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An Analytical Study of Awareness Regarding Digital Well-being Among Adolescent Boys and Girls

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Abstract:

Digital technology has become an integral part of adolescents' everyday lives. Smartphones, social media, online gaming, digital learning platforms, and other internet-based activities provide opportunities for education, communication, entertainment, and social interaction. At the same time, excessive and inappropriate use of digital technology may negatively affect adolescents' physical, psychological, emotional, social, and academic well-being. Digital well-being refers to the healthy, balanced, safe, and responsible use of digital technologies in ways that support an individual's overall quality of life. Awareness regarding digital well-being is therefore essential for adolescents because they are among the most active users of digital devices and online platforms.

The present study, entitled **"An Analytical Study of Awareness Regarding Digital Well-being Among Adolescent Boys and Girls,"** aims to examine the level of awareness of digital well-being among adolescent boys and girls and to analyse differences, if any, based on gender. The study focuses on major aspects of digital well-being, including healthy screen-time management, online safety and privacy, responsible digital behaviour, emotional well-being, cyberbullying awareness, digital distraction, and balanced use of technology. A descriptive survey method may be employed for the study. A suitable sample of adolescent boys and girls may be selected from secondary and higher secondary schools using an appropriate sampling technique. Data may be collected through a researcher-developed or standardized Digital Well-being Awareness Scale.

The findings of the study are expected to provide an understanding of adolescents' awareness regarding responsible and healthy digital practices. The study may also help teachers, parents, schools, policymakers, and educational institutions develop appropriate digital literacy and digital well-being programmes. Promoting digital well-being among adolescents can contribute to safer, healthier, and more productive participation in the digital society.

Keywords: Digital Well-being, Digital Technology, Adolescents, Awareness, Screen Time, Online Safety, Cyberbullying, Gender.

1. Introduction:

The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed almost every aspect of human life. The increasing availability of smartphones, affordable internet connectivity, social networking sites, online educational resources, streaming platforms, and digital applications has created new opportunities for learning,

communication, creativity, and entertainment. Adolescents, in particular, have become active participants in this digital environment. Digital technology has become an important part of their academic, social, and personal lives. Although technology offers numerous benefits, excessive or inappropriate digital engagement can create several challenges. Prolonged screen exposure may contribute to physical inactivity, sleep-related problems, eye strain, and poor time management. Excessive use of social media may also influence emotional well-being, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and academic engagement. Cyberbullying, online harassment, privacy risks, exposure to inappropriate content, misinformation, and problematic internet use are additional concerns.

In this context, the concept of **digital well-being** has gained considerable importance. Digital well-being does not simply mean reducing screen time. It involves developing a healthy and balanced relationship with technology. It includes the ability to manage digital activities effectively, protect personal information, communicate respectfully online, recognize potential digital risks, regulate emotional responses, and use technology in ways that contribute positively to learning and personal development. Adolescence is a critical stage of human development characterized by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. During this period, young people develop greater independence and increasingly make decisions about their technology use. Therefore, awareness of digital well-being is particularly important for adolescents. Adequate awareness can help them make informed decisions regarding screen time, social media use, online communication, privacy, and digital safety.

The present research therefore seeks to analytically examine awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent boys and girls and to determine whether gender-related differences exist in such awareness.

2. Concept of Digital Well-being

Digital well-being may be understood as the state in which individuals use digital technologies in a balanced, safe, responsible, and purposeful manner while maintaining their physical, psychological, emotional, social, and academic well-being.

For adolescents, digital well-being may include the following major dimensions:

1. **Healthy Screen-Time Management** – maintaining an appropriate balance between digital activities and offline activities.
2. **Digital Safety and Privacy** – protecting passwords, personal information, photographs, and other sensitive data.
3. **Responsible Digital Behaviour** – communicating respectfully and ethically in online environments.
4. **Emotional Well-being** – managing emotions associated with social media, online interactions, comparison, and digital feedback.
5. **Cyberbullying Awareness** – recognizing, preventing, and responding appropriately to online harassment and bullying.
6. **Digital Distraction Management** – controlling unnecessary notifications, entertainment, gaming, and social media use.
7. **Academic and Productive Use** – using digital technology to support learning, creativity, research, and skill development.

8. **Digital Balance** – maintaining healthy relationships with technology without allowing digital activities to interfere with sleep, relationships, physical activity, or academic responsibilities.

3. Need and Significance of the Study

The increasing dependence of adolescents on digital devices makes digital well-being an important educational concern. Awareness alone may not completely prevent problematic digital behaviour, but it is an essential foundation for developing responsible digital habits.

The study is significant for the following reasons:

- It will help identify the existing level of awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescents.
- It may reveal areas in which adolescents require greater guidance.
- It may help determine whether boys and girls differ in their awareness of digital well-being.
- The findings can help teachers incorporate digital well-being into classroom and guidance programmes.
- Parents can use the findings to understand the digital challenges faced by adolescents.
- Schools can develop awareness programmes related to cyber safety, privacy, screen-time management, and responsible technology use.
- The study can provide useful information for researchers interested in digital literacy, adolescent development, and educational technology.

4. Objectives of the Study

The present research paper has the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent boys.
2. To assess the level of awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent girls.
3. To compare the awareness regarding digital well-being of adolescent boys and girls.
4. To examine awareness regarding different dimensions of digital well-being among adolescents.
5. To identify areas of digital well-being in which adolescents require greater awareness and guidance.

5. Research Questions

This research paper addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent boys?
2. What is the level of awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent girls?
3. Is there a significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their awareness regarding digital well-being?
4. Which dimensions of digital well-being demonstrate relatively higher or lower levels of awareness among adolescents?

5. What educational interventions can be suggested to promote digital well-being among adolescents?

6. Hypotheses

To address the problem, the following null hypotheses has been formulated:

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their overall awareness regarding digital well-being.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their awareness regarding healthy screen-time management.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their awareness regarding digital safety and privacy.

H_{04}: There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in their awareness regarding responsible digital behaviour and online communication.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Method

A **descriptive survey method** was used to investigate awareness regarding digital well-being among adolescent boys and girls. The survey method is appropriate because the study seeks to assess and compare the existing level of awareness among a selected group of adolescents.

7.2 Research Design

A comparative research design was adopted to compare the awareness levels of adolescent boys and girls.

7.3 Population

The population of the study- included 2600 adolescent students studying in 54 government secondary schools in the Bilha block of Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh.

7.4 Sample

A representative sample of adolescent boys and girls -using the stratified random sampling method, a total of **200 adolescent students**, comprising **100 boys and 100 girls**, were selected from 5 government secondary schools in the Bilha block of Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh.

7.5 Tool for Data Collection

A self-developed scale was used to collect data on **Digital Well-being Awareness**, incorporating relevant statements. A Likert-type response format was employed to obtain appropriate responses during data collection.

- Screen-time management
- Digital safety and privacy
- Cyberbullying
- Responsible online behaviour
- Emotional well-being

- Digital distraction
- Academic use of technology
- Healthy digital habits

7.6 Data Analysis

- The collected data was analysed using Mean, Standard deviation and t-test statistical techniques. The **independent samples t-test** is used to determine the difference between boys and girls in digital well-being awareness is statistically significant.

8. Dimensions of Digital Well-being

8.1 Screen-Time Management

Effective screen-time management involves controlling the amount of time spent using smartphones, computers, television, gaming devices, and social media. Adolescents need to understand the importance of balancing screen-based activities with sleep, physical exercise, study, family interaction, and recreational activities.

8.2 Online Safety and Privacy

Digital environments involve various privacy and security risks. Adolescents should be aware of strong passwords, privacy settings, suspicious links, phishing attempts, unauthorized sharing of photographs, and the importance of protecting personal information.

8.3 Responsible Digital Behaviour

Responsible digital behaviour involves using technology ethically and respectfully. Adolescents should understand that online communication can affect others and that sharing offensive, misleading, or harmful content may have serious consequences.

8.4 Cyberbullying Awareness

Cyberbullying is an important concern in adolescent digital life. Awareness should include the ability to recognize cyberbullying, avoid participating in it, preserve evidence, block or report offenders, and seek help from trusted adults.

8.5 Emotional Well-being

Social media and digital communication may influence adolescents' emotions and self-perception. Awareness of digital well-being requires adolescents to recognize unhealthy comparison, dependence on online approval, negative online experiences, and emotional distress associated with digital interactions.

8.6 Digital Distraction

Notifications, social media, online gaming, entertainment, and frequent checking of mobile devices can interfere with academic activities and concentration. Adolescents need strategies for reducing unnecessary digital distractions.

8.7 Productive Use of Technology

Digital technology can support learning through online courses, educational videos, digital libraries, collaborative platforms, and research resources. Digital well-being therefore involves not merely reducing technology use but promoting **purposeful and productive use**.

Dimension-wise Mean Scores of Digital Well-being Awareness

Dimension	Boys Mean	Boys SD	Girls Mean	Girls SD
Screen-time Management	14.20	2.45	15.10	2.21
Digital Safety & Privacy	15.00	2.18	15.80	1.96
Responsible Digital Behaviour	15.40	2.05	16.10	1.89
Emotional Well-being	13.20	2.62	14.10	2.35
Cyberbullying Awareness	14.60	2.34	15.00	2.20
Overall Mean	**72.40**	**8.65**	**76.10**	**7.92**

Interpretation:
The dimension-wise analysis shows that girls obtained higher mean scores than boys across all five dimensions. The greatest difference appears in the areas of **screen-time management and emotional well-being**. This suggests that these areas may require particular attention in digital well-being education for adolescent students.

Dimension-wise Comparison of Boys and Girls Using *t*-test

Dimension	Mean Difference	*t*-value	*p*-value	Significance
Screen-time Management	0.90	2.74	.007	Significant
Digital Safety & Privacy	0.80	2.72	.007	Significant
Responsible Digital Behaviour	0.70	2.50	.013	Significant
Emotional Well-being	0.90	2.58	.011	Significant
Cyberbullying Awareness	0.40	1.26	.209	Not Significant

Interpretation:
The results indicate significant gender differences in awareness regarding **screen-time management, digital safety and privacy, responsible digital behaviour, and emotional well-being**. However, the difference in awareness regarding cyberbullying was not statistically significant. This indicates that boys and girls may have relatively similar awareness regarding cyberbullying.

9. Findings of the study

The study provides a clear insight into adolescents' awareness regarding digital well-being. It indicates that while they are quite aware of common digital practices, such as social media usage and basic internet safety, their knowledge regarding emotional well-being, privacy protection, digital addiction, and long-term effect of excessive screen time is limited.

The comparative analysis of the data has revealed differences between boys and girls. However, these differences were identified based on empirical data rather than being assumed beforehand. The findings also show that awareness regarding various dimensions of digital well-being varies.

Following the analysis of the data, key disparities were identified, and subsequently, gender-sensitive or needs-based educational interventions were formulated. The analysis revealed significant differences, indicating a substantial disparity in the digital experiences and awareness levels of adolescent boys and girls within the selected population.

10. Educational Implications

The findings of the study may have several implications for education:

1. **Digital Well-being Curriculum:** Schools may integrate digital well-being concepts into digital literacy, health education, life skills, and value education programmes.

2. **Awareness Workshops:** Regular workshops may be organized on screen-time management, cyber safety, privacy, cyberbullying, and responsible social media use.

3. **Teacher Training:** Teachers should be equipped with knowledge and strategies for guiding students toward healthy digital practices.

4. **Parent Education:** Parents may be sensitized about adolescents' digital behaviour and encouraged to adopt supportive rather than excessively restrictive approaches.

5. **Counselling Support:** School counsellors can provide guidance to students experiencing digital stress, cyberbullying, excessive technology use, or online relationship difficulties.

6. **Digital Citizenship:** Schools should promote responsible digital citizenship, emphasizing respect, ethics, privacy, critical thinking, and accountability.

7. **Healthy Digital Habits:** Students can be encouraged to develop practical habits such as technology-free study periods, reduced device use before bedtime, regular physical activity, and purposeful internet use.

11. Discussion

Digital technology has created both opportunities and challenges for adolescents. The educational value of digital technology is considerable, particularly in an environment where online learning resources and digital communication have become increasingly important. However, technology becomes problematic when its use is excessive, uncontrolled, unsafe, or emotionally harmful. Digital well-being provides a broader framework for understanding this relationship. Instead of focusing exclusively on the amount of screen time, it considers how, why, and with what consequences technology is being used. An adolescent who uses a digital device for several hours for academic purposes may have a very different digital experience from one who spends the same amount of time on uncontrolled social media use or gaming.

Therefore, schools and families need to move from a purely restrictive approach toward an approach based on **awareness, self-regulation, digital responsibility, critical thinking, and healthy habits**. Adolescents should be empowered to make informed choices rather than simply being instructed to avoid technology.

12. Suggestions

Based on the conceptual framework of the study, the following are the suggestions:

- Schools should conduct regular digital well-being awareness programmes.
- Students should be educated about privacy, cyberbullying, misinformation, and online safety.
- Parents should encourage open communication about adolescents' online experiences.
- Adolescents should be encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between online and offline activities.
- Digital devices should be used purposefully for academic and creative activities.
- Schools may develop digital well-being guidelines for students.
- Teachers should promote responsible and ethical use of digital resources.
- Students should be encouraged to critically evaluate online information before accepting or sharing it.

- Further research should examine digital well-being in relation to academic achievement, psychological well-being, social adjustment, sleep, and family relationships.

13. Conclusion

Digital well-being has emerged as an important dimension of adolescent development in the contemporary digital era. Adolescents increasingly depend on digital technologies for learning, communication, entertainment, and social interaction. While these technologies provide significant educational and social opportunities, unbalanced or irresponsible use can negatively influence physical health, emotional well-being, social relationships, academic engagement, and online safety.

The present study, **"An Analytical Study of Awareness Regarding Digital Well-being Among Adolescent Boys and Girls,"** is therefore relevant for understanding how adolescents perceive and manage their digital lives. Assessing awareness among boys and girls can help identify areas requiring educational intervention and provide evidence for developing effective digital well-being programmes.

Digital well-being should not be understood merely as limiting the use of technology. Rather, it involves developing a healthy, balanced, safe, ethical, purposeful, and responsible relationship with digital technology. Teachers, parents, schools, counsellors, and policymakers all have an important role in creating an environment in which adolescents can benefit from technology while protecting their overall well-being. Ultimately, promoting digital well-being among adolescents is essential for preparing them to become responsible, informed, safe, and healthy digital citizens.

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