

The Role of Internet use in the Adoption of Deviant Behavior among University Students

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Abstract

This is the age of criminological theory. Every criminological theory tries to find the cause of crime and deviant behavior among the masses and finds ways to mitigate those crimes. The present study was conducted to analyze the role of internet use (as an independent variable) in causing deviance among university students (as dependent variable). A sample of 360 respondents was proportionately allocated and randomly selected from two universities situated in Peshawar, in July 2012. Chi square test was used to examine the association of independent and dependent variables. The result showed a highly significant association between deviant behavior among university students and immorally chatting with friends ($p=0.000$), immoral online activities ($p=0.000$), parents objection on using internet ($p=0.000$) and place of internet access ($p=0.000$). Enhanced stress on moral well-being of students in family, community and university, keeping proper check on students' online activities and regular interaction and association among students, teachers and their parents on the intellectual, academic and moral issues were the major study recommendations.

Keywords

Internet Use, Social Networking System, Deviance, Deviant Behavior, University Students.

Introduction

Every society has some standard of right and wrong for the guidance of their members called norms (Horton and Hunt 1984). Violation of these norms is known as "deviance", which ranges from a harmless life style against the common culture (style of dress, hair) to odd behavior (sexual preferences, beliefs against the common theology, ways of eating and behavior in the presence of the elders) and criminal acts (killing, kidnapping and hurting etc.). All forms of deviant behavior makes individual unpopular in a society. Every society has its own formal and informal mechanism in the form of social sanction and law to bring the deviant people toward conformity. Deviance is common to all societies with variations in the degree of observance of norms according to the situation irrespective of dominant religious beliefs or strength of law. An individual who considered as a person with deviant behavior will not be considered or punished as criminal in the society. By obtaining the status as deviant the person will be placed slightly away from the normal line of action. (Macionis, 2002)

Biological theories consider that deviant behavior is instinctive and people having special genetic makeup are most likely to be involved in act of deviance. Further, the traits of deviance are transmitted from generation to generation. Psychological and socialization theory explains that it is due to the psyche, environment and the process of socialization which guides individual towards a specific behavior. If we judge the causes of deviance in the light of socialization theory we will see that today's electronic media, especially the internet acts as a change agent towards the positive or negative socialization of our children. However, the negative effects of technology use are more prominent due to its unlimited negative use (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000).

Materials and Methods

Despite its manifest importance, the role of internet use in the adoption of deviant behavior among the university students in Pakistan remains an under-researched area. To obtain the required objective that to find out the role of media in causing deviance in youth at university level two universities namely the Agriculture University Peshawar and Preston University Peshawar were selected as universe of the study. Secondary data reveals that there are a total number of 6444 students enrolled in Peshawar campuses of both the universities, including both male and female students in the year of 2012. The required sample size of 360 respondents was obtained according to the criteria devised by Sekoran (Sekoran2003). The sample size was proportionately allocated and randomly distributed among both the universities on the basis of their gender.

Table I: Allocation of Sample Size

University	Population Size			Sample Size		
	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students	Male Students	Female Students	Total Students
The Agriculture University	4954	560	5514	277	31	308
Preston University	889	41	930	50	2	52
Total	5843	601	6444	327	35	360

Source: Administration offices of both the Agriculture University and Preston University Peshawar.

As the study was based on primary data, a well thought out questionnaire was prepared which covered all the aspects and variables of the study. The questionnaire was pretested on a limited scale for the validity of information. The data was

collected according to observational method in order to validate the findings of the study. The collected data was comprised on different parameters such as the educational background of the respondents and their parents, occupation of the respondents' parents, economic condition of the respondents' family, immoral online activities, chatting with friends, place and time of using internet.

Chi-square test was used to test the association between independent and dependent variables. The dependent variable (deviance) was indexed and cross tabbed with independent variable. Following statistical procedure devised by Tai was adopted to calculate the chi-square.

(Tai, 1978)

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \cdot \sum_{j=1}^c \cdot \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}}$$

Where

X^2 = Chi-square for categorical variables

O_{ij} = observed frequency in i^{th} row and j^{th} column

E_{ij} = expected frequency corresponding to i^{th} row and j^{th} column

The degree of freedom was calculated as:

Df (degrees of freedom) = $(r-1)(c-1)$

r = number of rows

c = number of columns

Results and Discussion

Time Spent over using of Internet and use of Social Networking System (SNS).

The following table show that majority of the respondents i.e. 90% were in the habit of using internet from which 83% spent 1-3 hours a day on internet surfing, 5.8% spent 4-6 hours a day, and 0.6% spent 7-9 hours a day on internet use. Furthermore, all the 90 % respondents who use internet had an access to SNS as well. Access to internet facilities and its use for social networking reveals that majority of students' access to internet facility which is encouraging on one side but the potential of its misuse is a major threat on the other side.

Table II:

Using Internet	f (%)*	Hours Use	f (%)	SNS Using	f (%)
Yes	324 (90.0)	1 - 3 hours	301(83.0)	Face book	314 (87.2)
No	36 (10.0)	4 - 6 hours	21 (5.8)	Twitter	9 (2.5)
Total	360 (100.0)	7 - 9 hours	2 (0.6)	Any other net works	1 (0.3)
		Not using internet	36 (10.0)	Not using internet	36 (10.0)
		Total	360 (100.0)	Total	360 (100.0)

* Values in parenthesis are Percentage.

Purpose of use of Social Network System (SNS)

Table No. III explains that the purpose of internet use by respondents was in diverse in nature, such as 46.4% respondents used internet for chatting with friends, 25.3% used internet for news updates, 13.1% were not using internet, 9.2% preferred to listen to online music, 3.6% were watching pornography clips, 2.2 % were involved in playing online games, and 1.48 % respondents were using internet for educational purposes. Moreover, 45.6% respondents did not use internet for online chatting with friends, however, 44.6 % respondents did chat with friends out of which 32.2% female respondents used SNS to chat with boyfriends, 40.5 % were chatting with both boys and girlfriends and 17.5% were chatting with girlfriends only. The result shows that majority of the respondents used internet for chatting purpose with both boy and girlfriends. The internet allows youngsters to overcome cultural restriction of interacting and communicating with members of opposite sex. However, the highest attraction in this chat is involvement in fantasies and immoralities, which probably can be one of a cause of deviation from local social norms and a cause to degradation of character. Similar result were found by Kuppuswamy (2010) who stated that majority of the students both male and female use internet for the purpose of chatting with each other without any social or cultural bondage.

Table III:

Do You Chat	f (%)*	With Whom Chat	f (%)	Most Doing Online	f (%)
Yes	160 (44.4)	Boy Friends	116 (32.2)	Chat	167 (46.4)
No	164 (45.6)	Girls Friends	63 (17.0)	Music	33 (9.2)
Not Using Internet	36 (10.0)	Both	145 (40.3)	News	91 (25.3)
Total	360 (100.0)	Not Using internet	36 (10.0)	Gaming	8 (2.2)
		Total	360 (100.0)	Pornography	13 (3.6)
				Not Using internet	36 (10.0)
				Study Purpose	12 (1.48)
				Total	360 (100.0)

* Values in parenthesis are percentage.

Parent's Attitude Towards the use of Internet and Place of its use.

Following table show that majority of the respondents as 64.7% were of the opinion that their parents' has no objection on the use of internet. However, 25.3% admitted that their parents do not like the use of internet accept educational purpose. The result shows a greater acceptance towards the use of internet among youth, while the parents do not like and allow their children for its use. This probably is because of the undesirable use of technology by the people all age. Furthermore, 51.9% respondents used the internet inside hostels, 23.9% at home and 14.1% had liberty of its use both in hostel and at home. It is concluded that use of internet technology has diffused in local culture to a greater extent and its use is on rise yet there is a profound resistance to its acceptance as its use is disliked by elders.

Table IV:

Parents Objection	f (%)	Where Using Internet	f (%)
Yes	91 (25.3)	At Home	86 (23.9)
No	233 (64.7)	At Hostel	187 (51.9)
Not Using Internet	36 (10.0)	Both Places	51 (14.1)
Total	360 (100)	Not Using Internet	36 (10.0)
		Total	360

* Values in parenthesis are percentage.

Associations Between Internet Using and Deviance

Following table displays a significant relation ($p=0.001$) between using internet and deviant behavior of youth. Hence those respondents who were involved in using internet frequently were mostly involved in deviant activities. It is probably because of the reason that students were addicted to the use of internet and mostly were involved in its futile and immoral use, which leads to their deviant behavior. Similarly, a highly significant ($p=0.000$) relation was found between type of social networking system used and the deviant behavior. Most of the social network sites have no moral regulations to access and share immoral videos and photographs, which automatically encourage the immoral activities in the society and the deviant behavior. A highly significant relation ($p=0.000$) was found between immoral chat with friends and the deviant behavior. Majority of the university students were involved in immoral chatting with the friends that paved the way for their deviant behavior. Majority of the parents had no objection over the use of internet and mostly they do not pay any serious attention to their children's activities over the use of internet, due to which they start immoral and anti-social activities over internet. The parent's reaction and their check and control towards the use of internet was found highly significant and showed ($p=0.000$) association with their children's deviant behavior. Another high significant association was found that a proper check from parents' ensuring moral use of internet on their children which can reduce the deviant behavior among the university students. Moreover, the relationship of place and use of internet and the deviant behavior had a highly significant association ($p=0.000$). A proper use of internet at home under the strict supervision of parents can reduce deviance. These findings are in line with Maqsood (2008) that proper check can reduce the deviance among the students. A highly significant relationship ($p=0.000$) was found between various online activities and the deviant behavior among the students. It was found that online activities like chatting with boy and girlfriends and watching pornographic videos online without any check causes deviant behavior.

Table V:

Internet Using Association	Attitude	Deviance		Total	Chi Square P Value
		Attitude	No		
Using Internet	Yes	133 (36.6)	191 (53.1)	324 (90.0)	$\chi^2=10.608$ (0.001)
	No	25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)	
Social Network Services Using	Not using internet	132 (36.7)	182 (50.6)	314 (87.2)	$\chi^2=18.302$ (0.000)
	Home	0 (0.0)	9 (2.5)	9 (2.5)	
	Hostel	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	
	Both	25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)	
Chat Immoral with Friends	Not using internet	90 (25.0)	70 (19.4)	160 (44.4)	$\chi^2=33.921$ (0.000)
	Chat	45 (12.5)	119 (33.1)	164 (45.6)	
	Music	25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)	
Objection of Parents	News	55 (15.3)	36 (10.0)	91 (25.3)	$\chi^2=29.927$ (0.000)
	Gaming	78 (21.7)	155 (43.1)	233 (64.7)	
	Study Purpose	25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)	
Where use Internet	Pornography	14 (3.9)	72 (20.0)	86 (23.9)	$\chi^2=42.974$ (0.000)
	Not Using internet	88 (24.4)	99 (27.5)	187 (51.9)	
		38 (10.5)	14 (3.9)	51 (14.4)	
		25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)	
Online Activities		79 (21.9)	88 (24.4)	167 (46.4)	$\chi^2=80.653$ (0.000)
		28 (7.8)	5 (1.4)	33 (9.2)	
		11 (3.1)	80 (22.2)	91 (25.3)	
		2 (0.5)	6 (1.6)	8 (2.1)	
		3 (0.8)	9 (2.5)	12 (3.3)	
		13 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	13 (3.6)	
	25 (6.9)	11 (3.1)	36 (10.0)		

**Numbers in table represent frequencies and numbers in parenthesis represent percentage proportion of respondents and in the last columns numbers in the parenthesis represent p value*.*

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is evident from the above results and findings of the study that internet is playing its role in the adoption of deviant behavior among university students. It is concluded from the study that chats over internet, online activities, immoral chats with friends, and poor check of parents' on the use of internet was influencing the individuals significantly to adopt deviant behavior.

It is recommended that a proper check of parents' towards their children is necessary to enhance their sense of responsibility and moral behavior. Furthermore, to keep proper check on the inner environment of home and the activities of their young family members especially in the choice of using media technologies should be properly checked. A proper check and balance system for controlling the legitimate expenditure of the youngsters by providing sufficient money according to their needs and its proper audit is utmost necessary. Moreover, a system of regular interaction and association between the parent teacher meeting to discuss the intellectual academic and moral progress of youngster is essential to ensure proper control of their deviant activities. Educational institutions have to form proper rules and regulations to identify and rehabilitate the students having deviant behavior as such institutions are the need of the day.

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