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Internet Utilization Patterns among University Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The major objectives of the study were: to find out the different ways and means of using internet among university students; to ascertain the purposes and reasons of internet utilization patterns among university students and to give recommendations for the improvement of situation and for further research. Population of the study comprised of all the students enrolled in BS programs in eight selected universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Total 1000 students were selected as a sample using purposive sampling procedure. A self-developed questionnaire was used as a research tool. Mean scores and Standard Deviation were used as a statistical tool using SPSS 16. It was found that most of the students use internet at university in the company of different peoples, three to five times a week and like to chat with both male and female. Mostly students utilize internet for positive and healthy purposes. Students agreed that they find information according to their need on internet and internet gives them pleasure. It is recommended that proper awareness and guidance may be provided to the university students to utilize internet for positive, creative, constructive and healthy activities.

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Introduction

Whenever any new medium enters human life, people try to adopt it rapidly, like the radio and TV's interventions do. Same is the case with the internet. In a highly developed country it has changed the life style of the people and are regularly using internet. Even in the less developed country like Pakistan, the use of internet is increasing and has impact on its users. So internet provides a new area of research for the students and researchers in this field. So this is the need of the day to introduce the internet as a new technology in education which will bring changes in the entire system of education.

In this era of information technology, internet emerged as a new mass medium and the concerns of communication researchers shifted towards the functioning and effects of new technology on its users and on human communication. Our emphasis is more with the human and social impact than the technology itself. (Bryant and Zillmann, 1994)

Internet plays a useful role in communicating the peoples and is a great site for youngster to communicate with people of other communities, to solve their problems, and to get data about their educational careers. But there is a possibility of both positive and negative effects of internet, such as internet affects the mind of our young generation. Our youngsters watch obscenities in net cafes and they also search or open the immoral and unethical sites. The owners of net cafes have no code of conduct for the wrong use of internet.

This is the age of information and communication technology. In this modern era, media has a central role in informing the individuals and affecting their thoughts along with shaping their behaviors.

In contemporary society, life without information is difficult. The gaps among countries are reduced by the

electronic Media, e.g. the internet, which has become the fastest growing Medium ever recorded. Internet is a major source of change for our print and electronic media as we cross the threshold of the 21st century. It brought about the greatest revolution in mass communication since the invention of moveable type for printing. Unlike the previous revolution, which took centuries to reach all parts of the world, the present revolution has already made its impact within a few years of its introduction.

The research article retrieved from china media research by Rooh-e-Aslam et al (2009) mentioned that overall, 75% users utilize internet for communication purposes like e-mail, instant messaging and chatting, while 43% utilize it for other activities like web browsing, shopping and game playing. They also reported that users consume 8.7% internet time in playing online games. Youngsters prefer to online communication, while adults utilize it for email purposes. Mostly students utilize internet for email, instant messaging and social networking sites, consuming a lot of time on browsing, reading, participating in discussion groups and in chat rooms.

Advancement in technology brings major impacts on education. Many universities around the globe are expanding their investment in information technology (IT), and specially the Internet, and are actively developing Internet use in university education. Teachers are being advised to prepare their teaching and other supporting which are easily available on internet. Students should be appreciated to communicate with teachers, or with each another, through email. As universities develop Internet use, they need to learn their students' behaviors towards using it.

Statement of the problem

The study was conducted on the utilization patterns of internet among university students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study highlights the positive and negative impact of internet on university students.

Significance of the study

Internet as an educational technology plays a catalytic role in uplifting of an education system. So how to makes the internet safe for the coming generation, the study will bring it to the required standard. The study will give a clear cut picture to the parents, stakeholders of education, administrators, policy makers and planners about the utilization patterns of internet among university students.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the different ways and means of using internet among university students.
- To ascertain the purposes and reasons of internet utilization patterns among university students.
- To give recommendations to improve the situation and for further research.

Research Methodology

The study was descriptive and survey type in nature. Following procedure was adopted for this purpose.

Population and Sample

Population for this study comprised of BS students of all the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Total 22 universities were located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa out of which 8 were selected randomly i.e. Peshawar University, Gomal University Dera. Ismail. Khan, Hazara University, University of Science and Technology Bannu, Cecos University Peshawar, Sarhad University Peshawar, Gandhara University Peshawar, Qurtaba University Dera. Ismail. Khan. Sample of 1000 BS students were selected from these selected universities with the help of purposive sampling procedure.

Instrumentation

A self-developed questionnaire was used which was comprised on five point Likert scale. The questionnaire consists of utilization patterns which are further sub divided into three parts.

- Ways and means of internet utilization (close-ended)
- Purposes for which they utilize internet (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)
- Reasons of internet utilization (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly agree)

Validity of the questionnaire was pilot tested. The questionnaires were sent to two professors of IT department and two of education department. Opinions of the experts were incorporated and then distributed to forty BS students of different universities for further validity and reliability. For reliability chronbach alpha was used which value was 0.73. Items were excluded with a chronbach alpha value less than 0.25. Later on these 40 students were excluded from the sample.

After pilot testing 1000 sets of refined questionnaires was distributed among the sampled students (125 questionnaires to each university) and 700 questionnaires (70%) were retrieved.

Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

Data were analyzed using SPSS 16. Mean and SD were used as a descriptive statistics.

The scale options, given weight and range are as follows.

Scale options	weight	Range
Never/Strongly disagree	1	1.00-1.50
Rarely/Disagree	2	1.51-2.50
Sometimes/Undecided	3	2.51-3.50
Often/Agree	4	3.51-4.50
Always/Strongly agree	5	4.51-5.00

I use internet at;	Weight	Range
Any place where available	1	1.00-1.50
Net Cafe	2	1.51-2.50
Friend's House	3	2.51-3.50
University	4	3.51-4.50
Home	5	4.51-5.00

I use internet when I am;	Weight	Range
Alone	1	1.00-1.50
With friends	2	1.51-2.50
With my family	3	2.51-3.50
With my teachers	4	3.51-4.50
With unknown person	5	4.51-5.00

I use internet for;	Weight	Range
Several times a day	1	1.00-1.50
Once a day	2	1.51-2.50
3-5 times a week	3	2.51-3.50
1-2 days in a week	4	3.51-4.50
Once in several weeks	5	4.51-5.00
No time limit	6	5.51-6.00

Table 1: Utilization Pattern (ways and means) (N=700)

S.No	Statements	Mean	S. D
1	I use internet at home, university, friend's house, net café or any place where it is available	3.70	1.50
2	I use internet when I am alone, with friends, with my family, with my teachers or with unknown person.	2.27	1.22
3	I use internet for several times a day, once a day, 3-5 days in a week, 1-2 days in a week, once in several weeks or no time limit.	3.63	1.87
4	I use internet to chat with male, female, both or none	3.09	.92

Table 1 represents that the student's utilization pattern for the places where they use internet with the mean score 3.70 and SD 1.50. The mean score falls in the range 3.51-4.50 which means that the students use internet at university. The student's utilization pattern for using internet in the company of different people with the mean score 2.27 and SD 1.22. The mean score falls in the range 2.51-3.50 which shows that the students like to use internet with friends. The student's utilization pattern regarding their timing ranges with the mean score 3.63 and SD 1.87. The mean score falls in the range 3.51-4.50 which shows that the students use internet 3-5 times a week. The student's utilization pattern for gender based chatting with the mean score 3.09 and SD .92. The mean score falls in the range 2.51-3.50 which shows that the students like to chat with both males and females.

Table 2 shows that the students who utilize internet for e-mail, health, religion, sports, music and for news purposes with the mean score 4.12, 4.24, 4.19, 3.87, 3.61, 4.30 and SD=1.01, .97, 1.05, 1.05, 1.31, .90. The mean score falls in the range 3.51-4.50 which means that the students "often" utilize internet for these purposes.

Table 2: Utilization Pattern (Purposes) (N=700)

S.NO	Statements	Mean	S.D
1	to read e-mails.	4.12	1.01
2	to chat.	3.47	1.34
3	to search for information about health.	4.24	.97
4	to search for information about religion.	4.19	1.05
5	to search for information about sports and games.	3.87	1.05
6	to search music sites and download all such files.	3.61	1.31
7	to search news especially current news.	4.30	.90
8	to Play and download games.	3.24	1.31
9	to kill my time.	3.25	1.35
	Overall	3.67	1.18

The students who utilize internet for chatting, downloading games and for time killing purposes with the mean score 3.47, 3.24, 3.25 and SD=1.34, 1.31, 1.35. The mean score falls in the range 2.51-3.50 which means that the students "sometimes" utilize internet for these purposes.

Table 3: Utilization Pattern (Reasons) (N=700)

S.NO	I use internet because;	Mean	S.D
1	It gives me access to every kind of information.	4.40	.79
2	I get free and easy information from it.	4.42	.73
3	I have a spare time.	3.04	1.39
4	I find information from it which I have needed.	4.59	.60
5	it diverts my attention when I am bore.	3.76	1.13
6	I am addicted (habitual) to internet.	2.85	1.33
7	it gives me pleasure.	3.64	1.16
	Overall	3.81	1.02

Table 3 shows that the students use internet because internet give them access to every kind of information, get easy and free information, divert their attention and also give them pleasure with the mean score 4.40, 4.42, 3.76, 3.64 and SD=.79, .73, 1.13, 1.16. The mean score falls in the range 3.51-4.50 which means that the students are "agree" about these statements.

The students' reason about the perception that they find information from internet according to their need with the mean score 4.59 and SD=.60. The mean score falls in the range 4.51-5.00 which means that the students are "strongly agree" with the statement.

The students' reason about the perception that they use internet because of spare time that they are addicted to internet with the mean score 3.04, 2.85 and SD= 1.39, 1.33. The mean score falls in the range 2.51-3.50 which means that the students are "undecided" about these statements.

Conclusions

On the basis of data analyses following conclusions were drawn:

1. Students perceived that they use internet at university and they like to use internet in the company of friends. They use internet 3-5 times a week and like to chat with both male and female.
2. Students mostly utilize internet for e-mail, health, religion, sports, music and for news purposes. They sometime utilize

internet for chatting, playing and downloading, and for time killing purposes.

3. Students were agreed that internet gives them an access to every kind of information and they get free and easy information from it. Internet diverts their attention when they are bore and internet gives them pleasure. They found information through internet according to their need. Students were found internet addictive and they do not utilize internet only because of spare time.

Recommendations

On the basis of conclusions following recommendations may be made.

1. There may be some check upon the students at university to prevent them from the wrong usage of internet. For this purpose window parental control is available, one can download it from internet easily which will check them automatically, whenever they search wrong or immoral websites computer will give negative results. Government may frame certain legislation in this regard to penalize and stop the wrong websites.
2. Mostly student use internet for positive and healthy purposes, these practices may be encouraged.
3. Internet may be utilized for creative and healthy activities only rather than to use it for time killing purposes or other negative activities.
4. Excess of everything is bad. Strict timing schedule may be introduced to prevent the students from the excessive use of internet both at home and university.

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