

## USAGE OF INTERNET AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF PERSONS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Persons with Hearing Impairment encounter more difficulties regarding their psychosocial wellbeing because they often face multiple challenges, such as speech and language delays, communication problems, and less or no access to the sound-dominated world. Henry (2010) found Internet activities contributed to more positive measures of psychosocial well-being. This study analyzed the Usage of Internet among Persons with Hearing Impairment and the effect of Internet Usage on Psychosocial wellbeing among Persons with Hearing Impairment.*

### INTRODUCTION

Social Interaction is a life-process and a crucial part in anyone's success in life. It supports independent living, community experiences and relationships. To enrich the social interaction process, recent technologies such as Internet have been introduced and used in a wide scale as new means for social communication between people. This is a mode of communication for Persons with Hearing Impairment to achieve success in education, career and life to the core.

### RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Persons with hearing impairment continue to reveal attainment disparities in multiple life domains. When compared to the general population, hearing impaired adults' life experiences and attainments are often not comparable. Persons with Hearing Impairment reveal lower self-esteem. They are less likely to complete a bachelors' degree or higher degree. They are underemployed and underpaid compared to the general population. Zazove et al (2004) stated that, "Persons with Hearing Impairment suffer the greatest socioeconomic and health care impact from communication barriers".

Most of the Persons with Hearing Impairment do not generally participate in oral language practices. Solutions to these communication problems are offered through Internet. Internet is regarded as a Social endless supply of information. Internet is an easily accessible and visual means of contact. As a result, this useful means of communication provides a vista of new opportunities for the Persons with Hearing Impairment. Internet provide Individuals with Hearing Impairment a number of opportunities and get possibility of engagement with a wide range of people which include Hearing people and Hearing Impaired people.

Pertaining to academic environments, Internet contributes to academic processes such as literacy development and identity development that may indirectly contribute to academic achievement. It is a fact that technologies support social networking rapidly emerging in today's culture. However, little is understood about how Internet support Persons with Hearing Impairment for social integration. Before the emergence of Internet the Persons with Hearing Impairment felt their identity as negative, ambiguous and bicultural. Social networking sites in Internet provide a method to showcase one's ideal identity in a virtual manner by updating status, posting to walls, sharing photos, and making comments on each other's pages

Persons with Hearing Impairment encounter more difficulties regarding their Psychosocial wellbeing because they often face multiple challenges, such as speech and language delays, communication problems, and less or no access to the sound-dominated world. Well-developed language and communication skills have been linked to higher levels of self-esteem and Psychosocial Wellbeing. (*Hintermair, M. 2008*). Gonzales and Hancock (2011) revealed that selective self-presentation using social media sites in Internet such as Facebook can have a positive influence on self-esteem and Psychosocial Wellbeing, especially when the individual selectively self-presents by editing information about the self. Henry (2010) found Internet activities contributed to more positive measures of psychosocial well-being.

## **OBJECTIVES**

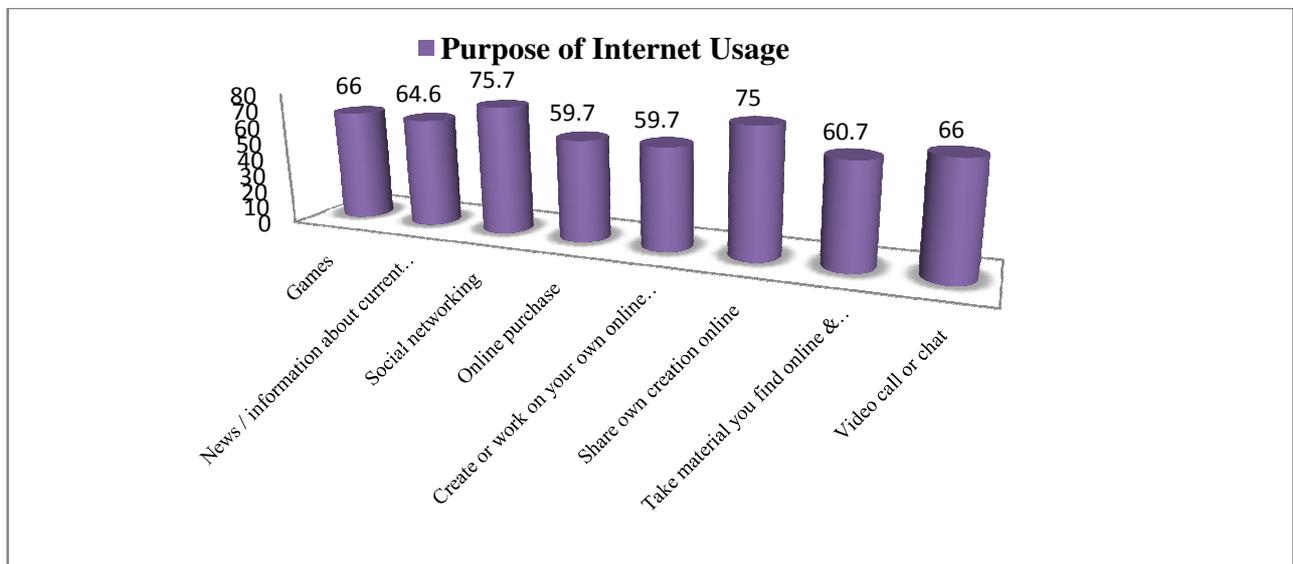
- Analyze the Usage of Internet among Persons with Hearing Impairment.
- To find out the effect of Internet on Psychosocial wellbeing among Persons with Hearing Impairment.

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The study was conducted in five districts of Tamil Nadu viz Coimbatore, Chennai, Tirupur, Nilgiris and Madurai. The sample comprised of 300 Persons with Hearing Impairment eighteen and above years of age. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. The investigator adopted Descriptive survey method and survey has been employed for the data collection. The study focused on the existing conditions with regard to the Usage of Internet among Persons with Hearing Impairment. The investigator developed a tool to find out the effect of Internet on Psychosocial wellbeing among Persons with Hearing Impairment. The tool consisted of eight questions based on purpose for which Internet was used such as Playing Games, Collecting information, Social Networking, Online purchase, Creating journals/blogs, Sharing own creations like photos, Videos and stories, Downloading online materials & remixing and Video calls /chat. These Eight questions elicited the level of Psychosocial wellbeing of Persons with Hearing Impairment.

## Results and Discussion

### Finding: 1

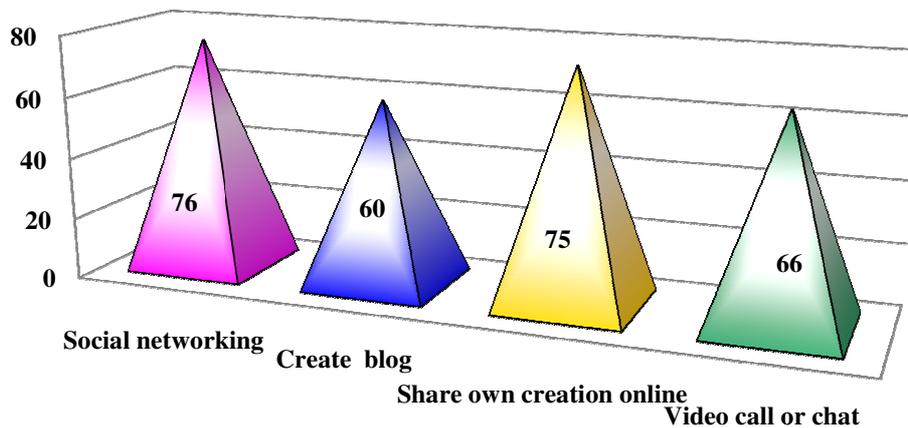


Among the respondents, nearly 76% of them used Internet for Social networking followed by sharing own creation online (75%). 66% used for Playing games and Video call or Chat

### Finding 2:

As examined by various studies the components such as Social networking, Creating blogs, Sharing own creation online and Video call or chat yield Positive measures on Psychosocial Well-being. This study is coinciding with the earlier results.

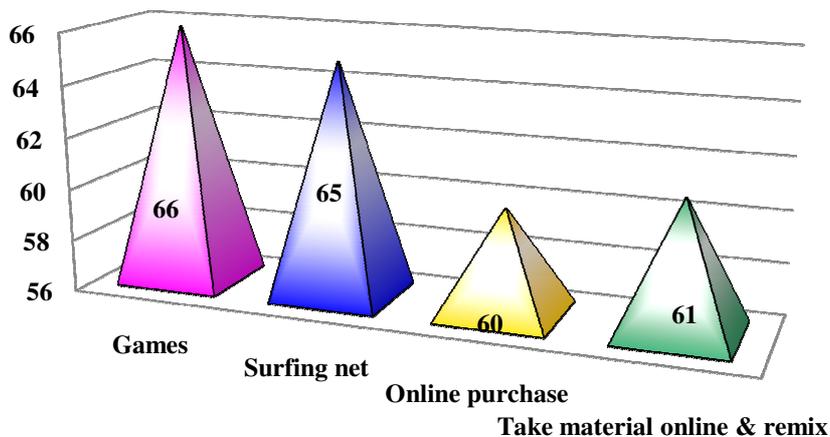
**Positive Measures Psychosocial Well being**



Usage of Internet by the respondents for Social networking - 76%, Creating blogs - 60%, Sharing own creation online - 75%, and Video call or chat -66% .This finding indicates that Psychosocial Well-being was noted between 60% - 76% among the respondents.

In contrast Playing games, Surfing net for information, Online purchase and Taking material online & remixing were considered as factors correlating negatively to Psychosocial Well-being. The present study is in line with the earlier studies.

**Negative Measures Psychosocial Well being**



Usage of Internet by the respondents for Playing games - 66%, Surfing net for information - 65%, Online purchase - 60% and Taking materials online & remixing - 61%. This finding indicates that Negative measures of Psychosocial Well-being was noted between 60% - 66% among the respondents.

## CONCLUSION

The results yielded from the study may have an impact on educationalist as they seek for ways to better meet the needs of Persons with Hearing Impairment by assessing their psychosocial wellbeing. The results of this study show the Usage of Internet is liable to open new communication opportunities to reduce the communication gap between Persons with Hearing Impairment and the Hearing community as well.

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