.20000 per month.
5. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who have one or less sibling and those who have more than one sibling.
6. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who use only one social media and those who use more than one social media.
7. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who spend two hours a week or less and those who spend more than two hours a week in social media.
8. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who get guidelines from their parents on social media usage and those who don't.
9. There is no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who get guidelines from their teachers on social media usage and those who don't.

RESEARCH METHOD

Survey method has been used for this study.

SAMPLE

Random sampling technique has been used for this study and the sample size was 150. Data has been collected from 150 Higher Secondary School students in Chennai.

TOOL USED FOR THE STUDY

The researcher used a self-constructed tool for this research. The tool consisted of 16 statements regarding Digital Safety and 16 statements regarding Real-life Safety. Each statement was followed by five columns with response categories, Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never. Provision was made to collect personal details like Gender, Parents' qualification, Parents' income, Number of siblings, Number of social

media sites or apps used, Time spent in social media sites and apps and Receiving guidelines for social media usage from parents and teachers.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Relationship between Awareness of Digital Safety Measures and Real-Life Safety Measures of Higher Secondary Students

Dimensions	Correlation value 'r'	p-value
Digital safety measures	0.751	0.000
Real-life safety measures		

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant relationship between the awareness of digital safety measures and real-life safety measures of higher secondary students.

Table 2: Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Boys and Higher Secondary Girls

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Male	75	81.92	11.81	5.60	0.000
	Female	75	92.86	12.09		

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary boys and higher secondary girls.

Table 3: Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Students Who Have Both Non-Graduate Parents and Those Who Have At Least One Graduate Parent

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Both parents non-graduates	89	86.65	13.48	0.67	0.498
	One or both parents graduates	61	88.13	12.42		

Since p-value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there is a no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who have both non-graduate parents and those who have at least one graduate parent.

Table 4: Difference in the Digital Safety Measures Between Higher Secondary Students Whose Parents' Income Is Less Than or Equal To Rs20000 per Month and Those Whose Parents' Income Is More than Rs20000 per Month

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Parents income less than or equal to Rs20000 per month	94	84.65	12.67	3.423	0.001
	Parents income more than Rs20000 per month	56	91.98	12.66		

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students whose parents' income is less than or equal to Rs20000 per month and those whose parents' income is more than Rs20000 per month.

Table 5: t test - Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Students Who Have One or Less Sibling and Those Who Have More Than One Sibling

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	One or less sibling	122	87.00	13.21	0.749	0.45
	More than one sibling	28	89.07	12.78		

Since p-value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there is a no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who have one or less sibling and those who have more than one sibling.

Table 6: t test - Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Students Who Use Only One Social Media and Those Who Use More Than One Social Media

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Only one social media used	28	85.42	13.08	0.878	0.381
	More than one social media used	122	87.74	13.14		

Since p-value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there is a no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who use only one social media and those who use more than one social media.

Table 7: t test - Difference in the Digital Safety Measures Between Higher Secondary Students Who Spend Two Hours A Week Or Less And Those Who Spend More Than Two Hours A Week In Social Media

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Less than 2 hour a week	97	87.18	14.39	0.286	0.775
	Two hours or more a week	53	87.77	10.52		

Since p-value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there is a no significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who spend two hours a week or less and those who spend more than two hours a week on social media.

Table 8: Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Students Who Get Guidelines from Their Parents on Social Media Usage and Those Who Don't

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Receive guidelines from parents	96	91.11	13.46	5.492	0.000
	Do not receive guidelines from parents	54	80.77	9.44		

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference in the digital safety measures between higher secondary students who get guidelines from their parents on social media usage and those who don't.

Table 9: Difference in the Digital Safety Measures between Higher Secondary Students Who Get Guidelines from Their Teachers on Social Media Usage and Those Who Don't

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Digital safety measure	Receive guidelines from teachers	78	90.03	13.13	2.620	0.010
	Do not receive guidelines from teachers	72	84.52	12.57		

Since p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a significant difference in the digital safety measures between Higher Secondary students who get guidelines from their teachers on social media usage and those who don't.

FINDINGS

- There is a significant positive relationship between the awareness of digital safety measures and real-life safety measures. Students who are careful about safety in real space also are careful in digital space.
- The awareness of digital safety measures is not dependent on the number of social media used or time spent on them. Neither does qualification of parents or the family size matter.
- What matters in issues of digital safety is clearly receiving guidelines from parents and teachers. The girls are more aware of safety measures than boys. The economic status of the students makes a significant impact too.

CONCLUSION

The study suggests that one of the most influential factors in keeping our children safe is increasing their awareness by giving them clear safety guidelines. Students who are aware of the real-life safety measures are so because they have been taught by family, school and society. Similarly, it is necessary to make conscious efforts to teach our students, guidelines on digital safety. Parents and teachers will have to make this a priority. Towards this it will be a significant step to first equip our parents and teachers with the knowledge of digital safety. The only way to keep our children safe online seems to be by consciously teaching them how to do it.

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