



Patterns of Media Usage and Attitudes of Children and its Relationship to Parental Perception of their Child's Behaviour

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Abstract

Children use the internet for a lot more than just research, they are active on social networking sites, uploading things like videos, pictures or even comments, downloading music and other files, chatting on various messengers and more. The main aim of the study was to assess the patterns of media usage and attitude of children towards media and technology and the relationship between media and parental perception of their child's behaviour. Data was collected based on purposive sampling technique from 122 children between the age of 8 and 15 years in Paediatric OPD. Standardized questionnaire, Media and Technology Usage and Attitude Scale and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was used. The medias that were available at their home are mobile phone (100%) and 97.5% of them have television available at home. More than half of the children have smart phone (65.6%) and internet connection (59.8%) in their home. Television viewing (48.36%) and phone calling (42.99%) were used more frequently by the children. There is an evidence of significant ($p = .001$) positive correlation between media usage and attitude among the children and no evidence of significant relationship between media usage and parental perception of children's behaviour. The children's positive attitude about technology makes them to use medias more. Children are becoming more media dependent and more of developing behavioral problems.

Keywords: Media Usage, Attitude, Parental Perception, Behaviour, children

Introduction

Media is the sum of information and entertainment which is taken by an individual or group. The amount of media consumption among individuals is increasing as new technologies are created. With rapidly growing social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, media consumption is reaching to younger and younger age group. Television is still predominant medium among children and adolescents. Mobile devices such as iPhone, news, entertainment, shopping and bullying are all now at the tip of our fingers, anytime and anywhere.

Social media use in India is growing with Facebook alone adding 16 million new users since January 2014 – that's roughly one new user every second. 70% of internet page views in India originate from mobile devices, while 87% of all Facebook users access the platform through mobile. There are 350 million unique mobile users in India who use it for entertainment and social media as the primary activities. Video consumption has increased however most video viewing on mobile devices in India is driven by memory card transfer, rather than via internet streaming (Naidu Prashant, 2014).

Parents are also trying to become technologically know-how to keep a tab on their children's virtual activities. Counsellors often advise parents and teachers to play a monitoring role in regulating children's usage of such sites.

The objectives of the study were

- To assess the patterns of media usage among children.
- To assess the attitude towards the media usage among children.
- To assess the parental perception of children's behaviour.
- To determine the relationship between the media usage and attitude.
 - To determine the relationship between media usage and parental perception of their child's behaviour.
 - To determine association between media usage and selected demographic variables.

Methods

Design and sampling

A quantitative approach with descriptive design was undertaken. Sample size was 100 calculated based on the formula $4pq/d^2$. This study was done on 122 children and their parents attending pediatric OPD and Well baby clinic of Christian Medical College, Vellore and those who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were included in the study using purposive sampling.

Instruments

The data were collected using two standardized tools. The data collection instruments were demographic data, Media and Technology Usage and Attitude Scale (MTUAS) to assess the patterns of media usage and Strengths Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for assessing the parental perception of their child's behaviour.

Media, Technology usage and Attitude Scale consists of 60 questions. Of which 44 questions are related to media usage with ten point scoring scale and 16 questions are about attitude towards media. The score was interpreted based on the frequency of usage. The score was given as 1 if that media was not used and scored as 10 if they used media all the time. The attitude scale was in 5-point Likert scale which consisted of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The score was given from 1 to 5.

SDQ consists of 25 questions which are subdivided into five categories like emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and pro-social behaviour. Each question was answered as true, somewhat true, not true. The scoring for behaviour was 0, 1 & 2 for true, somewhat true and not true respectively. The total score ranged from 0 – 40 and categorized into close to average, slightly raised, high and very high.

Data collection and analysis

Data was collected for the period of six weeks from. An informed consent was taken from all the parents and an assent was taken for all the children, apart from the consent of the parents. Data was collected through interview technique. The tool was translated to Hindi, Tamil and Bengali and both parents and children were asked to fill the questionnaire using the respective tools. Samples were selected in child health OPD and pediatric surgery OPD. Media questionnaire was given to the children. One questionnaire was given to the parents to fill about their child's behaviour. Each sample has taken 15 – 20 minutes to fill the questionnaire. In a day five to six samples were collected.

Results and discussion

This study was restricted only to children between the ages of 8 and 15 years and 60.7% of them were between 11 and 15 years of age. The present study demonstrated that the majority (67.2%) children in this study were male. The socio-economic classes of families, majority (36.1%) were belonged to upper middle class.

Similar result was found in a research review study by Strausburger, Jordan and Donnerstein (2009) revealed that the youth spend an average of more than 7 hours per day. The frequency of media usage has showed that the television viewing mean percentage is more (48.36%) that is the children are watching television several times a week and it ranged from several times a month to several times a day. Same results was found in a

survey conducted in 2002-2004, revealed that average daily use of television among those school-age children around the world with access ranges from between 1.5 hours to more than four hours. (Janeiro Rio De, 2004)

Table 1 *Type of Medias available at Home* (N=122)

Variables	Number	Percentage (%)
Mobile phone	122	100.0
Television	119	97.5
Smart phone	80	65.6
Internet	73	59.8
Computer	36	29.5
Laptop	32	26.2

Table 1 shows that all families (100%) had mobile phones; whereas 97.5% only had television at home. More than half (59.8%) of the families had internet facilities at home.

Table 2

Frequency of Media Usage (N=122)

Patterns of media	Mean percentage	Standard deviation
TV viewing	48.36	21.33
Phone calling	42.99	20.04
Video gaming	36.61	20.10
Text messaging	32.65	17.23
Smart phone	31.84	15.49
Internet searching	22.64	18.10
Media sharing	20.23	14.64
Social media	14.86	15.60
e-mailing	12.30	7.96
Facebook friendship	12.30	7.45
Online friendship	11.23	4.65

Table 2 shows that the television viewing was more among children 48.36% that is they used television several times a week. Secondly phone calling was more (42.99%) among the children average of once a week and video gaming also more relatively.

Nearly half of the children (47%) had strong positive attitude and 37% had very strong positive attitude towards the usefulness of media. Among the children who were assessed, 44% of children have moderate anxiety and 34% have mild anxiety of being without technology or dependent towards technology. Majority of the (39%) of children had strong negative attitude towards media and technology, where as 31% of the children had very strong negative attitude towards media and technology.

Mean attitude scores for females in the coeducational schools increased from 1.0 to 2.6 between baseline and the 1-week followup (Pinford Vanessa, et.al, 2003).

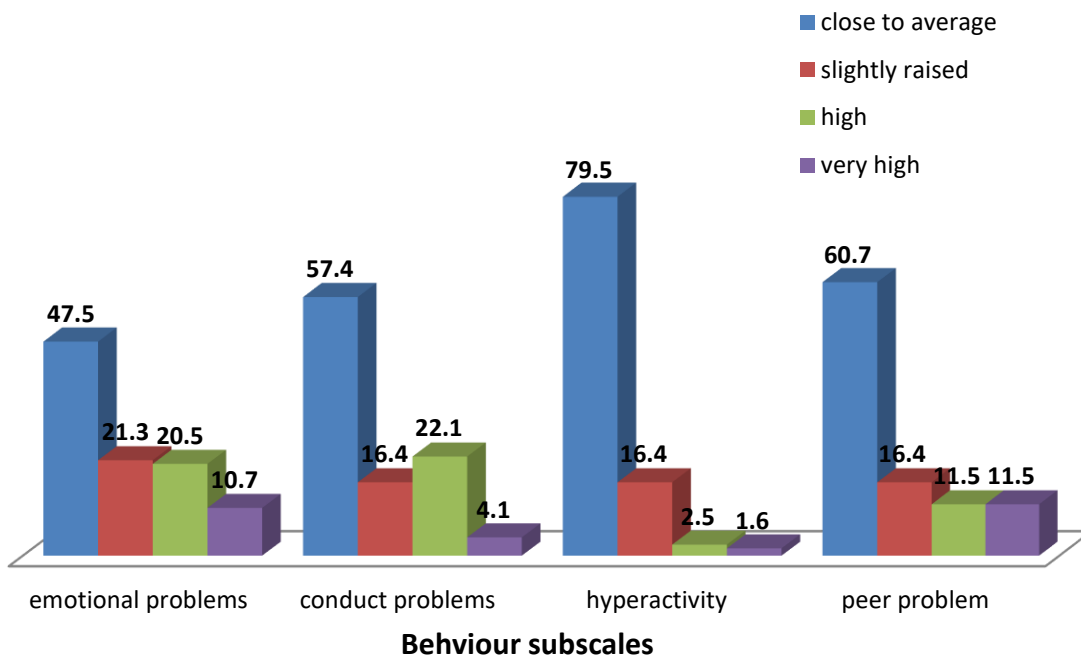


Figure 1. Children’s behaviour subcategories.

Figure 1 shows that majority of the children’s emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems were fell under the close to average category. 20.5% and 10.7% of the children were having high and very high emotional problems respectively. 22.1% of children were having high conduct problems. 16.4% of them were found to have slightly raised hyperactivity and peer problems.

Similar results was found in a research review which showed that the children developed behaviour problems like violence and aggression, substance abuse, obesity, eating disorders, developmental concerns and school performance and learning problems related with media usage (Strausburger, et.al, 2009). Kwong (2000) reported that the parental perception of the children’s need with epilepsy revealed that 55% of parents perceived behavioural changes in their epileptic children which included being short tempered, restlessness and naughtiness. Information was considered adequate in 27% of patients.

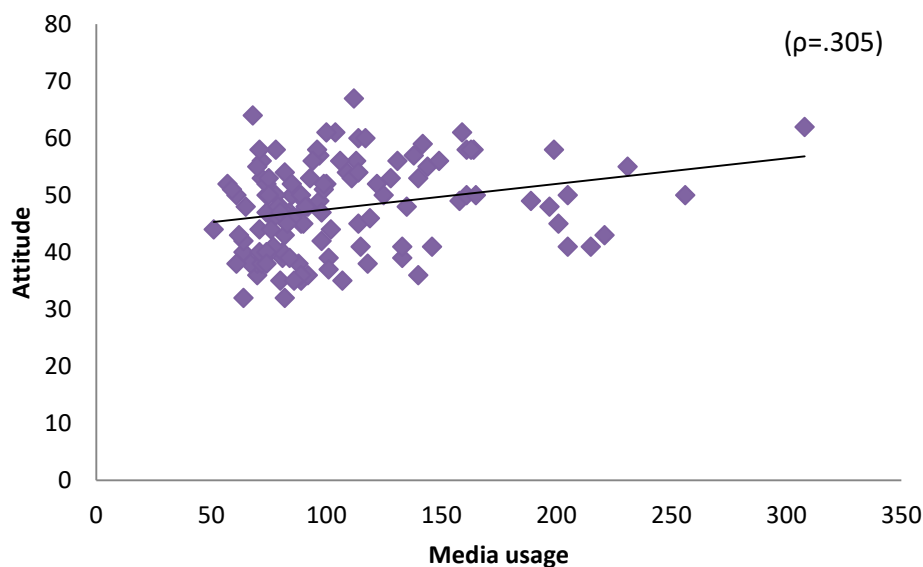


Figure 2. Relationship between the Media Usage and Attitude

Figure 2 reveals that there was a significant (p = 0.001) positive correlation between media usage and attitude among the children.

This study has shown that there was an evidence of significant ($p = .001$) relationship between media usage and attitude of children towards media. There was a weak positive correlation between media usage and children's attitude. Similar result was found in the study conducted by Rosen (2013), which showed that there was significant ($p < .001$) association with media subscales and attitude subscales.

Table 3

Relationship between Media and Attitude subscales

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Variable	Spearman's rho Correlation coefficient	p value
Positive attitude	0.179*	0.049
Anxiety/Dependence	0.375**	0.001
Negative attitude	-0.024	0.791
Task switching	0.192*	0.034

Table 3 shows that there was a significant correlation between media and positive attitude, dependence and task switching. There was no significant relationship between negative attitude and media usage.

This study revealed that there was no significant relationship between media usage and parental perception of children's behaviour. The relationship between media and usage and behaviour was statistically not proven.

In this study, the results have shown that there was an evidence of significant ($p = .054$) association between media usage & sex of the children. There was no evidence of significant association between age of children, education or birth order. This study also showed that there was an evidence of significant ($p = .007$) association between media usage and socio-economic status of the family. Similar association was found in the study done by Rosen (2013) which showed that there was significant association ($p < .001$) with media usage and sex of the children.

CONCLUSION

Paediatric nurses are challenged with children who are at risk to develop behavioural problems and poor school performance. Nurses have a role to play in the overall development of the children in home and in community. Early identification and appropriate management results in good prognosis. Nurses should implement the interventions planned for children along with other health care professionals. Thus the consequences of behavioural problems can be prevented such as hyperactivity, dependence of media, anxiety, poor school performance, sleep disturbance, drug use in children, sexual abuse, economic problems and development of psychiatric illnesses. The nurses need to teach the parents and school teachers about their role in prevention of media addiction. The magnitude of the existing problem is higher and required greater attention. The mental health of the children is important to form a healthy nation in future.

The children's positive attitude about technology makes them to use medias more. Though the children were aware about the negative effects about media, the usefulness was considered more. Children are becoming more media dependent and more of developing behavioural problems.

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