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# The moderating effects of parenting styles on the relation between the internet attitudes and internet behaviors of high-school students in Taiwan

Hui-Lien Chou, Chien Chou, Chao-Hsiu Chen\*

*Institute of Education, National Chiao Tung University, 1001 Ta-Hsueh Rd., Hsinchu 30010, Taiwan, ROC*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how parenting styles moderate the relation between the Internet attitudes and behaviors of high-school-aged students in Taiwan. We review the literature on studies of parenting styles and Internet attitudes, and their relations between Internet behaviors. We employed Latent Class Analysis to cluster the child-reported parenting styles. In this regard, we found that there exist three types of parenting styles in Taiwan. We in turn implemented the 2<sup>nd</sup>-order confirmatory factor analysis to validate the 6-T internet attitude model. The so-called 6-T internet attitude model is to explain the Internet attitude by the multi-dimensions such as Tool, Telephone, Toy, Territory, Treasure and Trade. It provides the basis on which we conducted the structural regression modeling. Three kinds of Internet behavior “online social compensation seeking”, “online game addiction” and “information security behavior” are analyzed in our research. We used the structural regression modeling to incorporate the 2<sup>nd</sup>-order confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis so that we can tell the moderating effects of parenting styles on the relation between Internet attitudes and Internet behavior by multi-group analysis. The result revealed that parenting styles have moderation effect on the relation between Internet attitude and “information security behavior”. Implications of the findings were discussed followed by the statistical analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

Internet use permeates all age groups and all aspects of life. It is not unusual to see a baby swiping a hand-held device in his parents' company. It is also common to see the elderly using Facebook to “like” a post or post a status. The younger generation makes full use of the Internet for educational and recreational purposes. How the Internet changes people's lives is a constant subject of scrutiny. Certainly, educational applications supported by the Internet to foster learning are never out of the spotlight. Researchers have also endeavored to investigate how to prevent problematic Internet behavior and encourage sound Internet behavior (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Valcke, Bonte, De Wever, & Rots, 2010).

In Taiwan, children begin computer classes in the third grade. Some schools even provide advanced computer classes as electives. School-aged students are vulnerable to Internet enticements, such as online solicitation or the unprecedented

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [hlien.tw@gmail.com](mailto:hlien.tw@gmail.com) (H.-L. Chou), [cchou@mail.nctu.edu.tw](mailto:cchou@mail.nctu.edu.tw) (C. Chou), [chaohsiuchen@mail.nctu.edu.tw](mailto:chaohsiuchen@mail.nctu.edu.tw) (C.-H. Chen).

pleasures of online game playing. Without proper supervision and guidance by parents and teachers, students may access the Internet without exercising self-discipline. Available research indicates that parents of adolescents are involved in their children's Internet use, and parents' intervention may be influential (Padilla-Walker, Coyne, Fraser, Dyer, & Yorgason, 2012; Rosen, Cheever, & Carrier, 2008; Wang, Bianchi, & Raley, 2005). Compared with college students, younger students are more easily affected by their parents than by their peers. Therefore, how parents act to prevent their children from engaging in problematic Internet behavior or encourage specific beneficial Internet behavior among their children requires further investigation.

Certainly, attitudes are related to behavior; however, little research has analyzed the relation between Internet attitudes and Internet behavior. Therefore, the present study explores the relation between Internet attitudes and Internet behavior in high-school students and investigates how parenting styles moderate this relation.

Latent class analysis (LCA) was employed to cluster the child-reported parenting styles in Taiwan, and 2<sup>nd</sup>-order confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the 6-T Internet attitude model proposed by Chou, Wu, and Chen (2011, 2013). Finally, the results derived from the structural regression modeling show the moderating effects of parenting styles on the relation between Internet attitudes and Internet behavior. A discussion of the implications of the findings is followed by the statistical analysis.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Parenting style

Home is a place in which adolescents spend much time, and parents play an important role in all aspects of their children's development. Numerous researchers have attempted to determine how parents' actions affect their children's development using the dyads' behavior, attitudes and values. Related research includes children's attachment relationships (Cohn, Cowan, Cowan, & Pearson, 1992), children's social anxiety (Greco & Morris, 2002) and children's emotional adjustment (Butler, Skinner, Gelfand, Berg, & Wiebe, 2007). Researchers have observed particular disciplinary techniques of parents, recorded typical behavioral responses of children, and measured specific psychological attributes of parents (Baumrind, 1966; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Researchers have termed these phenomena parent–child interaction, socialization or parenting styles. These terms and research contexts were generally unrelated to the Internet.

In the mid-1960s, Baumrind collected and reviewed prior research on parental disciplinary techniques and their related effects (Baumrind, 1966). She identified seven disciplinary techniques (considered as parental control in most related studies), including punishment, withdrawal of love, and demand for household responsibilities. Three models of parenting styles were identified by different combinations of disciplinary techniques - permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. The three models of parenting styles were confirmed in Baumrind's later research using qualitative observations of parent–child interaction (Baumrind, 1967).

Maccoby and Martin (1983) categorized Baumrind's disciplinary techniques into two elements: responsiveness and demandingness. Parental responsiveness refers to how parents respond and adapt to a child's signals, statuses, and needs. Parental demandingness reflects how parents exert consistent discipline, make maturity demands and encourage independent contacts.

Consequently, the permissive parenting style defined by Baumrind was replaced by indulgent and neglecting parenting styles. Using the two orthogonal dimensions, responsiveness and demandingness, four parenting styles emerged. Authoritative parenting refers to both high demandingness and high responsiveness. Indulgent parenting is characterized by low demandingness but high responsiveness. Neglecting parenting refers to low demandingness and low responsiveness. Authoritarian parenting refers to high demandingness but low responsiveness (see Fig. 1). Maccoby and Martin's typology of parenting styles was accepted in Baumrind's later work (Baumrind, 1991). This typology is widely recognized in the literature, and it is noteworthy that a similar typology of two-dimensional parenting was introduced even earlier with slightly different

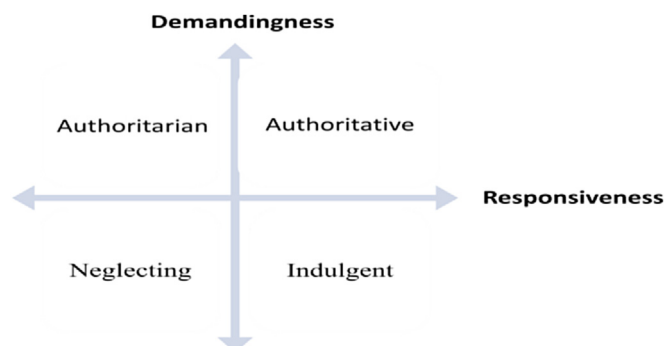


Fig. 1. Parenting styles.

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