Mediation by Parents Digital Socialisation Adolescents

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Abstract

The present research proposes to understand the psychology of adolescent and their use of digital platform and their process of digital socialization. It focuses on the role of parents as a mediator and guide for better internet usage. It is very difficult to keep children away from internet and digital games, but if we guide them about its different usage, it is more possible that children can utilize internet in a better way. The present research paper is the description of the personal experience of parenting an adolescent child.

Introduction

The present research focuses on the mediation and intervention by the parents of internet use by the adolescent to become digital natives. The internet is a platform used for entertainment and time, but if we habituate t rhe children to utilize the internet for their study material, educate them about cyber laws, aware them about their digital identity, they will be utilizing internet for better uses. Addiction to internet, social media, digital games is the biggest negative aspect of the virtual world. Even the adults cannot escape from the addiction of the digital world, thus it is very easy of kids and adolescent to be addicted by the internet. But regularly talking to the children about the misuse and negatives of the internet can at least make them self-conscious and self-aware about the wastage of their precious time. Socialisation is a process through which the younger generation learns about their values, traditions, attitudes and beliefs. It can also be described as the process through which a generation passes its cultural heritage to its younger generation. The younger generation now a days are the native internet users but still when a generation passes its knowledge regarding virtual world, cyber laws and ethics, online lectures, e-banking, its usages for online shopping, discussion forums, consciously or unconsciously, to its younger generation, the process is called as digital socialisation. "Digital Socialization is a new form of socialization of a modern person, which reflects both the process of social adoption and integration of a person in the context of digitalization of the life of society and the process of gaining new social experience based on online context by a person, as well as the use of information and communication technologies that form the so-called "digital identity". The digital identity, in turn, is the result of the digitization of personal data, individual needs, activities, relationships, biography and habits" (Podbolotova, et.al. 2020).

I am a parent of 13-year-old child who is smart and sensitive as well. She is good in her studies but she has been an introvert since her childhood. She was provided with a laptop to cope up with her online studies during the lockdown period when she was eleven-year-old. The internet is whole new world for children where they have lot to discover and, in this process, they tend get lost and sometimes waste their time aimlessly. But being a working mother I it was difficult for me to keep them entertained in other activities, so I couldn't monitor, or check the frequent use of internet by my child. Moreover, I would often see her shutting down webpage's switching to another websites, whenever, she used to see me in her room. I used to be quite suspicious seeing her behaviour. So, I checked her history of websites visited and found that she used to visit the cartoon network YouTube channel or the Instagram pages of in-house plants or home décor videos. We had shifted in a new house in that year, and I used to watch a lot of house décor videos and chatted with her about decorating her room and our new home. It was not the webpage's or YouTube videos she watched was troubling me rather I was more concerned about the fact, why she used to hide her webpage from me, so I had to talk to her on the issue. The result that I received from her was that she was not sure about what will be my reaction if I allowed her to watch Doraemon or Shinchan cartoon, nor she knew how I would react to her watching Instagram pages.

Thus, at the age of eleven, the child was confused whether she is just a child watching

Doraemon or a young adult understanding the Instagram and YouTube videos on fashion and design. The first challenge for parenting an adolescent is to understand that the child is still a kid at heart who is exploring and trying to understand the conversation and interests of their parents and other adults. Take the example of my daughter who at the age of eleven was still watching Doraemon, something that she did since her childhood and at the same time she began taking interests in the hobbies of her mother. It is interesting to note here is that, although she was doing this she wasn't sure whether watching Doraemon will put her in the kids' category or Instagram/ you tubes in the grown up category.

During the lockdown period, i.e., in the year 2020 she attended her school online, apart from that she was fortunate to attend the various online summer school workshops on astronomy and various other science activities conducted by Bajaj Science Center, Wardha and Nehru Science Center, Mumbai. She was encouraged by her father to attend various lecture session by eminent scientists and social workers. She also started learning chess through online classes and even participated in an online chess tournament. She even enrolled herself for online guitar tutorials but discontinued it due to her lack of interest in the field. She rather polished her sketching and painting skills through the YouTube videos and online free tutorials. Thus, although living in a small city the virtual platform helped her to follow her hobbies and pursue her dreams.

In the next year in 2021 when she became even more internet friendly, we encouraged her to start her own science YouTube channel. It was an interesting experience for her to find out a new science topic every week, research for script and record videos of science experiments and upload it. We found that she became a more confident internet user at understanding the plagiarism laws and copyright issues. She read the ethical and plagiarism clause of YouTube channel and used to act accordingly while selecting any image from the Google platform for her video. Now she is a confident digital native who visits various websites of her interest and uses internet

for her knowledge up gradation. We guided her about digital frauds, phissing and other forms of cybercrimes. We have often encouraged her to read reviews and feedbacks before any online purchase. She has been recommended to read various novels and science fiction, but she makes her decision about the books and novels appropriate for her age group only after reading the reviews online. Now, we notice that she has begun to also guide her six year old sister about what to watch on the YouTube kids channel and encourages her to not to loiter in the virtual spaces aimlessly. She even reminds her younger sister about to maintain the right body postures and blink her eyes regularly while using the mobile phones or other electronic devices.

Conclusion

It is very difficult now days to not allow a child to be on internet but teaching them how to manage their time and find a balance between study, sports and virtual space is the key. Instead of restricting to a number of websites, it's better to keep talking on the pros and cons of various sites. We have seen that our child, although in the age group of 13, she always follows the instruction or disclaimer provided by the channel. We keep giving her task so that she can explore the useful side of internet rather than wasting her time on digital games. Children have lot of energy and it has to be directed in the right direction. She is not addicted to online digital games till now but she enjoys the offline version during her leisure hours. During her summer vacation she enjoys various animated movies, web series made for her age group. In the near future we are planning to guide her about e-banking, online marketing, ticket booking, planning various tours and other visits. We have already guided her on our online financial investments, passwords and how to retrieve forgotten passwords, so that in case of emergency she might have a rough idea of our financial transactions. It is seen that children behave in a very responsible manner if we show our confidence in them and responsibilities make them more responsible and considerate human being.

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