Abstract

Internet is a great tool and ready-made forum for communication. With the growing popularity of Internet communication applications such as instant messaging, blogs and social networking sites among adolescents, the Internet has become an important social context for their development. The present research aimed at analyzing the perceived influence of Internet use on Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and General Well-being of adolescents belonging to different Residential Background, Gender, Academic Stream and Frequency of Internet Access. 496 Internet user adolescents were surveyed about their access to Internet. Respondents also completed measures of Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and General Well-being. The data was collected through random sampling and analyzed in the light of the objectives and design of the study. In order to see the influence, $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3$ factorial design was employed. The findings of the study indicate that (i) There exists a significant influence of Residential Background on Emotional Maturity of Internet user adolescents; (ii) There exists a significant interactive influence between Residential Background and Academic Stream on Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and General Well-being of Internet user adolescents; (iii) There exists a significant interactive influence between Academic Stream and Frequency of Internet Access on Emotional Maturity of Internet user adolescents; (iv) There exists a significant interactive influence among Residential Background, Gender and Frequency of Internet Access on Emotional Maturity of Internet user adolescents. A major limitation of the study was that longitudinal data were available only on Social Competence Scale, Emotional Maturity Scale and General Well-being Scale, not on Internet use Questionnaire. The implications of results for researchers, parents and other lay persons are discussed. The present study, however, provide more than an interesting glimpse into influence of Internet among adolescents. Recognizing the Internet as a repository for information as well as a dynamic vehicle for learning, the present investigation suggests that future researchers may be able to contribute to understanding of personalized learning and its role in building confidence and competence.
Keywords: Internet, Internet user, Adolescents, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and General Well-being.