Abstract

This study explores the influence of three psychological factors of the parental monitoring of children's Internet activity: (i) parents' perception of the Internet as a source of threat and risk, (ii) parents' perception of the Internet as a source of benefits, and (iii) family closeness. The sample consisted of 161 parents (20 fathers and 141 mothers) of children aged 7–12. Results show that family closeness is the most significant predictor for parental monitoring. The second significant predictor is parents' perception of the Internet as a source of threat or risk. As expected, the predictors for parental monitoring of children's Internet activity depend on children's age.

Keywords: Internet activity, parental monitoring, children, preadolescents

1. Problem

The Internet has become one of the most popular and important parts of children's leisure-time activities (Van den Eijnden et al., 2010; Valkenburg, 2008). Generally, the age at which children use the Internet for the first time is decreasing across Europe. For instance, it is seven years in Denmark and Sweden and eight in several other countries like Norway, Finland, the UK (Livingstone et al, 2011). In Poland, the average age of the first Internet use is nine (Kirwil, 2011).

The Internet offers many educational benefits. One of the important reasons for using the Internet is access to information on their hobbies and idols and carrying out school assignments (Valkenburg, Soeters, 2001). Social interaction, like making